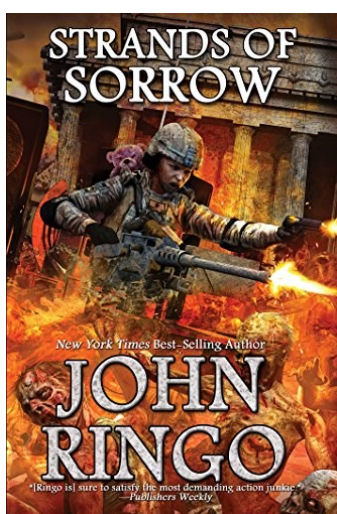


to point that out to us. I do not know what a 'slow burn Reverse Harem' is, and my 'Freakishly Aversive Reaction To Reading Even Soft Porn' warning light started flashing when I came across the word 'harem.' As I disclosed in the review, I skipped a LOT of the last half of the book, but from what I DID read, it's obvious that there is some magically-induced non-consensual sex action I missed, for which I am grateful. I accept that it is a rule of certain genres that there MUST be incorporated some explicit sex, and that bedroom doors are a fiction. This will likely garner votes for this book, as it has garnered cash for the author.

Peace be on your household.

## Review: Black Tide Rising

### Review by Cedar Sanderson



I've been reading John Ringo's tales for well over a decade now, and I always look forward to them... except I wasn't sure about this series. Although I've written a bit about zombies, most of what I have seen or read was, well, more humorous than anything. Human physiology just doesn't work that way.

But this is Ringo. So I tried it out, and was sold. His usual fare: fast-paced storytelling, well-developed characters, real-feeling world. As a long-time fan, I was amused by the number of people I 'know' in the books, other fans who were redshirted or tuckerized into the books. But above that, it reminded me of something I had been unconsciously missing in my recent reading.

I've been reading a lot of newbie authors (and one aspiring to lit-ew-ary status), and while with them I have to work to stay in the story, reading *Islands of Rage and Hope* was an immersive process. I didn't read it all in one sitting – physically impossible with my schedule – but I will go back and re-read it. Which is rare for me, these days. He does a superb job of making the reading easy. I'm still trying to analyze what it is, and why it works for me.

It might not work for everyone. If you prefer things like the literary tome I'm struggling with, you probably won't appreciate the taut plotting of Ringo's work. I like to have forward momentum, rather than pages droning on about the moles on a demon's back (yes, really... no, I'm not giving the name of the other book). But if you enjoy character development, rather than navel gazing, this book (which wouldn't stand alone, you do need to start with *Under a Graveyard Sky*) is an excellent example, as we have two young women finally coming of age, and to grips with their new role in a new world.

I'm looking forward to the next one already.



← Battling  
Art by Angela K Scott

Anime Girl →  
Art by Angela K Scott



## Short Fiction

### Reviews by Greg Hullender and Eric Wong

Greg Hullender and Eric Wong publish vast numbers of reviews of short fiction. All their reviews may be seen at Rocket Stack Rank <http://www.rocketstackrank.com>

*How Sere Looked for a Pair of Boots*, by Alexander Jablokov

Cover illustration by Michael Whelan

[Asimov's]

4-Star: Intricate Plot in a Complex Setting

Sere takes a case for her niece, who's sure her boyfriend was wrongly imprisoned for violating security at an alien incubator. (21,887 words; Time: 1h:12m)

Although this follows the previous story, "How Sere Picked up her Laundry," there's no strong need to read that story before this one.

"How Sere Looked for a Pair of Boots," by Alexander Jablokov [bio] (edited by Sheila Williams), appeared in Asimov's Science Fiction issue 01-02|19, published on December 15, 2018 by Penny Publications.

Pro: Most of the fun of the story is the exotic locale and the complex plot that brings together so many different characters from different parts of the city. There are plenty of laughs too, including the running joke of Sere carrying those old Bik eyeballs everywhere.

By the end, Sere has figured out everything that was actually going on, rescued Dothaniel, and finally put her relationship with Lemuel behind her.

Con: There's so much to the background that its confusing, and at the end of it all, Sere really hasn't got much out of it personally.

*The Book of Magic*, edited by Gardner Dozois

Cover illustration by Stephen Youll

[Anthology]

Four-Star: A Magical Experience

The Magic Goes Away

Gardner Dozois might be best known for his annual Year's Best Science Fiction anthologies, or possibly for his tenure as editor of Asimov's Magazine of Science Fiction, but he also produced excellent original anthologies, both by himself and with collaborators like George R.R. Martin. He passed away on May 27 of this year, so this volume will be his last. He will be sorely missed by everyone who loves short science fiction.

Gardner Dozois's last original anthology explores all types of magic in all sorts of settings. (175,649 words)

"The Book of Magic," edited by Gardner Dozois, published on October 16, 2018 by Bantam Books.

