

PROBE

197



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Editorial

Gail

I had a mail from Donald Mullany in Finland, who asked, among other things, where I saw SFFSA in twenty years and myself in the mix.

Well, first off, I hope I will not be pushing up daisies, but on a more serious note it is something I have been thinking about. As far as PROBE goes, this is issue 197 and I would definitely like to get to issue 200. Having said that, I am finding that having added an e-copy we are reaching far more people around the world than we did before. More about these contacts a bit later.



As to SFFSA it seems that the club continues on. We continue to have really interesting talks, Zoom or live, and have good attendance for our monthly meetings.

Last month we had Prof James Sey talking on AI with particular reference to the film Bladerunner and the replicants and their relationship with Dekker in particular. With lots of film clips it was a very entertaining talk. This month we had our long time member and supporter, Arthur Goldstuck, talking on “AI is for Everyone”. A real eye opener as I think a lot of us had not realised for how long AI has been developing and how the wave has suddenly burst on the scene as a tool that can be used to increase our productivity. And from Arthur’s point of view a much more positive outlook on the future. An interesting point that came up in discussion was that we need to consider the difference between sentience and what is basically access to all of the information that is available to us on the Internet and the ability to be able to decide what “human intelligence” really is and what is not. We all went away with lots to think about.

It’s been a real time of contact with other groups and people around the world as well. Carla Martins got a mail from a Chinese Editor. He goes by the name of RiverFlow, and is chief editor of “Zero Gravity News”, a Chinese sci-fi fanzine, shortlisted for this year's Hugo Awards, and says he am planning a special topic on world science fiction culture (that is, translating articles on the history and status quo of foreign science fiction into

He asked us for a “blessing” which we sent to him.

He also reminded us that the 81st Science Fiction WorldCon is in Chengdu, China



They extended an invitation to us to join the WorldCon and we really hope some local fans are able to attend.

Some members of SFFSA, myself included were lucky enough to attend Nippon 2007 which took place in Yokohama, Japan. That was an amazing experience and I expect that this Chinese Worldcon will introduce fans to another dimension of Speculative Fiction. I somehow don't think I'll get to another Worldcon, but this one should be very different.

Our Chinese contact put me in contact with Dairus Hupov who is working on a series of interviews with SFF people around the world. I did an interview with him and it has been published in the online Romanian SFF magazine galaxia42.ro, which publishes in English and Romanian. You can find the interview, in English at the following link

<https://galaxia42.ro/english/non-fiction/sff-panorama/sff-panorama-republic-of-south-africa-16387.html>

I also received a mail from Phil Stephenson-Payne, from the UK. He hosts and edits the Fictionmags Index Family - <http://www.philsp.com/indexes.html> - and has (fairly) recently extended it to include books as well. He has now been looking at "Best of" anthologies - <http://www.philsp.com/homeville/FMI/f00/f00005.htm> et seq.

I was able to help him with this information and our 4 collections will be added to the index.

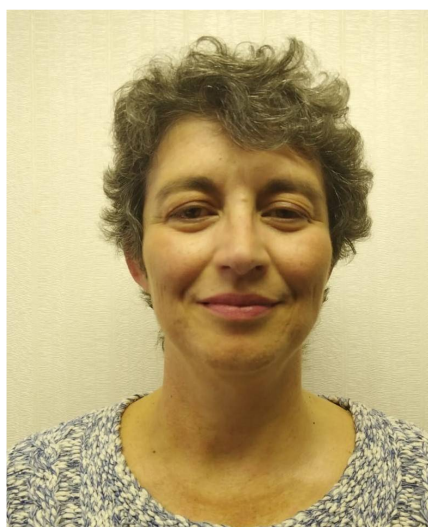
So SFFSA is becoming available to fans in other parts of the world. Not only what is happening now but historical information as well.

And he is also looking at possibly indexing all of PROBE and its covers. This is great for SFFSA. I don't always think we realise fully what is happening in the world of SF&F, tucked away here as we are down on the southern tip of Africa

Chairperson's Note

As I am composing this note on 4 September 2023, we are heading into spring in the southern hemisphere. The northern hemisphere will be heading into autumn and various countries will be celebrating either Halloween/All Hallows' Eve/Samhain on 31 October 2023.

This led me to thinking about the relationship between horror and science



Fiction/fantasy. There has always been a mash up of horror and science fiction since Mary Shelley's Frankenstein – some view it a horror novel and others proclaim it as the first science fiction novel. It is both of course – it seamlessly melds the two genres together. Horror is fascinating because it can combine with any genre so to speak – comedy, zombie movies, science fiction etc. The same can be said for the many movies which are too many to mention but for me the great examples are John Carpenter's The Thing, Ridley Scott's Alien and both versions of The Invasion of the Body Snatchers. Other notable examples which are more current are Jordan Peele's Get Out, Nope and Us, which are all fantastic movies melding horror with science fiction/fantasy. Also let's not forget the creature features – werewolves and the various irradiated creatures that terrorised the public.

