



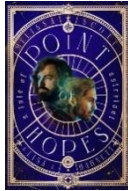
# Lambda Sci-fi

## DC Area Gaylaxians

(202) 232-3141 – Issue # 424 – July 2025

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### Point of Hopes Wins MiPA

info passed along by Peter & Carl

Peter sent me this recent bit of news. On June 28th, *Point of Hopes* won the Annual Midwest Book Award in the category of Fiction—Fantasy/Sci-Fi/Horror/Paranormal.” This novel (the first of the “Points” novels) was written by Melissa Scott and her late partner Lisa Barnett and was originally published in 1995 by Tor.

“Why the time delay?” you ask. I wondered, too, so I did a little research. *Point of Hopes* was recently re-published by Queen of Swords Press, a Minneapolis-based company; and the Midwest Independent Publishers Association created the MiPA Award to “foster community, celebrate quality, and raise the profile of Midwestern independent book publishers.”

For more information about the MiPA Awards, go to: [2025 Winners – Midwest Independent Publishers Association](#)

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Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July  
to all LSFers and  
their friends!!



### 📖 The LSF Book 📖 Discussion Group

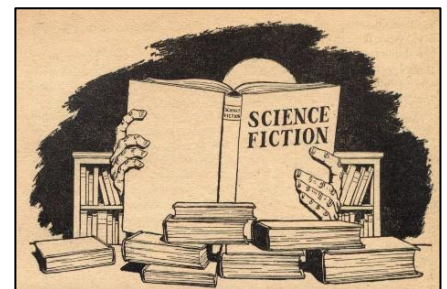
If you're interested in lively discussions of F&SF books (with an emphasis on elements of interest to the LGBT community), we invite you to join the LSF Book Discussion Group. Each month, we conduct fascinating round-table discussions of works by significant F&SF authors.

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 July 24, 2025.

Here are the details for the next couple of discussions:

**July 24** – *The Fifth Season*, by N.K. Jemison (moderator: Zena). ΛΨΦ

**Aug. 28** – TBD.



### \*\*\*\*\* July 13, 2025 Meeting \*\*\*\*\*

The next LSF meeting will be held on **Sunday, July 13th**. 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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Page 3: *Point of Hearts* (book review).

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

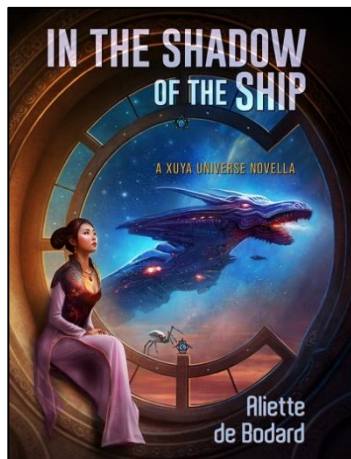
## Two by Aliette de Bodard, Part 2

a short review by Carl

I'm a BIG fan of Aliette de Bodard, particularly of her stories set in the "Xuya Universe." Here's a succinct description I ran across: "a series of novellas and short stories set in a timeline where Asia became dominant, and where the space age has Confucian galactic empires of Vietnamese and Chinese inspiration: scholars administrate planets, and sentient spaceships are part of familial lineages."

Imagine my delight when I unexpectedly ran across *two* of her most recent "space opera" novellas.

Last month, I reviewed *Navigational Entanglements* (which turned out *not* to be a Xuya story); and now on to *In the Shadow of the Ship* (which is *definitely* a Xuya story).



*In the Shadow of the Ship*  
(Subterranean Press, 2024)

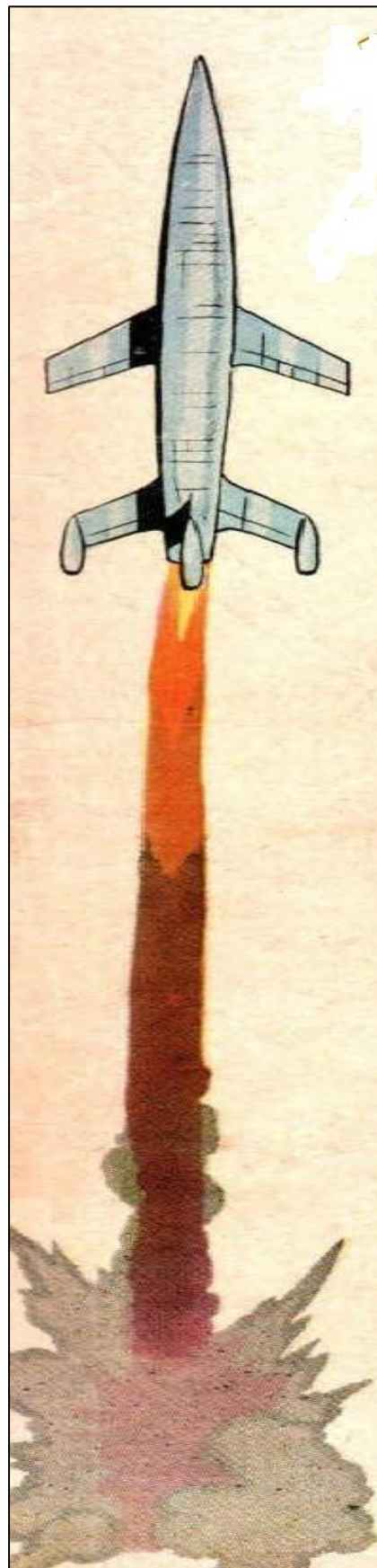
Ages ago, *Nightjar* (a sentient warship and her family's matriarch) fled from an horrifically destructive interstellar war. In addition to her own family, the warship also saved other lost, broken, and grieving refugees by carrying them off into the uncharted interstellar depths. Under *Nightjar*'s guidance, the refugees and their descendants survived to form their own thriving spaceborne culture and eventually to recontact the interstellar empire, where a relative peace had been restored. But there was a secret condition for *Nightjar*'s protection.

