



# Lambda Sci-Fi

## DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 417\* – December 2024

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### LSF New Year's Eve Gaming Party & Potluck! by Peter Knapp



**What:** LSF Gaming Party & Potluck

**When:** Tuesday, Dec. 31st – 2 PM until just past Midnight

**Where:** Peter and Rob's Home - 1425 "S" Street NW in DC

**What to Bring:** Bring your favorite table game (or two or three or....). Also, please bring food and/or beverages to share (non-alcoholic). Please feel free to bring friends along as well – the more gamers the merrier!

**Dinner:** This is a potluck – so bring food to share (main courses, side dishes, desserts, snacks are all good choices).

**Questions:** Contact Peter at: [peter@lambdascifi.org](mailto:peter@lambdascifi.org)



That's right...you read it correctly... our next LSF Gaming Party is almost here! LSF Gaming Parties are an opportunity to share your favorite board or card games or to just come and play games you know and love or learn new ones. We have plenty of space, so multiple games will be underway at any given time. We'll start at 2 PM and run through to a midnight toast.

Rather than our usual pizza order, we'll be doing this event as a potluck. Bring yourself, some food (main course, or side dishes, or desserts, or snacks) and/or non-alcoholic beverages to share, and a favorite game (or two, or three, or more...) and join us for an afternoon and evening of gaming fun.

For this, our New Year's Eve event, you may also bring some sparkling beverage (alcoholic or non-alcoholic) for us to use for the Midnight toast. (The party will remain alcohol free other than for the toast.)

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### 📖 The LSF Book Discussion Group

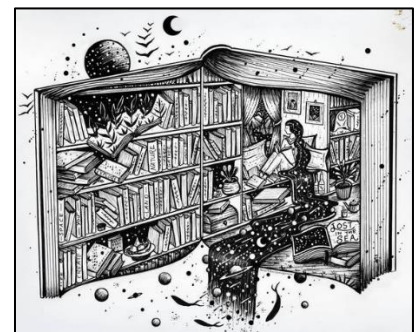
If *you're* interested in lively discussions of F&SF books (with an emphasis on elements of interest to the LGBT community), we invite you to join the LSF Book Discussion Group. Each month, we conduct fascinating round-table discussions of works by significant F&SF authors.

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; but the next book discussion will be held on December 5th.

Here are the details for the next discussion:

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

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### \*\*\*\*\* December 8, 2024 Meeting \*\*\*\*\*

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, December 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?

Page 2: Annual LSF Gift Exchange at Jan. 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting; Minutes of the Nov. LSF Meeting; Editorial Corrections; Gaylaxicon 2025 (announcement).

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

Page 4: Info About LSF: DC Area Gaylaxians; Con Calendar.

## Annual LSF Gift Exchange at Jan. 12th Meeting



It's coming up on that time of year again – time for the *thirty-fourth* annual book (*et al*) exchange at the monthly LSF meeting to be held on January 12, 2025!

All LSF members – and visitors, guests, attendees, etc. – are invited to participate in this “blind exchange.”

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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## Minutes of the November LSF Meeting taken by Scott

### TV News

Rob talked about *Heroes*, the successful NBC superpowers TV show, saying how he felt Season 2 went downhill due to its bloated story lines and lack of momentum. Miscellaneous genre TV news: the final season of *Star Trek: Lower Decks*, *Arcane* Season 2, *Silo* Season 2, and *What If* Season 3. The ending of *Good Omens* Season 2 delivered a gut punch.

### Movie News

Peter reviewed the movie *Godzilla Minus 1*, which won an Oscar for Best Special Effects; he liked that it's a character-driven movie. Movies coming out before the end of the year: *Moana 2*, *Wicked Part 1*.

### Misc News

Rob reviewed the 10/26/2024 *Guardian* article about genre author Alan Moore's review of toxic fandom. Moore's *Watchmen* and *V for Vendetta* are considered pinnacles of genre literature. He also discussed *The Mote in God's Eye*, a novel by Jerry Pournelle and Larry Niven. It centers upon a first contact mission between humans and aliens; and there were comparisons with Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver Travels*, which was parody of travelogues. There was a discussion of Lucian of Samosata's *True History*, written in the second century AD; some claim that it is the earliest known work of science fiction that includes travel to outer space, alien lifeforms, and interplanetary warfare. There was a long, long, strained conversation about Christmas Hallmark movies; and a long, long, enticing conversation about the Land of Oz. Rob advised that the game *Dragon Age: The Veil-guard* game has been released.