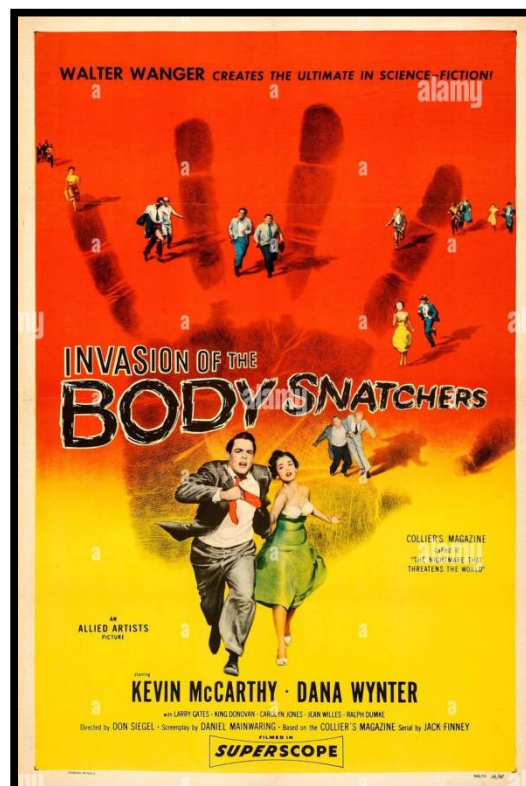
For the written word there are the too numerous novels of Stephen King to mention! Of course, there are Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, Robert Louis Stevenson's Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, Max Brooks' World War Z, Richard Matheson's I Am Legend and Stephen King's Cell.

I am very envious of the countries that have the culture of celebrating Halloween/All Hallows' Eve/Samhain – I love the atmosphere of the mysterious, supernatural and horror that is prevalent during the celebration. Of course, it would not be Halloween without the costumes and the sweets!

To all celebrating it, I wish you a wonderful and fun time!

Till next time

Carla



Magazines Received

Stapledon Sphere (formerly the newsletter of the Middle Tennessee Science Fiction Society [aka the Nashville SF club])

Reece Moorhead reecejbm@gmail.com

Issue #73 June 2023

Issue #74 July 2023

Issue #75 August 2023

Ansible David Langford

March 2023 430 <http://news.ansible.uk/a430.html>

April 2023 431 <http://news.ansible.uk/a431.html>

May 2023 432 <http://news.ansible.uk/a432.html>

Books Received

JonathanBall

Jennifer Saint Atlanta Headline R355.00

Rebecca Yaros Fourth Wing Little Brown R380.00

Shannon Chakraborty The Adventures of Amina Al Sirafi Harper Collins UK.
R360.00

Mark Lawrence The Book That Wouldn't Burn Harper Collins UK R380.00

Shameez Patel Papathanasiou The Eternal Shadow Simon & Schuster US
R370.00

From the authors

Michael J. Lee Robo Rage day of the machines **MYEBOOK**

Michael J. Lee and Bruce Matthew Chrysalis **MYEBOOK**

NOVA 2022 Finalist Gary Kuyper

A TRUE CLAIRVOYANT

“Are you a true clairvoyant?” asked King Rufus.

Meg calmly answered, “If I said, ‘Yes,’ you would want me to prove it.”

“Very...astute of you, hag!”

“I have baked a black-treacle pudding in honour of your visit to my humble cottage in the woods by the lake.”

“What?”

“It’s your favourite sweetmeat. I would have purchased some mead to help wash it down, but my resources are limited.”

“Ah, but I am also of a mind to believe that a true clairvoyant would be swamped in coin.”

“You are mistaken if you think people pay great amounts to have their fortunes told?”

“They would...if you were true to your claim. That is why I aim to rid my land of charlatans; I consider them dangerous.”

“Aye, so much so that instead of banishment you prefer beheadings.”

“So, word of my...cleansing has reached your humble hovel in the forest near the lake. If you were wise you would have fled to the mountains and caves.”

“I would have...if I had considered my life to be in jeopardy.”

“Ah, so you wish to prove yourself true to your...profession?”

“Tell me, King Rufus of Astonia, why do you consider a fake fortune teller to be dangerous?”

“You tickle the ears of your clients, your duped victims, with tales of fame and fortune. You give them false hopes and dreams. You take payment for a babble of lies. You are no better than a common thief.”

“And you are a liar.”

Her words, although spoken calmly, created uproar.

“*What?* How dare you? I will have you...”

Meg interrupted the king’s tirade. “What you are doing is not to rid the land of false fortune tellers – it is your hope that such action will ferret out a true clairvoyant. Do you deny it?”

“I...you...you are very shrewd,” spluttered King Rufus. “But it will help you naught if you fail to...”

“You wish to know if an invasion of Sylkain will end in victory for Astonia.”

The king narrowed his eyes at Meg. “You’re good. You’re either the genuine article or...very smart.”

“I tickle the ears of my clients with hopes of fame and good fortune because if I told them the whole truth they would be reluctant to use my services. Nobody goes to a

fortune teller to hear bad news. No-one wants to hear that taxes are to be increased, and that any family not meeting the exorbitant demand will see their land and possessions confiscated by the crown, and their sons added to the growing Astonia military. I tell them only that which is pleasing.”

“Then you admit that you are a fake?”

“I admit that the truth I know is too hard for some to hear. Would you like some pudding?”

“It’ll take more than a pudding to convince me that you’re...authentic.”

“Very well. King Gustav of Sylkain, having heard rumours of an invasion, will send a party to negotiate a peace treaty with you. As an act of faith and trust on his part, the group of ambassadors will include his daughter, and only child, Princess Gwendolyn.”

“I have no interest in making peace with Gustav.”

“But you will.”

“That is a blatant lie.”

“Your military advisors will encourage you to do so. They’ll see it as an opportunity to give Sylkain a false sense of security prior to Astonia’s invasion.”

“I see. Aye, that does make sense.” He smiled broadly. “That makes very good sense indeed. And when will this meeting take place?”

“Within a month.”

“Excellent! If what you have told me comes to pass, I will consider you a true clairvoyant and bring much gold – if not I shall, instead, be taking your head.”