As a young girl, Khuyên lived with her family within the *Nightjar* polity. When her childhood friends mysteriously disappeared one by one (with no apparent explanation or consequences), a teen-aged Khuyên abandoned her family and sought refuge within the larger Imperial culture. Her educational and socio-political successes eventually saw her become an imperial magistrate.

Now, when Khuyên receives word of her maternal grandmother's death, familial obligations force her to reluctantly return to her former home aboard the deteriorating *Nightjar*; and Khuyên learns that children are still mysteriously disappearing. Khuyên's beloved Cousin Anh pleads for her help – but then Anh also disappears. Khuyên is determined to investigate the disappearances and, if possible, rescue Cousin Anh. This forces her to do what she couldn't do before: face her family, face the secret reality of *Nightjar*, and face her own hopes and fears for the future.

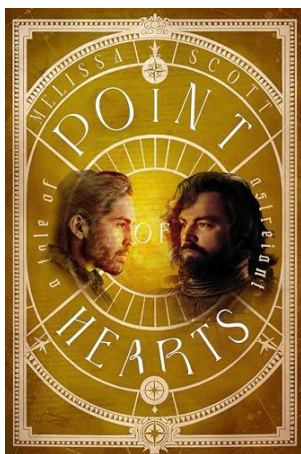
Khuyên is unexpectedly aided in her investigation by a beautiful and mysterious woman named Thảo, who seems to know more than she should about Khuyên and *Nightjar* – and Khuyên begins to contemplate having Thảo play a more intimate role in her future plans. But there's a darker aspect to Khuyên's investigation: a strange and critical voice keeps entering her thoughts – a voice that sounds a lot like *Nightjar*'s. Can Khuyên unravel *Nightjar*'s dark secret? Who is Thảo and how does she seem to know so much about Khuyên and *Nightjar*?

I found *In the Shadow of the Ship* to be another fascinating addition to de Bodard's "Xuya Universe" canon. *Keep 'em comin'*, says I! ΛΨΦ





**Point of Hearts**  
**by Melissa Scott**  
 (Queen of Swords Press, 2025)  
 short review by Carl



Over the past 30 years, I've been a big fan of the "Points" novels by Melissa Scott. In case you're unfamiliar with the series, the first two novels were *Point of Hopes* (1995) and *Point of Dreams* (2001), both co-written with her late partner Lisa A. Barnett. Then came *Point of Knives* (2012), *Fairs' Point* (2014), and *Point of Sighs* (2018). (They were all originally published by Tor.) Now, after almost 10 years, there's a new "Points" novel for me to enjoy: *Point of Hearts*. This newest novel in the series has been published by Queen of Swords Press, which company

has also re-published all the previous novels in the series.

The action of the novel takes place in the royal city of Astreiant, the capital of the Kingdom of Chenedolle. It's a fictional world, where society and technology are roughly equivalent to what existed in the mid-1600s in our world. However, the society of their world isn't a duplicate of the male-dominated, patrilinear late Medieval/early Modern society of our world; women hold a great many high social, mercantile, and political positions – in fact, they might even be "a little more equal" and predominate in many professions. Although it's advertised as a Fantasy novel, there are no unicorns, dragons, or wizards in this Fantasy world; but astrology and astrological magic are a part of the everyday fabric of life in Astreiant. (And one of the previous novels even included a form of "horticultural magic.")

As in the previous novels, the main characters are long-term lovers. Nicolas Rathe is a street-smart Senior Adjunct Point (a member of the civic policing organization) assigned to Point of Dreams (one of the districts of Astreiant). Rathe's leman Philip Eslingen is a Captain in the City Guard, a newly-established unit in Her Majesty's army tasked with maintaining order in the capital.

