



# lambda Sci-fi

## DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 419 – February 2025

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Happy Lunar New Year – Year of the Serpent

### 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 February 27, 2025.

Here are the details for the next discussion:

**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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### \*\*\*\*\* February 9, 2025 Meeting \*\*\*\*\*

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, February 9th**. 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!



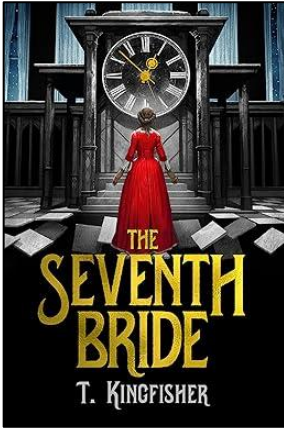
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**The Seventh Bride**  
**by T. Kingfisher**  
 (47North, 2024)  
 a short review by Carl



In the last few years, T. Kingfisher has become one of my favorite Fantasy authors. I've read about a half dozen of her novellas and a number of her short stories. I think she's especially effective when it comes to re-telling or re-formulating folk tales or legends or fairy tales. She often finds hidden aspects to those stories and brings them forward for her readers to consider – and sometimes she even turns once-familiar tropes on their heads

*The Seventh Bride* is a re-telling or reformulation of the horrific legend of Bluebeard, the man who gruesomely and secretly murdered his wives – to which Kingfisher has added her signature blend of unique and often unexpected magical elements.

Rhea, the daughter of a village miller, suddenly finds herself courted by and affianced to the mysterious and powerful Lord Crevan; and there's no way she or her parents can turn down this unexpected "honor." Lord Crevan's remote manor house is magically hidden away from everyone in a dark and dangerous forest; and, during a "get-acquainted visit" to the manor, Rhea learns that Lord Crevan has been married six times previously and that his wives (well, most of them) are still alive (well, sort of). Over the course of the story, Rhea gradually learns the heinous reasons behind Lord Crevan's previous marriages and comes to suspect his gro-

**Minutes of the January 12<sup>th</sup>**  
**LSF Meeting**  
 taken by Scott

**Movie News**

It seems that everyone wants to see the new *Nosferatu* movie. Teresa is excited about the upcoming movie *Thunderbolts*, which will include such MCU characters such as Winter Soldier, Black Widow, and US Agent. She also raved about actor Franko Grillo, who starred in the 2024 movie *Werewolves*: "Check out his abs!"

**TV News**

Teresa loved the final episode of *Star Trek: Lower Decks*. As for Apple TV+'s series *Silo*: Teresa is enjoying it, while Andy is bored. It was noted that the original 2011 books (by American writer Hugh Howey) were well received. Teresa is a noted horror movie

devotee; she enjoyed *Smile 2* (sequel to *Smile*), a violent horror movie; and she also enjoyed *Substance*, the body horror movie.

**Other News**

Teresa cheered for Barnes & Noble, which is re-opening more bookstores. During the discussion of *Nosferatu* and the Dracula legend, Carl mentioned that he preferred the 1872 novella *Carmilla* by Irish author Sheridan Le Fanu (which actually predated Bram Stoker's *Dracula*). As a short preview to this month's LSF Book Discussion (*Saint of Bright Doors* by Vajra Chandrasekera), Andy said loves it and Carl says he has mixed feelings about it.

The meeting concluded with the annual LSF Blind Book(ish) Exchange. For the details, see the chart below.

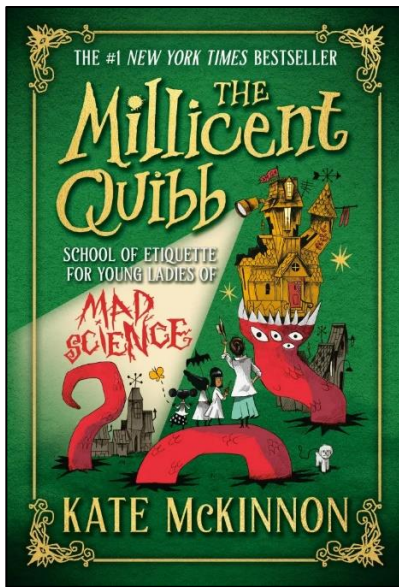
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Title	From	To
<i>Parable of the Sower</i> by Octavia Butler	Scott	Karl
<i>The Left Hand of Darkness</i> by Ursula K. Leguin <i>I, Robot</i> by Isaac Asimov	Karl	Scott
<i>The Rest of Us Live Here</i> by Patrick Ness <i>Inside the Funhouse: 17 Sf Stories About Sf</i>	Derrick	Andy
<i>1177 B.C.: A Graphic History of the Year Civilization Collapsed</i> by Eric H. Cline (Author) and Glynnis Fawkes (Author, Illustrator)	Andy	Teresa
<i>Swords Against Darkness</i> edited by Andrew J. Offutt <i>The Outcast Hours</i> (anthology) <i>Weird Tales: 100 Years of Weird</i> <i>Ex Libris: Stories of Librarians, Libraries, and Lore</i>	Carl	Derrick
<i>The Complete Girls With Slingshots</i> by Danielle Corsetto (collection of the entire webcomic)	Teresa	Carl