Meg sighed. “You will do neither. Still, I shall see you shortly after your meeting with the delegation from Sylkain. Oh, and you’ll be bringing your son along.”

#

“I am convinced that you’re a true clairvoyant,” said King Rufus rudely pushing past Meg and entering the small cottage. “Come, hag, we have business to discuss.” Prince Maximus grinned sheepishly. “I apologise for my father’s behaviour. The king is rather bombastic when it comes to dealing with...common folk. In fact, he has much the same attitude towards most others.”

“Then you must surely tire of expressing regret for your father’s actions?”

“Aye, tis a tedious pastime, but I hope I never do.”

“You are young, but wise.”

“Apparently not wise enough. My father has brought me along...to educate me.”

“Aye, in the ways of war and deception.”

“How so?”

“Please, enter my humble cottage. All will shortly be made clear.”

“Thank you, madam,” he said and walked inside.

Meg glanced at the military entourage that had escorted the royal party. “Cattle for the battle,” she mumbled under her breath before moving to join the king and his son.

“You know why I’m here, hag,” said King Rufus filling his mouth with black-treacle pudding. “I brought my son along as witness.”

“As I said you would.”

“Uh...why, yes, so you did. I had near-forgotten that.”

“That is why I set two bowls.”

“Damn, you truly are remarkable.” He turned to his son. “Sit down, boy. Have some pudding - it’s very good.”

“I’m not hungry, father.”

“Sit! Eat!” commanded the king.

Prince Maximus sat and ate.

“Don’t worry,” said Meg. “I didn’t put poison in it.”

For a long moment King Rufus sat with his mouth full and agape before blurting, “By Tonak’s red hairy beard, I hadn’t thought of that! Ah, well, too late now.” He swallowed, laughed nervously and said, “Well? Let’s hear it? Out with it, hag?”

“Perhaps you should first explain to your son the purpose of your visit here.”

“Aye, you’re right. Maximus, this woman is what you would call *a true clairvoyant*. She has proved herself genuine beyond a shadow of doubt.” He pointed a sticky spoon at Meg. “Hag, tell my son something that will convince him too.”

Meg grinned wryly at Maximus. “You think Princess Gwendolyn the fairest of all women; and you found her mind to be equally attractive.”

“What?” blurted the king almost choking.

“That is not clairvoyance,” said the prince hastily. “That is...revealing another’s thoughts.”

Meg informed, “Ah, but one can discern another’s present thoughts by knowing the future.”

“Is this true, Maximus?” demanded the king.

“Aye, I was somewhat taken by her beauty and...”

The king spat, “Well, let not your boyish infatuation interfere with my plans.”

“Plans?” frowned the prince.

“I intend to invade Sylkain. If all goes well, I will grant you Gwendolyn as part of the spoils of war. I’m sure you would appreciate that.”

“Invade Sylkain? You recently negotiated a peace treaty with them!”

“That is why I brought you along. You need to have this naïve outlook on life thoroughly squeezed from your green body.”

“What?”

“It’s time you became a man. It’s time for you to realise that you can’t trust anyone.”

“Just because there are untrustworthy people in the world does not give *you* the right to be deceptive too. A king, above all, should be true to his word!”

“Don’t be a fool! There are only two groups of people in this world. Those who step on others, and the downtrodden - to which group do you wish to belong?”

“I...”

“Silence!” interrupted the king. “I did not come here to debate the morality of my decisions.”

“But you...”

“Hold your tongue.” The king turned to Meg. “Tell me what I wish to hear?”

“Very well, my liege. Here is the truth: If you send an army to invade Sylkain, Astonia will meet with a devastating defeat.”

“What? That is definitely not what I was hoping to hear!”

“However...” She paused momentarily. “However, if you, King Rufus, lead your army into battle, Astonia will be guaranteed a wondrous victory and future.”

“Ah, yes, that is far more to my fancy. I like it! So, you’re implying that my presence on the battlefield will rally my men to an undeniable victory?”

“Your presence on the battlefield will see two kingdoms united under a single banner – Astonia’s.”

“Splendid! How glorious that my august presence should be the very cause for success.”

“No, father!” protested the prince. “It is wrong! I’ll have none of it.”

“Then you shall also have none of the spoils.”

“I’d prefer to have Gwendolyn give herself willingly to me.”

“So be it! Suck your mother’s teat behind the safety of the castle walls while real men go to prove themselves worthy of glory.”

“How can there be any glory in deception?”

“Hold your tongue, you mewling milksop!”

“This is absurd, father! This woman could be lying? She could be sending you and your army to certain destruction!”

Meg appeared hurt. “I swear that what I have said is true – every word!”

“I believe her,” said the king. “It makes perfect sense.” There was a moment of deliberation before he added, “But if it should prove otherwise, I would expect you to do that which is noble and fitting.”

The prince frowned. “Noble and fitting?”

“Make sure that this woman never tells another lie...ever!”

“What?”

“If I should die on the battlefield you must promise me that you will take this woman’s head.”

“I...I...”

“It’s alright, Prince Maximus,” said Meg. “Make your oath and please your father. There will be no need to end me – I have spoken true.”

“Go on!” said the king. “Swear it now before me!”

“Very well! I, Crown Prince Maximus, heir to the Astonia throne, do solemnly swear that if this woman has been untruthful here today that I shall certainly take her life.”

Meg winked at the prince. “Well said, my prince. That wasn’t too difficult...now was it?”