Strange things are happening in Astreiant, and they're centered around Point of Hearts, Astreiant's pleasure district. Dozens of Chenedolle's troublesome nobility have entered the city – accompanied by their armed retainers – to prepare for the celebration of a young nobleman's wedding to the Queen's heir. Mysterious carts rumble through the nighttime back streets of Point of Hearts, carrying who-knows-what to an unknown destination in the city. Rathe is highly suspicious of the fact that the Hearts nightwatch doesn't seem to have a clue about these carts; and he can't help but believe that some among the Hearts Pointsmen have been bribed to turn a blind eye. Unfortunately, as a Pointsmen assigned to Dreams, he's unable to officially investigate; and Philip and the City Guard are constrained from getting involved in a possible dispute between Hearts and Dreams. In the meantime, civil unrest is on the rise, encouraged by rumors of the return of the mysterious and anti-aristocratic Broadsheet Poet. A playwright friend of Rathe's is wanted by the authorities on charges of adding to the unrest by including anti-aristocratic contents in his latest play. Rathe is injured during a riot when the playwright is cornered in one of the Hearts playhouses; and a Hearts Pointsmen unexpectedly testifies that he saw Rathe incite the riot in an effort to save the playwright.

Now Philip must rely on acquaintances among the Astreiant underworld to keep Rathe safe while he recuperates from his wounds and while Philip tries to unravel an insidious plot against Chenedolle's royal government. (Note: As with many of Melissa Scott's works, there's historical precedent for some of the content of *Point of Hearts*. But I won't go into any of the details, which would include spoilers.)

*Point of Hearts* is another fine addition to the "Points" series, and I quite enjoyed it. I was a bit disturbed that it's listed (in Amazon.com and elsewhere) as "6 of 6" in the series. When I asked Melissa about this at Balticon, she told me that she hasn't totally given up on writing another "Points" novel. (I've got my fingers crossed!)

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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 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, July 13th, 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

July 11-13, 2025 **SHORE LEAVE 45**. A Fan-run Media Science Fiction Convention. Wyndham Lancaster Resort and Convention Center (Lancaster PA). (Note: hotel room block already sold out – check special rates at nearby hotels.) Guests include: Scott Grimes (*The Orville*); Adrienne Palicki (*The Orville*); Ethan Peck (*Star Trek: SNW*); Kathy Coleman & Wesley Eure (*Land of the Lost*); Michael Rooker (*Guardians of the Galaxy*). Weekend membership: \$125 until 6/15 (on-line registration); after that, only registration at the door for a higher price. Website: [www.shore-leave.com](http://www.shore-leave.com)

August 7-10, 2025 **PULPFEST 2025**. "Celebrating pulp magazines and related materials, vintage paperbacks, digests, men's adventure and true crime magazines, contemporary genre fiction, first-edition hardcovers, series books, dime novels, original art, Big Little Books, Gold/Silver/Bronze age comic books, old time radio shows, gaming materials, film serials, B-movies, and related collectibles." DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Pittsburgh-Cranberry (Mars PA). Weekend membership = \$40 for members staying at the DoubleTree (otherwise = \$50). Webpage: <https://pulpfest.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 \$250 (will go up). For more information & on-line registration: <https://seattlein2025.org>

September 19-21, 2025 **CAPCLAVE 2025**. Rockville Hilton & Executive Meeting Center (Rockville MD). Guests of Honor: Joe Haldeman, Gay Haldeman, Naomi Kritzer. Weekend membership: \$65 (on-line registration). Website: [www.capclave.org](http://www.capclave.org)

October 3-5, 2025 **GAYLAXICON 2025**. Crowne Plaza Suites AiRE MSP Airport - Mall of America (Bloomington MN). More details as they become available. [Home - Gaylaxicon 2025](http://Home-Gaylaxicon2025)

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/>

### The Color Purple info passed along by Carl

I ran across an interesting on-line article the other day. It seems that the human eye doesn't *really* see the color purple. Think back to the mnemonic we learned about the colors of the visual spectrum: ROYGBIV (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet); there's no color "purple" on the visual spectrum. (And, no, "violet" is not the same as "purple.")

When we "see" purple, it's actually a combination of the red and

blue wavelengths. But red and blue are at opposite ends of the visible spectrum, and it's supposedly not possible to create a color from wavelengths on opposite ends of the spectrum – combining "red" (from the "long" wavelength end of the spectrum) and "violet" (from the "short" wavelength end of the spectrum). The "long wavelength" cones in your eyes absorb the reddish end of the spectrum; and the "short wavelength" cones in your eyes absorb the violet end of the spectrum – and they send the electrical signals to your brain. When presented

with something "purple," the human brain apparently performs some neuro-scientific gymnastics and "bends" the linear spectrum into a circle, making the two spectral extremes meet at "purple." It's the brain's way of resolving confusion.

You can check out the science at: [Purple exists only in our brains](https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.1258888) ΛΨΦ