The Whole World of Magic

The stated goal of the anthology is to cover the whole world of magic, and it definitely delivers. We have High Fantasy, Historical Fantasy, Alternate History Fantasy, Folktales, Modern Fantasy, and Fantasy Thrillers, and every one of them has a focus on magic and magic users.

In an anthology of this size (sixteen original stories), average would be to recommend three stories (4 or 5 stars) and to recommend against three stories (1 or 2 stars). We do recommend against three, but we recommend six, which is double the expected number, so this is a magical anthology indeed.

#### Recommended

**The Friends of Masquelayne the Incomparable**, by Matthew Hughes, introduces us to an evil magician who can't accept the fact that someone he never heard of before beat him in a competition.

**The Governor**, by Tim Powers, tells the story of a secret family of wizards who live in Los Angeles, and what happens to them when their patriarch dies and everyone scrambles to try to take advantage before he can figure out how to resurrect himself.

**The Staff in the Stone**, by Garth Nix, features a very brave man trying to protect three villages from a magical risk only he can see, but it's not at all clear that he has the strength to survive it.

In **The Fall and Rise of the House of the Wizard Malkuril**, by Scott Lynch, a very powerful wizard dies, and his house AI attempts to take his place.

#### Specially Recommended

**The Wolf and the Manticore**, by Greg van Eekhout, tells an unlikely love story set in a world where Northern and Southern California are separate kingdoms that fight each other with magic that's almost as bad as nuclear weapons.

**Bloom**, by Kate Elliott, takes us to a fascinating alternate Europe where a traditional-minded middle-aged magician tries to help his house survive by recruiting young magicians with the help of a very nontraditional young woman.

#### A Bonus

We did not review, "**A Night at the Tarn House**," by George R.R. Martin, because it's a reprint of a 2009 story, but it's an excellent tale and would have easily been 4 stars if it were original to this volume.

#### **Flint and Mirror**, by John Crowley

Cover illustration by Stephen Youll

[Anthology]

Three-Star: Average

(Historical Fantasy) Ten-year-old Hugh O'Neill leaves Ireland for England to get support to overthrow his usurping uncle, but the Sidhe have a parting gift for him. (11,495 words)

The story begins around 1560, when Hugh O'Neill was ten years old. It will help to read a bit of Hugh's history in our world before reading this story, although it's not essential.

"Flint and Mirror," by John Crowley (edited by Gardner Dozois), appeared in *The Book of Magic* (RSR review), published on October 16, 2018 by Bantam Books.

Pro: It's a nice tale of 16th-Century Ireland. Hugh is in a difficult position, as the conflicting magical elements symbolize.

Con: It just ends without resolving anything. Is Hugh's fate going to be same as it was in our world, or will he become a king who unifies Ireland? We'll never know.

*The Lady of Butterflies*, by Y.M. Pang  
 Cover illustration by Alan M. Clark  
 [F&SF]  
 Four-Star: Captivating

(High Fantasy) A beautiful northern lady appears mysteriously in a southern Emperor's garden, and Lady Rikara takes care of her while trying to learn who she is and how she got there. (8,952 words)

"The Lady of Butterflies," by Y.M. Pang [bio] (edited by C.C. Finlay), appeared in The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction issue 11-12|18, published on October 27, 2018 by Spilogale Inc.

Pro: There's something about this story that just sucked me into it. Lady Rikara's attempts to figure out who Lady Morieth was and how she got there quickly turn into her simply wanting to know Lady Morieth better, but in the process we learn all about the various palace intrigues and many of the southern customs, such as what it means for a Sword to wear red. In the process, all the later events are nicely foreshadowed.

Morieth's memory of her brother trying to strangle her makes us very apprehensive when we learn the emperor will receive a delegation from Jillenes and that she'll attend that. The full story, that she really is a lady of butterflies, makes complete sense.

The resolution, Rikara finding Morieth alone in the forest, unable to remember her, is sad but it completes the story in a satisfying way, albeit not a happy one.

Con: We never find out how she ended up like this. Did she really replace a human child?

## SerCon

### Dragons and Hugos

#### Discussion from Bob Jennings

The times they are a changing, and it seems to me that as more and more of the old guard who came into fandom in the 50s, 60s, 70s die off or go completely FAFIA, that the traditional Hugos will continue to have less relevance for the newer generation of fans.

The sniping and complaints ongoing for a few years now about how the fanzine category doesn't really represent fanzines, or how the fan art category should not have been allowed to expand to jewelry or statues offered for sale over the internet, or how easy it was to vote-pack the Hugos, are just examples of how muddled up things have become.

And here's the other side of the coin, most of the younger fans who came to the literature/video/games/podcasts from the mid 1980s onward don't particularly give a damn either. They will vote for the Dragon Awards, but most don't vote for the Hugos. The fact that Hugo ballots only go out to people who have purchased some kind of membership in the WorldCon is a deterrent because the memberships at any level are expensive.