“Good!” exclaimed the king. “Now let’s be off. I have serious plans to make with my military advisors. Unlike my spineless son, they will consider this news most welcome.”

As they were returning on horseback to the castle, the king moved his mount next to the prince’s.

“Maximus, you must realise that I can’t risk someone like her falling into the hands of our enemies.”

“What are you implying?”

“Isn’t it obvious? After I return victorious from the battlefield, I will have her burned as a witch.”

“Is there no end to your deceptive nature?” Prince Maximus was about to add, ‘If she is a true clairvoyant, she will know of your deception and head for the mountains and the caves.’ But he decided to hold his tongue.

#

“The king is dead – long live the king!” shouted Meg. “Welcome to my humble abode King Maximus!”

“A true clairvoyant would have fled to the mountains and the caves.”

“How so, my liege?”

“You know full-well my father’s request regarding your life.”

“That I do! But you will not carry it out!”

“No?”

“No! You will not kill the instrument responsible for placing you on the throne at such a young age.”

“Are you so certain of that?”

“Have I fled to the mountains and caves? No! I am quite happy and contented here in my cosy little cottage in the forest near the lake.”

“I have sworn an oath.”

“And it would prick your conscience not to fulfil it?”

“Aye!”

“I believe it would prick your conscience more if you were to fulfil it.”

“You speak truthfully, but alas, a king, more than any other man, should always remain true to his word.”

“Aye, you speak wisely.”

“And you, if a true clairvoyant, have acted foolishly.”

“Had I fled to the mountains and caves you would have been obliged to search for me.”

“I fail to believe that you have remained here to spare me such trouble.”

“Nay, I have remained here to remind you of your oath.”

“Ha! Clearly I am in no need of such prompting.”

“You promised to kill me if I had spoken untrue.”

“Aye.”

“Every word I told your father was true.”

“Not so. You told him that leading his troops into battle would cement Astonia’s victory.”

“And it will. As an only child, Princess Gwendolyn is heir apparent to her father’s throne.”

“What does that have to do with anything?”

“Everything! Marriage will see two kingdoms united under a single banner – yours – Astonia’s. All will come to pass without any further bloodshed.”

“Marriage?”

“You and Gwendolyn.”

“But she must surely hate me now?”

“Only because she believes that you will follow in your father’s plans of conquest by means of an iron fist.”

“But that is not so.”

“Aye! Show her the truth and you will conquer her heart; conquer her heart and you will gain her trust and her kingdom. Don’t forget about the wild chicory.”

“Wild chicory?”

“It’s her favourite flower.”

“You truly are amazing! I beg, tell me more?”

“I’ve already said too much. But fear not, it will all work out well. So, as you will come to realise, your father’s death on the Sylkain battlefield is truly the reason for a union of both hearts and kingdoms – a victory indeed.”

“By God, if you speak the truth, that *will* be something glorious.”

“Aye, a glory that your father and his advisors could never fathom. You are young, but you are wise.”

“As are you. I could use someone with your...skill in my court. I have recently dismissed my father’s advisors; you would make a formidable replacement for the entire rabble.”

“Aye, that lot were truly dangerous in their advice, tickling your father’s ears with deceptive tales of conquest and glory, far more treacherous than any false fortune teller.”

“Then you accept my offer?”

“Nay, the world is not ready to listen to the advice of an old woman.”

“My father did.”

“Aye, and look what it gained him.”

Although the statement was scornful and severe, the new king managed to crack an uneasy smile. “You are wise and shrewd, madam.”

“I’ll take that as a compliment.”

“You’ll want for nothing at the castle.”

“As I have said, ‘I am quite happy and contented here in my cozy little cottage in the forest near the lake.’ You are welcome to visit me whenever you feel so inclined. I will, as always, be waiting. I look forward to entertaining your young’uns.”

“My children?”

“Aye.”

“How many?”

“I believe I already said that I’ve said too much.”

“My father was wrong - he wished to rid the land of false fortune tellers because he believed them to be dangerous. You have proven the opposite to be true – a true clairvoyant is someone to be most wary of.”

“And I don’t need to be a true clairvoyant to know that you will be a great king.”

###

Blasts from the past from Probe 122 3rd quarter 2003

Torcon 3 Reviews 3 different views

First from Tony Davis who lives in Toronto

Living just outside Toronto, I figured that Torcon3 was the show for me. It ran for five days, from August 28 to September 1, 2003. Its main attraction from this scribe's

point of view was linking up with those stalwart members of SFSA who had made the long trek to the Worldcon.

I think that it was back in 1899 when thousands of Canadians landed in Cape Town to join other British Empire forces in battling the Boer republics. And now, in 2003, SFSA had invaded Toronto. They travelled a long way, including Grant Kruger and Fiona Le Croix from Mississippi.

The notables were: Gail and Ian Jamieson (aka Ian and Gail Jamieson), Cedric Abrahams, Al Du Pisani, Franz Tomasek, Antonio Ruffini, Grant and Fiona, Janis Benvie, Cecilia Lombard and Barrett Brick. Truly a representative gang of SFSAers. While this noteworthy group did not raze any farmsteads or engage in any pitched battles, they did leave an impression upon Toronto. T-0, as it is known, is home to a good number of ex-South Africans and many SA products are readily available in stores. Ian, with his mild Scottish accent, kept trying to convince Canadians that he was a South African, 35 years in the making. And, to his credit, Ian did his level best (with the willing assistance of Franz) to repatriate (orally) all the long torn Castle lagers he could find in Toronto bottle stores - a bold task - but he was up for the challenge!

