



# Lambda Sci-fi

## DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 418 – January 2025

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



LSF will host its *thirty-third* annual book (*et al*) exchange at the in-person 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 book-mark) 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 all 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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### 📖 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 January 23, 2025.

Here are the details for the next discussion:

**Jan. 23** – *The Saint of Bright Doors*, by Chandra Sekera (moderator: Rob).

**Feb. 27** – *A Closed and Comon Orbit*, by Becky Chambers (moderator: Zena).

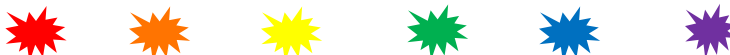
**March 27** – *Frieren: Beyond Journey’s End* (Vol. 1 and 2), by Kanehito Yamada, illustr. Tsukasa Abe (mod.: Greg).

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### \*\*\*\*\* January 12, 2025 Meeting \*\*\*\*\*

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 12th**. The meeting will be held at Peter and Rob’s home, **1425 “S” Street NW, Washington, DC**. It will feature the Annual LSF Book(ish) Exchange. The meeting will begin at 1:30 PM. Hope to see you there!



### What’s Inside?

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## Unexpected Life Found in Antarctic Lake

info passed along by Carl



How cold is Antarctica? *Very* cold! In fact, Antarctica has long served as an analog for conditions expected to be found on other planets. For example, Antarctica's McMurdo Dry Valleys haven't seen rain in nearly two million years; and this provides a good environmental comparison for Mars, which is also extremely cold and extremely dry. (Of course, Mars doesn't possess a breathable atmosphere.)

There is, in fact, plenty of microbial life in Antarctica. But in the summers of 2019 and 2020, a research team led by the National Research Council of Italy made a surprising discovery at Lake Enigma. It had previously been believed that Lake Enigma was frozen from top to bottom. But, using ground-penetrating radar, the research team discovered that the lake contained liquid water lying about 11 meters below its icy surface. Because of its location, Lake Enigma should have dried up long ago – but it still contains liquid water, which suggests that it's being fed by some currently-unknown water source.

When the researchers drilled into the ice to extract water samples – being careful to avoid contaminating the samples – they got an even bigger surprise. The water contained living microbiota: Pseudomonadota, Actinobacteriota, Bacteroidota, and extremely simple single-celled creatures in the superphylum Patescibacteria. They were particularly intrigued to find the Patescibacteria, which are totally absent from other lakes studied in the McMurdo Dry Valleys.

The research team has published their results in the journal *Communications Earth & Environment* (December 2024). “Perennially ice-covered

## Minutes of the December LSF Meeting

taken by Scott

### TV News

Wess does not care for HBO Max's *Dune: Prophecy* – a prequel to the *Dune* and *Dune: Part Two* films – saying that the characters are boring, the building interiors are boring, whispered politics are boring, and the plot flow is too slow.

Peter & Rob talked about the new Disney+ series *Star Wars: Skeleton Crew* (starring Jude Law). They described it as a coming-of-age story about four children and “New Republic suburbia” (very Earth-like).

There is much buzz about CBS's upcoming *Section 31* – about an autonomous intelligence/defense group that carries out covert operations. (Section 31 was first established in *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*.) Michelle Yeoh stars as Philippa Georgiou; and Rob described it as a high-octane-energy action thriller.

The trailer for the *Doctor Who* Christmas special has been shown – the cast includes Nicola Coughlan.

Peter is fascinated by the premise of the series *Severance* (on Apple), but he says it's slow. Peter is also enjoying the Apple series *Silo* – but Andy is not.

The new MGM series *Earth Abides* has started – based upon the classic novel by George R. Stewart.

*Babylon 5* is returning on Amazon Prime.

freshwater ecosystems are hotspots of biodiversity in Antarctica's polar deserts, providing a year-round oasis for microbial life. This study describes a unique example of these ecosystems by adding the massive freshwater Lake Enigma, one of the deepest hydrological formations in Victoria Land.”

They theorize that Lake Enigma likely teemed with life before its top froze over thousands of years ago, and that the microbes they discovered are the living descendants of those ancient life forms that were cut off from the rest of Antarctica when the lake's surface

### Film News

Rob totally loved *Wicked*. He says that Jonathan Bailey (who plays Fiyero Tigelaar) exudes sex. It was noted that Michelle Yeoh has her singing debut in *Wicked*.

The new film *Nosferatu* (written & directed by Robert Eggers) will be released on Christmas Day.

Derrick enjoyed *Gladiator 2*, despite its glaring and questionable historical inaccuracies.

### Other News

Carl reported that author Katharine Kurtz has been receiving unusual e-mails from fans. They told her that they're re-reading her early “Deryni” novels, but they're disturbed because “the plot of the evil regents successfully working to destroy ‘those they do not understand’ hits too close to current events.”

### Upcoming LSF events

New Year's Eve Gaming Party on Tuesday, Dec. 31st. Doors open at 2 PM.

The Jan. 12th LSF meeting will include the annual LSF Book(ish) exchange!

Upcoming LSF book discussions: *The Saint of Bright Doors* by Vajra Chandrasekera (Jan.), *A Closed and Common Orbit* by Becky Chambers (Feb.), *Frieren: Beyond Journey's End* (Vol. 1 and 2), by Kanehito Yamada & Tsukasa Abe.

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permanently froze over.

Finding life beneath a perennially frozen lake provides an interesting data point for space missions like the recently launched *Europa Clipper*, which aims to learn if the water beneath the icy crust of Jupiter's fourth largest moon contains the conditions to support life.