Toward that end I really welcome the policy the recent WorldCons have initiated of providing e-book downloads of every single print story nominated for a Hugo, from novel thru short story, for free to anybody who buys any kind of WorldCon membership, including non-attending supporting memberships. That perk alone is worth the current price of a supporting membership, and I would expect to see this option used by a lot more fans in the next few years, especially for people who can't afford to travel to far distant parts of the planet to attend an upcoming WorldCon event.



That would certainly include me. These days the Hugo nominations come from such a wide variety of different publishers and magazines that it is almost impossible to have encountered them all, let alone purchased the flood of novels, anthologies, and mags (some print, some pixel format only) where all those novelettes and short stories were originally published.

Meanwhile, DragonCon continues to operate as a strictly profit making enterprise, and they are succeeding by providing the new generation of fans what they want. The fossil generation of fandom deplors the emphasis on media, or flashy fluff, or video, or games, or personalities, or TV/Hollywood hype, but and yet again, the newer generation of fans don't care. This is what they like, this is what they expect in a convention, this is the kind of convention they are willing to attend, and those DragonCon Awards are the kind of award recognition that they are willing to support and vote for.

Like it or not, this is a clear indication of where the fields of the fantastic are going in this new century. What was the name of that story? "Adapt Or Die!" It's something to think about anyway.

## Food of Famous Authors

### Torgersens' Poor Boy Beef Soup

Recipes and Photographs by Cedar Sanderson and Brad Torgerson



I've enjoyed Brad's work for some time now, before I'd read his fiction. His puckish sense of humor and reasoned approach to the world, I discovered, hold true in his fictional works as well as his blog. I highly recommend The Chaplain's War for science fiction with that rare element, faith. But the book you really ought to pick up and read with this meal is Racers of the Night, a collection of his short stories. Why? Well, for one thing, it's the one Brad asked me to feature. Secondly, this is the rare recipe for beef stew that doesn't take all day to create, you can have this one on the table in less than an hour.

Beef stew is a staple at our house, during the cold months, and even sometimes on a rainy day in summer. For us, as I am sure for you, it's constantly changing. I don't go and shop for special ingredients: I use what I have on hand. If that means the veg changes from pot to pot, then it just keeps the meal interesting. I tackled this pot of stew with that in mind, and made a few changes. I've been asking my author acquaintances and friends simply for the name of a dish, and most generously take the time to give me a recipe, Brad was no exception. He started out by telling me this is an old family recipe...

### Torgersens' Poor Boy Beef Soup

Beef stew recipe

Beef Soup ala Torgerson

#### Ingredients:

- Beef stew starter packet (1 for small batch, 2 for large)
- Lean ground beef (1.5 lbs for small batch, 3 lbs for large)



Frozen mixed veggies (small bag, or large bag)  
 Onion (yellow or white, small or large)  
 Beef bullion cube (1 or 2)  
 Potatoes (3 to 5 small, or 2 to 3 large russet)  
 Ordinary table salt and table pepper  
 Extras if you feel like it:  
 Red, yellow, or green bell peppers  
 Whole carrots

Directions:

- 1 – Dice or julienne onion into a bowl.
- 2 – Wash potatoes, dice; with skins left on.
- 3 – Dice or slice extras into bowls.
- 4 – Brown & turn the ground beef; rinse off fat in hot water.
- 5 – Throw browned ground beef into large cook pot.
- 6 – Throw diced potatoes on top of the beef.
- 7 – Throw frozen mixed veggies on top of potatoes.
- 8 – Throw on onions and extras.
- 9 – Pour in tap water until contents adequately submerged.
- 10 – Slowly stir in beef stew packet(s).
- 11 – Ensure contents are well-mixed and homogeneous.
- 12 – Bring soup to a boil on stove top.
- 13 – Set simmering for 30 minutes.
- 14 – Salt and pepper to taste; add bullion if you want.
- 15 – Simmer for additional 30 minutes.
- 16 – Turn off burner; let cool for 20 minutes.
- 17 – SERVE! Ideally suited to a side of french bread, sliced, with butter. Multi-grain also works well.

Stew and biscuits

Cedar's Notes: I realized about the time I started cooking that I hadn't picked up potatoes (we don't eat them often) but I did have a nice large parsnip, so I did a straight substitution. I also used up some ground beef, rather than stew beef. I had to ask my First Reader what a beef stew packet was, I'd never heard of it. Seems they are a handy way to thicken the stew, the main ingredient on the packet I got was cornstarch, followed by brown sugar.

I prepared this on the stovetop, my slowcooker hasn't got a 'high' setting. I did sauté the onions and add some garlic to the recipe, as we're fond of it.