Grant - that's Grant as in actor Hugh Grant, he'd tell Canadians - dashed madly about as a Worldcon volunteer, undertaking innumerable duties. He also ventured onto a panel, together with Antonio, to discuss the prospects of a united Africa in the future. Also on the panel were authors Bill Dietz, Steve Sterling and Mike Resnick. Alas, the consensus of opinion was a "thumbs down" to the concept for a number of factors.

It is worth noting that this panel was held on the Sunday morning of Torcon3, at 10 am, the first scheduled hour. The night before was party night and many functions, with and without alcohol, were held in the huge, Victorian-style Fairmount Royal York Hotel (a good 5 minute walk from the Metro Toronto Convention Centre where most of the panels were held).

Unfortunately there were only about two dozen people in attendance at the 10 am talk - and that included the SFSA gang - prompting Bill Dietz to comment "uh, oh" at all the SA experts. Yet it was not an unruly group - one tends to be sedate after only a few hours sleep. SFSA members were highly visible with their black SFSA T-shirts with the colourful SA flag on the back.

SFSA held a party on the Saturday night, which ran from 9:00 pm to circa 3:30 am. Fiona was taking new memberships (some 20 newbies!) Assorted eats were made available to visitors to the party - koeksusters, nuts, cookies and jelly tots. Many such parties were sponsored by sf clubs, book publishers and sponsors for future Worldcons.

SFSA's party was advertised with a poster with an elephant-rampant (though it looked to me to be a Cthulhu-type being). Some Castles helped to liven up the atmosphere and Janis offered new members to the club a taste of SA booze and copies of Probe. Ian, Gail and I reminisced about SFSA club days in the late 1970s, the Total House meetings, the committee meetings at Felicity's (nice cake!), social events at members' houses and the first few club cons at Wits. We also talked about the great writers from the early days of the short story competitions, and more notable authors such as Peter Wilhelm and Claude Nunes. I left the festivities after midnight - I did have a 40-minute drive north to travel.

As noted earlier, the Convention Centre held the panels, the hall for the Hugo presentations, an sf fan area, art show and dealers' area. The adjoining Crowne Plaza Hotel was home to attendees, as was the Royal York. There was a bulky, pocket-sized guidebook to Torcon3 and daily releases with changes to the schedule. Never a boring moment!

I personally had the good fortune to renew acquaintances with sf fans I hadn't seen in some time, though in the vastness of the complexes there were some people I knew to be there but never caught sight of. Some attendees said that Torcon3 wasn't that large a Worldcon in terms of numbers (some 4,000 paid-up attendees, I believe), but I enjoyed it nevertheless. Lloyd Penney, of Probe letters fame, was there with his pleasant-as-ever wife Yvonne. It was very much a fan event with many people in the 30+age category, but not a Klingon in uniform in sight. There were certainly varied interests represented, from sf, fantasy and filking filkers (if that is the way it is phrased). Professional writers and artists mingled freely among the masses. I spotted Hal Clement, Fred Pohl and Robert Silverberg, among others. (There, I'm showing my age!)

A lot of work goes into organizing an event of this size, and the Canadian crew benefited from volunteers from the US of A. In any given daytime hour there were eight to twelve panel discussions being held, films being screened, author signings,

book readings, etc. Lots to do. Grant K was steadily gaining expertise on the art of running a Worldcon. I advised that he should win a US lottery to assist in his dream of having a South African Worldcon - lots of \$\$\$\$ are required.

The Hugo awards ceremony, on the Saturday night, was quite a ceremony with more than a thousand in attendance and TV crews recording and displaying the stage events on large screens to the audience. Spider Robinson, as MC, opened the proceedings with his guitar and a witty song. The awards ceremony was interesting (for this first-timer anyway). Local Talent Rob Sawyer won the Hugo for best novel - home favourite?

I'm sure there will be write-ups about Torcon3 in sf magazine "Locus", as magazine editor Charles Brown was present. It will be interesting to see how the `experts' view Worldcon 2003.

I am pleased that SFSA left its mark on Torcon3 - a great time had by all. Totsiens!

Then from Gail Jamieson from Johannesburg

TORCON3 - 28 Aug - 1 Sep 2003

Toronto - 2003. A different Worldcon. We had been planning this trip since Buccaneer in 1998 and we were finally here. Even better we were part of a group of 12 South African Science Fiction fans, even if 2 live in Mississippi, one in Edinburgh and we count Barrett as an honorary South African who just happens to live in New York. This for me was one of the most enjoyable parts of this Con. We were among 4000 SF fans but we had our own good friends with us as well.

Another very good part of the Con was meeting up with Tony Davis again. Many of you may remember Tony, who is a past Chairman of SFSA as well as a past editor of PROBE, who lived in South Africa for about 10 years in the 1980's. He and his wife Liana returned to Toronto about 14 years ago but we have never lost touch completely and his L.O.C.'s appear in PROBE from time to time. It was great to catch up with all that had happened in his and our own lives in the intervening years and really scary to think that we both now have 19 year old children. We brought back a couple of the magazines that he now edits - "The Pulpster" - he having gravitated back to one of his original loves - pulp magazines.

As usual with a WorldCon there was a great variety of choice - panels, discussions, movies, Kaffeeklatches, book signings, masquerade and Hugo Awards among other things.

High points for me were listening to Terry Pratchett and Connie Willis, Kaffeeklatches with Harry Harrison and Hugh Gregory and of course the South African Party.