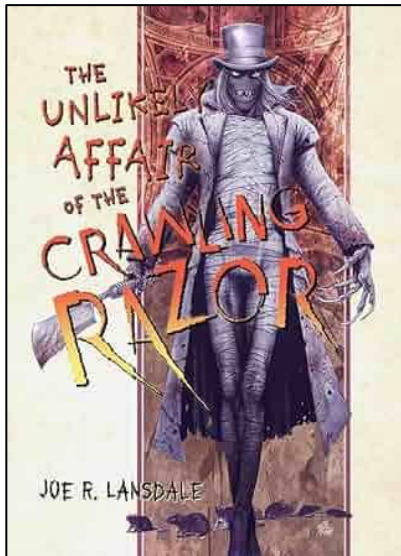
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## Strange Tales, Part 4

reviews by Carl

Here are a last couple of reviews of “weird” or “creepy” or “scary” books that I read in honor of the season of Halloween and *Dia de los Muertos*.



*The Unlikely Affair of the Crawling Razor*  
by Joe R. Lansdale  
(Subterranean Press, 2024)

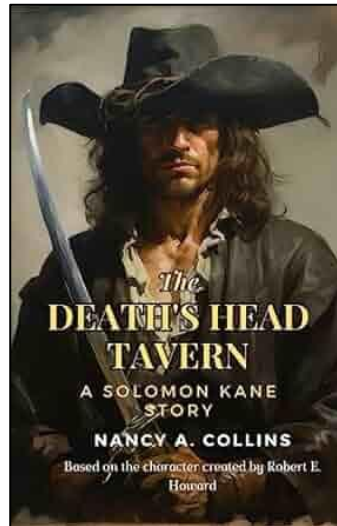
I’m a big fan of Joe Lansdale, across several genre types. He’s fostered some really “creepy” stories over the years, such as the anthology *Razored Saddles* (editor and contributor, 1989), the novella *Bubba Ho-Tep* (1994; movie adaptation 2002), and numerous short stories. Recently, I stumbled across a new Lansdale novella, *The Unlikely Affair of the Crawling Razor*. Needless to say, it’s a “creepy” story, too. (But, based on the title, you probably figured that out.)

The God of the Razor, a truly horrific cross-dimensional creature, has appeared in a number of Lansdale horror stories. This time Lansdale has included it in a new adventure involving Auguste Dupin, a character created by Edgar Allan Poe.

Side note: Poe introduced Dupin in “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” (1841), which is widely considered to be the first example of detective fiction. Dupin reappeared in two subsequent Poe

stories: “The Mystery of Marie Rogèt” (1842) and “The Purloined Letter” (1944).

In *The Unlikely Affair*, a distraught young woman has come to Dupin (and his unnamed assistant) seeking help for her brother, who has become increasingly obsessed with a dark world that exists alongside our own. It’s a world with “its own geometry of evil,” a world from which nightmares spring. It is from this world that her brother has used horrific spells and sacrifices to release its deadliest inhabitant, The God of the Razor. In an effort to counter the demonic creature, Dupin and his assistant race through the shadowed, haunted streets of Paris – and even down into the famous Catacombs. Lots of blood in the shadows – a short but truly creepy story!



*The Death's Head Tavern and Other Fantastic Tales*  
by Nancy A. Collins  
(Hopedale Press, 2024)

I’m also a big fan of Nancy Collins, who also writes across several genre types. This volume is a “collection of dark heroic fantasy pastiches and historical fantasy stories.”

The title story features Solomon Kane, the 17<sup>th</sup> Century demon-hunting Puritan created by Robert E. Howard. In this adventure, Kane accidentally runs across a nest of ghouls infesting a creepy, isolated inn located in the trackless English moors. But this isn’t a typical nest of ghouls; they’re devilishly clever,

## Gaylaxicon 2025 - Changed Dates - announced by Don Kaiser, Chair



Due to conflicts with other local conventions, we have had to change our dates for Gaylaxicon 2025.

Our new dates will be Oct. 3-5, 2025 (the *first* weekend in October). Still the same hotel: the Crown Plaza AiRE - MSP Airport - Mall of America (Bloomington MN).

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



with deep, deep roots stretching back for untold centuries and reaching into the unsuspected depths beneath the moors. Solomon Kane truly has his hands full this time.

There are also dark fantasy pastiches featuring Prince Corum and Elic of Melniboné (both created by Michael Moorcock), as well as a story featuring good old Robin Hood. It’s difficult for me to choose my favorite, but I think it might be the short novel *Absalom’s Wake*. It features Captain Ahab in a story that answers the question: “What would have happened if, instead of writing *Moby Dick*, Herman Melville had created the Cthulhu Mythos?” It’s real hoot! **ΛΨΦ**



**\*\* 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 LGBT people and their friends;
- provide forums for LGBT people and their friends to share their interest in SF/F/H;
- promote the presence of LGBT elements within SF/F/H and within fandom; and
- promote SF/F/H within the LGBT 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, **January 12th, 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)

May 23-26, 2025 **BALTICON 59**. Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel (Baltimore MD). Author Guests of Honor: Silvia Moreno-Garcia & Sebastien de Castell; Artist GoH: Stephanie Law; Science GoH: Marc Abrahams. Membership: \$75 thru Feb. 28; \$80 - March 1 thru April 15; \$85 - April 16 thru May 15; \$89 at the door (daily rates available). For more information and on-line registration: [Balticon 59 | Baltimore's Science Fiction Convention](http://Balticon 59 | Baltimore's Science Fiction Convention)

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 3-5, 2025. **GAYLAXICON 2025**. Crowne Plaza Suites AiRE 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/>



**HAPPY  
NEW YEAR  
TO  
EVERYONE  
AT LSF...  
AND ALL  
THEIR  
FRIENDS!**