### Upcoming LSF events

- LSF book discussion on Thursday, Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>: *The Terraformers* by Analee Hewitt.
- LSF New Year's Eve party at Peter & Rob's.
- The January 12, 2025 LSF meeting will feature the Annual LSF Book-(ish) Exchange.

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## Editorial Corrections



by Ye Olde Editor

Somehow, I screwed up the numbering LSF newsletter issues, starting with the July 2024 issue. The number of *this* December 2024 issue is now correct: #417. If you want to go back and correct previous 2024 issues, here's what they *should* have been:

- November 2024 = 416
- October 2024 = 415
- September 2024 = 414
- August 2024 = 413
- July 2024 = 412

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## Gaylaxicon 2025

announced by Don Kaiser



We've signed the hotel contract we're bringing Gaylaxicon back to Minnesota in 2025.

The dates will be Oct. 17-19, 2025 (the third weekend in October); and it'll be held at the Crown Plaza Suites MSP Airport - Mall of America (Bloomington MN).

We'll keep you all informed as things develop (guests, etc.). ▼





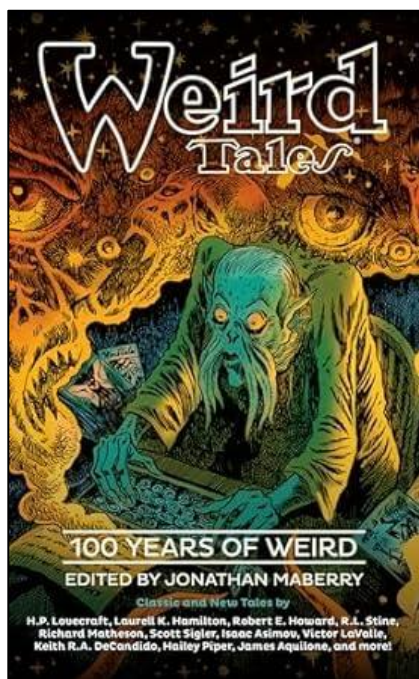
## Strange Tales, Part 3

reviews by Carl

It's that time of year again – longer nights, Halloween, *Día de los Muertos*, and the Winter Solstice – and I generally enjoy reading “weird,” “creepy,” “scary,” or “dark” books in honor of the season. This October was no exception. Here are a couple more reviews of the books I've read this year.

### *Weird Tales: 100 Years of Weird*

edited by Jonathan Maberry  
(Blackstone Publishing, 2023)



I purchased this doorstop-sized book in the dealers' room at this year's Balticon; but I held off reading it until this latest iteration of my annual “weird reading fest.” It's a massive collection/anthology published in honor of *Weird Tales*, a magazine that's been in existence (in one form or another) for a century.

Here's how editor Jonathan Maberry describes the nature of *Weird Tales* in his introductory essay: “It allowed [writers] to tell uniquely peculiar stories that simply would not fit into any other magazine. The stuff we've always published is not straight science fiction, horror, mystery, fantasy, or adventure. We're off-center. We view those genres through a deliberately

warped lens. We like our stuff to be unexpected, unusual, outside the box and...yes...weird.” And this volume contains a wonderfully representative sample of that “weird.”

The “classics” are, of course, represented—weird stories by authors who were frequent contributors to *Weird Tales*. There's “Worms of the Earth” (1932), a dark non-Conan tale by Robert E. Howard, in which the Pictish hero King Bran Mak Morn makes an unholy pact with a subterranean pre-human race to wreak vengeance upon the tyrannical Roman governor of Britain. There's “The Black God's Kiss” (1934), C.L. Moore's first story about Jirel of Joiry, a medieval warrior-woman who seeks hellish supernatural aid to avenge the harsh conquest of her barony. And what collection of “weird stuff” would be complete without at least one story from H.P. Lovecraft? In this case, it's “The Call of Cthulhu” (1928), a seminal story in the so-called Cthulhu Mythos. And then there's “The Vengeance of Nitocris” (1928), a tale of dark Egyptian magic penned by 16-year-old Thomas Lanier Williams. (You've probably heard of Williams by his later, more famous *nom de plume*: Tennessee Williams.)