I went to plenty of panels and enjoyed most of them. From the very funny - The Frank Kelly Freas Slide Show - where, as Kelly Freas had unfortunately broken a hip and was unable to attend, and to make matters worse no-one could find the slides - we had Howard Waldrop, Joe Haldeman and Mike Resnick reminiscing about their most amusing experiences with Frank Kelly Freas; to the very serious - Hugh Gregory's talks on Soviet Space disasters, the Chinese Space Programme and the Soviet Venus and Mars Landers.

As we had found in Baltimore, Hugh Gregory is an erudite entertaining speaker who does not suffer fools at all, let alone gladly.

The Kaffeeklatche with Harry Harrison made us realise why he has been such a successful author for such a long time. He has lived in Ireland, the USA, Sweden and Mexico and speaks a variety of languages. Unassuming and articulate he shared many of his experiences with us.

One panel that all of us went to was the panel discussion on a 'United Africa'. Two of our members, Grant Kruger and Antonio Ruffini were on the panel with Mike Resnick, William Dietz and Stephen Stirling. We were pleasantly surprised to find that all of the panellists had done their homework. I know that Mike Resnick's sphere of interest is Kenya and so expected that he would have some knowledge of Africa and its peoples but William Dietz and Stephen Stirling were well informed and so it was an interesting panel, even if the general thought was that a united Africa is a long way off.

The highlight of the Con for many of us was the South African Party on the Saturday night. Grant and Fiona put in an enormous amount of effort and money as well and Science Fiction South Africa thanks them gratefully.

We had all brought with us things like Amarula and Cape Velvet Cream, Endearmints, Top Deck, Peppermint Crisp, Lemon Cream and Romany Cream

biscuits, and even "koeksusters", as well as shot glasses with the big five animals of Africa on them. Grant and Fiona bought cool drinks, cheese, biscuits etc. Al's friend David Herrington brought along 6 cases of Ginger Ale. We also had a couple of dozen Castle Lager Long Tom cans. Interestingly enough our local beer was cheaper to buy in Toronto than their local beer, mainly because ours has a lower alcohol content. Go figure?

We also had a couple of large South African Flags and plenty of wild life posters and other tourist goodies to give away. We had advertised that we would open our doors at 9.00pm, as had the about 12 other parties that were on the same night and had fortunately started to set up at about 7.00p.m. because by 8.15 people came knocking at our door. The beers were a brief but good draw and the sweets and biscuits kept the later visitors happy. I was at the door putting stickers on everyone's Torcon3 badges.

Between 8.15 p.m. and 2.45 a.m. over 600 people came to drop in on our party. At one point in time the queue to get in stretched around the corner of the long hotel passage. Many people seemed amazed that we had come so far. A lot wanted to know if we were bidding for a Worldcon. All appreciated the beautiful wildlife posters. At one point I looked up to see a man in a familiar jersey - a Springbok Rugby jersey. He also happened to be wearing a South African police cap. He was an American army Major who had spent a lot of time in Africa and a fair bit of that in South Africa. Some people popped in and out again but all of us spent ages talking to others who were interested in what we had to say about South Africa and the state of Science Fiction here. By the time we closed the door at about 2.45 a.m. I could hardly believe that I had stood on my feet for 6 and a half hours. It was a most exhilarating experience.

There were good and not so good parts to this Con. The organisation did not seem as smooth as it could have been. It was a little frustrating to only get our daily programmes as we arrived at the Convention Centre each morning, but the huge power blackout the previous week had been a curved ball that no-one could have expected.

On the other hand the volunteers signalling that there were only 5 minutes and then no time left made for much smoother transition from one venue to another. Also the Kaffeeklatches were very well organised and no-one was permitted to go over their

time. One small problem was that at previous Worldcon's everybody got a cup of coffee, but here the hotel would have charged 4 Canadian dollars for a cup so only the speaker got one. Even this was purchased from the coffee shop down the road. Both Harry Harrison and Hugh Gregory seemed a little uncomfortable with this but as there was plenty of iced water nobody seemed too put out.

Another good thing was meeting up with Francois Van Heerden, whose family had emigrated to Canada when he was six but who still speaks perfect, if slightly Canadian accented Afrikaans. He and his wife joined SFSA and they will be made most welcome here when they come for a visit.

One other thing I really enjoyed was our hotel, the Fairmont Royal York. It was originally built in 1929 as one of the Canadian Pacific Railway hotels. You can get to the station, the underground and the rest of Toronto from the basement of the hotel. It is enormous and totally luxurious and ornate. The passages are so long that when you look from one end to the other, it feels like looking into a mirror. It has beautiful gym, which kept Ian and I going and an apparently magnificent presidential suite on the 12th floor. We had to smile when a tour guide told us that that is where "The Queen of Canada" stays when she visits Toronto.

All in all it was a wonderful 9 days spent in Toronto. We were all left with enjoyable memories that we will be able to reminisce over for years to come.

And finally the short one from Ian Jamieson also from Johannesburg

Torcon3

61st WorldCon

What to do? Where to go, whom to listen to, do I want to go to a panel discussion, or a workshop, or a reading, or a Kaffeeklatche? And when do I find the time to go for lunch or even a cup of tea.

A first timer at a Worldcon will find the amount of choices very intimidating. To us old timers (well, third timers) it was a lot easier. Plan your day, pick the good speakers, or a topic in which you are really interested, get in early to book for the Kaffeeklatches and line up for the book signings.

Make time for the Art Show, the dealer's room, the ceremonies, the masquerade, but most of all -ENJOY YOURSELF!

It is difficult to describe what it really feels like to be with 4000 other SF fans, and to walk past, or even talk to famous authors like Pratchett, Harrison, Silverberg, Niven, Willis, Haldeman and all the others.