tesque plans for her once the marriage has been consummated. I can't go into more details than this, because even brief descriptions of Lord Crevan's magical powers, the condition of his wives, and his plans for Rhea would be major spoilers. You'll just have to read *The Seventh Bride* for yourself. And I assure you that you won't be disappointed (especially if you're fond of cute little hedgehogs).

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**The Millicent Quibb  
School of Etiquette for  
Young Ladies  
of Mad Science**

**by G. Edwina Candlestank  
("as told to Kate McKinnon")**  
(Little, Brown and Company, 2024)  
a short review by Carl

I've quite enjoyed the quirky comedic performances of Kate McKinnon: Holtzman (in the all-female version of *Ghostbusters*); Weird Barbie (in *Barbie*); any number of skits in *Saturday Night Live*; and (believe it or not) Susan Toothbrush in recent commercials for Sonicare toothbrushes. So, as soon as I learned about her first novel – *The Millicent Quibb School of Etiquette for Young Ladies of Mad Science* – I raced out to get a copy. I'm certainly glad I did – I found it as enjoyably quirky as her comedic performances.

The year is 1911. The orphaned Porch sisters – Gertrude, Eugenia, and Dee-Dee – live in the small town of Antiquarium and are the wards of their Uncle Ansel Parquette, their Aunt Desdemona, and Grantie Lettuce (Desdemona's 98-year-old grandmother). Unlike their seven cousins (all named Lavinia), they have no interest in how to wear taffeteen, how to hold their pinky-fingers when drinking a cup of tea, how to sit properly ("the delicate art of not

standing"), and all the other social skills taught at Mrs. Wintermacher's School of Etiquette for Girls. They prefer various scientific pursuits. "Eugenia liked explosions and searching for expensive rocks. Dee-Dee liked building machines. And Gertrude was interested in things like bugs and beetles and what makes the purple feathers on pigeons sparkle and what makes soap bubbles have rainbows in them and where does a newt lay eggs and do cat whiskers feel anything and are guinea pigs related to pigs and how is a chili pepper hot and things like that."

When the Porch sisters are (predictably) expelled from Mrs. Wintermacher's School of Etiquette for Girls, Uncle Ansel and Aunt Desdemona threaten to send them to the grim *Ver-sagenschule* (School for Failures) hidden away deep in the Austrian Alps – unless they are able to get enrolled in another reputable finishing school in town (which is unlikely). Fortunately for the Porch sisters, they unexpectedly receive a gilt-edged invitation to attend "The Marjory Questions\* [sic] School of Etiquette for Young Ladies." So, off they go to a less-than-reputable section of town, where they learn that the school is in reality "The Millicent Quibb School of Etiquette for Young Ladies of Mad Science" and that it is run by the infamous mad (possibly) scientist Millicent Quibb herself. Thus begins the greatest adventure of their young lives. The charismatic (but quirky) Millicent Quibb undertakes their continuing education in the various fields of mad science, such as Unnaturalism, Fryzzics, Whatany, and Animosity. More importantly, she convinces the adventurous Porch sisters to join in her mission to defeat the insidious plot by the Krenetics Association ("a sinister cohort of evil mad scientists") to resurrect their buried (but undead?) leader, wreak havoc in Antiquarium, and (ultimately) take over the world.

Wild adventures ensue – perilous investigations, weird scientific devices, traps and escapes, attacks by weird and dangerous creatures, unexpected enemies revealed – all written in McKinnon's oh-so-quirky style. In addition to the narrative itself, the book includes an amusing map of Antiquarium, a couple



of appendices on various aspects of Mad Science, and a plethora of (need I say) quirky illustrations by Alfredo Cáceres. There are also all sorts of explanatory (and, of course, humorous) footnotes. Here's an example from page vii: "This book has too many footnotes, and I know it. You do not have to read them, but you could if you had time on your hands. Though if you do have time on your hands, I suggest washing it off—it chafes the skin."

Fair warning: Although many of the plot points are resolved, the book ends with an unexpected cliffhanger. We'll just need to wait for the sequel – *Secret of the Purple Pearl* – to be released in September 2025.

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**The Porch Sisters  
(Gertrude, Dee-Dee, & Eugenia)  
illustration by  
Alfredo Cáceres**

**\*\* 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, **February 9th, 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

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](#)

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 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/>

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[ \*\* That's "Happy New Year" in Parseltongue. ]