Sautéing onions and garlic releases a lot of flavor for the meal. I do think that the French Bread would be a nice accompaniment for this meal, but I started too late in the day for proper rising and baking. So I had this recipe I wanted to try, and it seemed to be a good pairing for this meal. The First Reader took one look at what I'd made and informed me I'd re-invented cheese biscuits. In cooking, as in fiction, there are no original ideas, only new twists on old plots.

Cheese Biscuits

4 oz shredded or powdered Parmesan Cheese



4 oz finely shredded cheddar  
 1 c flour  
 1 egg  
 1 c milk  
 1/2 c oil  
 1/4 tsp baking powder  
 1 tsp salt

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Whisk together the wet ingredients, then fold in the cheese. Slowly whisk in the flour. Spoon into mini muffin tin, makes about 24. Bake for about 10 min, until tops bounce back when pressed. They are very rich and dense.

### Toni Weiskopf's Christmas Buckeyes Recipe and Photographs from Cedar Sanderson and Toni Weiskopf

Now, those of you who know Toni Weiskopf are wondering why she was included in this series. She is not commonly known as an author. Because I could, that's why. As a reader, Baen Publishing has been pretty important to my book habit for 15 years and going strong. I think that Toni, as the Head Honcho over there, should absolutely be included in this. That, and I like her, she's a nice lady, and one I look up to with a lot of respect. So I asked her for a recipe. And she gave me one.

Right there, I looked at it, and said 'Oh, Toni, no...'

Just looking at it went right to my hips. I knew that with only two of us in the house, and me trying to lose weight... well, I figured there was a book, a treadmill, and some walking in my future to burn this off. But then I had another idea... More on that after the recipe.

#### Christmas Buckeyes

Makes 180 balls, give or take.

Insides:

- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 pound butter, softened
- 2 pounds creamy pb—use Skippy
- 3 pounds powdered sugar

Mix above ingredients thoroughly until mixture is uniform.

Can use a heavy duty mixer, but dough will be very stiff, so probably will need to end with hands. It will take a while. Roll into small balls, about cocktail meatball size, and place on wax or parchment paper to await dipping.



Very stiff filling. I didn't do much hand-work to it, trying to preserve the 'fluffy' texture.

Usually at this point there's a break in the action, and I recommend a book to you for reading while you wait on a timer to go off. That's not going to happen this time, you'll have your hands full all the way through this recipe. But wait! There is an option, Baen is not just for paper and e-books. There are some award-winning audiobooks availa-

ble from them. Perfect for whiling away time during the rolling of many, many, many little peanut butter balls.

A small army of peanut butter balls. Which would be tasty at this stage. But the chocolate completes them.

Dip in:

12 oz. Nestles semi-sweet chocolate chips + 1/2 bar paraffin (yes, this is just wax—you'll find it in stores that have canning supplies or larger grocery stores)

\* or \*

a couple of packages of chocolate bark (option I've used in the past few years and nobody seems to object; found in baking section of store)

Over a double boiler, melt chocolate. (My double boiler is a regular pot with a metal mixing bowl plopped over it.) Once water is boiling, lower heat so a gentle steam is maintained so chocolate stays melted while you are dipping.



They do resemble the nuts of the Horse Chestnut tree. Only more edible.

Taking a wooden toothpick (plastic ones okay, but buckeyes slip off more easily on them), inserted about 1/3 to 1/2 way into the ball, dip into chocolate and swirl around, coating most of the ball, but leaving the top open. (Hence "buckeye": they look like chestnuts called "buckeyes." Ohio is the "Buckeye" State, btw, which is why Ohio State's football team is nicknamed "Buckeyes." Who says cookbooks aren't educational?) Place on waxed cookie sheet. Let sit until chocolate is set. Store in tightly

covered container. Will last weeks. If you don't eat them. Can be frozen.

Cedar here again. The recipe came out delightfully, as I expected it to. I cut the recipe in half, and made 75 buckeyes. The First Reader sampled one, declared that they taste like buckeyes, to my relief since I'd never made them before. I tasted one, liked it a lot, and then we packed the rest of them up. Most of them went with me to classes on a Monday (my long day). College students, as I anticipated, love your recipe, Toni! Lots of compliments, and wonderings of 'will Cedar bring snacks again?' which was funny. No, probably not. But it was a great way to make sure they didn't go to waist. Mine, that is.

Maybe I should make up little cards with the link to the Baen Free Library on them to give out with the snacks... food and free books. Hook 'em in good! For more book recommendations and recipes, check out the Eat This While You Read That! index page.

buckeyes



A plateful of bon-bons (well, sort of) and books to read. Heaven!

Last Page Image  
Courtesy Bob Jennings

Once upon a time, the image on the next page would have been science fiction.



Once upon a time,  
this cover would have been science fiction.  
(cover courtesy Bob Jennings)