What makes a convention are the people, the people to whom you listened (at panels) the people you meet and the people with whom you go

I was lucky

I had a fabulous time

Thanks to everyone who made it so.

PROBE 197 Cover

There has been much discussion on AI and we have now had two really good talks on the use of AI and on the advantages of AI. Gavin Kreuter had mentioned that he had been experimenting with creating pictures and he sent me the following:



I loved the picture and immediately thought that it would be interesting and

possibly a bit contentious to use it as a cover for PROBE. I really hope that someone, other than Lloyd Penney will have something to say about it.

I asked Gavin to give us an idea about its creation

He sent me the following:

Rather than writing a piece, I shall describe the background. I hope you will be able to do something with it. If not, it will provide the info on the generation of the image as requested.

I have been experimenting with ChatGPT (OpenAI) and its challengers like Bard (Google) and Bing (MS). These AIs generate text by answering typed questions. Bing now incorporates DALL-E, an image generator that I mentioned (along with Midjourney) in an article I sent you on AI. Was it published? I seem to be missing electronic and paper versions of 195. Perhaps it was in there? Anyway, I experimented with DALL-E and with Midjourney with interesting but unsatisfactory results.

I then read an article on the BBC which mentioned that another image generator, Stable Diffusion, had *no* restrictions on the type of image it generated, While the article was about using the AI for pornography, I had no interest in that; I was curious how yet another AI image generator would treat a description I had tried using the other image generators, My first attempt produced the image now gracing the cover of Probe 197. After the image was well received by everyone, I revisited Stable Diffusion to see if I could improve the image. The results were more than disappointing; they were of a similar weirdness that I obtained from other AIs, and what one could anticipate from a drunken Picasso indulging in Timothy Leary's mind-expanding experiments. Certainly nothing that was printable (in the sense of good quality).

The description that I have used many times with many image generators with only one usable result is the following: a photorealistic image of a dragon battling a spaceship on an alien world while a storm rages.

If you really just want a succinct "cover description", I guess something like "The cover was created by an AI image generator called Stable Diffusion, using the prompt text "a photorealistic image of a dragon battling a spaceship on an alien world while a storm rages."

Not that I can see a dragon or a spaceship, anywhere. But the storm is nice. As is the weird hybrid image that dominates the scene, whatever it is supposed to be.

I really started to get intrigued with the idea of using AI to create pictures I could use in PROBE

My son had previously showed me a programme called “Leonardo.AI” . He was really enjoying creating images. So I registered on it and tried it out. I put in the same description as Gavin used above and this is one of the options I got. I see the spaceship looks a bit like a rowing boat but a great dragon and a good storm



So I then asked my son to have a try as he has rather more experience with the programme and he came up with the following. Obviously we were using different aspects of the programme and with the same description as I had used he came up

with a couple of different options, all of which were interesting. But it does seem as if the programme is not sure of what a space ship should look like.



This one looks, to me, rather as if the dragon is doing a bit of wave surfing on a sort of spaceship.

I'll definitely continue to follow up on this new venture.

Nova 2023 Finalist

Gavin Kreuter The Fly

He sat at his desk, staring at spreadsheet on his computer screen. The numbers didn't add up, and it was starting to give him a headache. His concentration was abruptly disturbed as a fly flew into the oriel window of his study, buzzing irritatingly and loudly. *Bromvlieg*. The Afrikaans name, inherited from Dutch, was a much

better description than the English blowfly. “Blow” was completely insipid compared with the onomatopoeic “brom”. The buzzing had ripped his concentration to shreds. ‘What a blow!’ he thought, with a grin.

At that moment, his Fitbit beeped; time for his hourly constitutional. Sighing, he rose from the executive chair at the desk in his study, and went outside to commence his walk around the garden.

ZX29 to Control. The subject has ceased its activity on the electronic device, and has now exited the dwelling. It seems to be walking in the open air, without an apparent motive. We shall remain inside the dwelling to monitor when it returns.

The outside heat was enervating. He needed to rest his eyes for a bit. As the guest room was nearer than his bedroom, he decided that that was the better place for a powernap. He lay on the bed in the guestroom, allowing his mind to meander. ‘I like thinking about things. A thought train. A dreamy thought train. But that is a completely inappropriate analogy, because Dad said I grasshoppered from thought to thought... and trains cannot hop...’ His eyes were closed, but the unmitigated nuisance had followed him into the guestroom, bromming as loudly as ever. This time he did not need to concentrate, and he was drowsy, so the buzzing did not disturb. But it did invade, and diverted his thought train. ‘Flies cannot hop either. *Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.* The first time both sentences appeared in print was in a book published in the 60s about computers. Strange that a semantic oddity should appear in a book on computers, rather than a book on linguistics. Mind you, the first sentence was coined by Oettinger, who was a linguist and a computer scientist. And I came up with a new variation, *Time flies like a banana.* Funny. Original. At least, I thought it was new. Until I googled it. And found that millions of people had already come up with that. Or a few, anyway. The rest probably just used copy & paste. The internet was full of it. Why do people use the term cut & paste? Not cutting was involved. Just copying. Just...’ And he fell into a deep sleep.

ZX29 to Control. The subject has entered a state of immobility. This seems to be a common characteristic of all species on this planet. It is usually cyclical, most commonly manifesting at night. But it appears to occur during daytime as well.