More modern writers are also represented. Here are just a few. One of my favorites is Victor LaValle's “Up from Slavery” (2021). At first, I couldn't quite figure out where the story was going; but by the end it turned into a very satisfying Lovecraftian tale. James Aquilone's “Dead Jack and the Case of the Bloody Fairy” (2023) is an enjoyable *noir*-ish supernatural detective story. And Keith R.A. DeCandido's “Prezzo” (2023) is a disturbingly dark tale of social injustice and demonic revenge in 1913 New York City.

The book also includes a number of thoughtful essays on various *Weird Tales* themes. I really enjoyed them. Some of my favorites are: “*Weird Tales* at 100: A Century of Weird” (the history of the magazine); “The Circle: Shared Worlds” (the inter-relationship between the small group of writers with whom Lovecraft corresponded and their contributions to the Cthulhu Mythos); “Swords and Sorcery: *Weird Tales* and Beyond” (a short history of the swords-and-sorcery genre); and “Who Ya Gonna Call? The

Evolution of Occult Detective Fiction”

And the book is chock full of “weird” illustrations: reprints of historic or notable *Weird Tales* covers and interior line-art, as well as full-color interior art from the magazine. Nice stuff.

All in all, I found *Weird Tales: 100 Years of Weird* to be one heckuva enjoyable collection/anthology.

### *True Detective: Night Country*

directed & written by Issa López  
Jonathan Maberry  
(HBO, 2024)



OK, this one *isn't* a book; it's a 6-episode limited series shown on HBO earlier this year and the fourth “season” in the *True Detective* franchise. But it's definitely “dark and weird.” I couldn't watch it on HBO – but I'd heard about it – and I looked forward to watching the series on DVD a couple of months ago. Wow! It's great!

Each “season” of *True Detective* has its own complete stand-alone storyline and a new cast. I was a big fan of the Season 1 (2014), with its well-written *noir*-ish story and its Lovecraftian associations. Season 2 (2015) and Season 3 (2019) didn't attract me enough to watch them.

*Night Country* takes place in the fictional town of Ennis, Alaska. Only a few hundred people live in and around Ennis, mostly Native Alaskans. Local unrest is growing as the incidence of stillbirths has been rising. It's believed that this is somehow connected

(continued on page 4)

## **\*\* 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, **December 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

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](http://www.HanaConAnime.com)

August 13-17, 2025 **SEATTLE WORLDCON 2025**. Seattle Convention Center (Seattle WA). Guests of Honor: Martha Wells, Donato Giancola, Bridget Landry, K. Tempest Bradford, Nisi Shawl. Full attending membership: currently \$230 (will go up). For more information & on-line registration: <https://seattlein2025.org>

October 17-19, 2025. **GAYLAXICON 2025**. Crowne Plaza Suites MSP Airport - Mall of America (Bloomington MN). *More details as they become available.*

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/>

### **Strange Tales, Part 3**

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to the nearby Tsalal Arctic Research Station. Tsalal is a secretive, restricted facility near Ennis, where scientists are rumored to be digging deep beneath the permafrost and performing some sort of biological research. Liz Danvers (played by Jodie Foster) is the tough and uncompromising local police Chief, who was "exiled" to Ennis because of internal police politics back in Anchorage. One of the members of her small force is Evangeline Navarro (played by Kali Reis), an ex-Marine and former squad partner of Danvers.

Just as the months-long winter night descends on Ennis, all eight scientists mysteriously vanish from the Tsalal facility without a trace, and a

woman's tongue is left at the scene. Chief Danvers deduces that the tongue belongs to an Indigenous woman; and Trooper Navarro believes the victim to have been a Native Alaskan woman who protested the construction of a local mine – and blames Danvers for the fact that the case has remained "unsolved" for the past six years. Danvers and Navarro independently investigate the Tsalal crime scene and are butting heads over the case when a woman living just outside town discovers the naked bodies of the missing scientists – all frozen in a solid block of ice, with their clothes carefully folded nearby on the snow.

All-consuming darkness, mysterious deaths, a secret research facility conducting unknown biological research, interpersonal conflicts, and an overall sense of foreboding... *I really*

enjoyed *Night Country*; and I don't think it's any wonder that the series received 18 Daytime Emmy Nominations. (Jodie Foster won the Emmy for Outstanding Lead Actress.) I highly recommend *True Detective: Night Country* for an exciting, fascinating, and chilling (pardon the pun) experience. **ΛΨΦ**