He woke up after his powernap, feeling refreshed, and eager to resolve the problem. Or the 'challenge' as management would call it. Did they - did she, his boss - really think that renaming a term is better? They were - no, she was - full of useless ideas. Like Dilbert's pointy-haired boss. A euphemism did not change the essential nature of anything. She was full of useless clichés that she threw around like confetti at a wedding. And yet she earned the big bucks. It was so unfair. He, and his fellow accountants, did the real work. They worked with money all the time, with tons of cash, but were fed peanuts. It would be so easy to take some of what he deserved, and no one would... Well, maybe the auditors. He grudgingly accepted that they could be as clever as he was. But they earned big bucks too. Although maybe they earned it. Somewhat.

Sighing at the injustice of it all, he returned to his study. He sat in his genuine leather executive chair, delighting in the luxurious softness that somehow offered superb spinal support, and briefly meditated on the importance of good furniture when one is deskbound for most of the day. To relax before returning to the challenge at hand, he gazed through the oriel window at the birds feeding on the tray hanging from the branch of the oak tree that dominated his garden. His gardener was doing a splendid job. The flowerbeds were in full bloom, challenging the glorious colours of plumage that were greedily fighting amongst themselves, even though there was an excess of birdseed. He wondered what sort of birds they were. He really should indulge in an ornithology course sometime. Perhaps after he learnt to swim. His swimming pool was sparkling in the sun, very inviting in this unbearable heat, and it seemed a waste not to use it sometimes. Thank heavens for the air conditioner that maintained a pleasant temperature inside the house.

Enough distraction. Time to concentrate. The problem would not be solved by procrastination. He opened the lid of his top-of-the-range laptop. The spreadsheet-that-didn't-add-up instantly appeared in high resolution. He looked at some of the problematic numbers, and mentally cross-referenced them with the financial reports

that were the source of the discrepancy. He remained motionless for some time, eyes closed, deep in thought.

ZX29 to Control. The subject has returned to the room containing the electronic equipment.

Control to ZX29. Be cautious. Your stealth mode appears to be effective so far, but you are the last of our scouts. The giants have destroyed every other infiltrator, and you are our last hope. We have not managed to determine how they expose our stealth mode, but we must be making a mistake somehow. It is essential that you remain undetected or, at least, determine the nature of their technology that exposes us. Our Death Ray and Nuclear Weapons will destroy these giants, but before we can deploy them safely, we need to understand their counter espionage technology, as well as the technology that is used to destroy our starcraft.

ZX29 to Control. Perhaps this electronic device is the source of their stealth counter-technology. But there was no deviation in its behaviour when we were in this room earlier. Perhaps the technology is used in search mode, and does not operate in a constant monitoring mode.

Buzzzz...

Damn! That irritating, invasive noise broke his concentration yet again. This was insufferable! He decided he needed coffee. Maybe that would ease his irritation. He strode into the kitchen, and switched the kettle on. 'A watched pot never boils. Weird. But this is a kettle. Why do we say we boil the kettle? It's the water that gets boiled. It's...'. A familiar drone interrupted his thinking. 'Again! I've had enough!' He moved to the pantry and removed a fly swatter. He waited for a few minutes, watching the fly buzz around. Eventually, it became stationary on the curtain of the kitchen window. Within reach.

ZX29 to control. The subject has moved to the room dedicated to alimentation. They seem to require nutrition two or three times a day. But some, this specimen in particular, also indulge in liquid intake many times a day. It was in the process of preparing a hot liquid to drink, but has now retrieved an object from storage. This object has a long, metallic stem, which supports a large, broad surface comprising

an unknown material. It has remained motionless for some time. Now it is moving again, and...

Splat!

Control to ZX29, report! Control to ZX29... It is no good. We have lost communication. That is the last of our infiltrators. They seem to possess an unknown means of identifying an infiltrator, and an unknown weapon that destroys them. Our Death Rays and Nuclear Weapons cannot be deployed if we cannot identify and counter their technology. This planet is too dangerous. We must search elsewhere.



L.O.C's

706-24 Eva Rd.
Etobicoke, ON
CANADA M9C 2B2
August 20, 2023

Dear SFFSAns:

There's a big difference between getting Probe as a paper fanzine, and getting it as a .pdf. I checked my own records, and I have responded to issues 193, 195 and 196. However, I got issue 194 in the mail just yesterday, and I see it is the December 2022 issue. So, it is seriously out of sequence, but here is a letter of comment on Probe 194.

Hello, Gail...I hope that putting news of 50 Science Fiction Tales onto the Amazing Stories website got you some sales from North America.

Incredible Soap...a good shower in the morning is a necessity, but if we could all get our hands on a bar of that soap, who knows how great life would be? Looks like you still have to behave, but still... And the finding company sounds like something we could all use, and you will get back what you've lost, for the right price. And, it is amazing what they can find. The trade of experiences sounds very interesting, but sometimes, it is only the memories we enjoy that we truly have. Both great stories.

The letter of comment here is nearly a year old, so I will see what I can say about it... I was working with Scot Noel at Dreamforge Magazine, but of course now, I am the Editor-in-Chief of Amazing Stories. We are still vending our wares here and there, and sales have been even better than last year. We now have had five COVID shots each, and have been advised to wait until the fall to get a better shot than we might have gotten otherwise.

Thank you for the ad! I will say that we had to postpone that issue because we just don't have the money to publish and distribute. However, we have been publishing short fiction on our website. The ad is old, so best to go on the submissions website (URL in the ad), and check things out.

Thank you for this issue, and I hope to get on a regular schedule with the next one, which is 197, I think...

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

And 196.....

Dear SFFSAns:

I got Probe 196 via e-mail a while ago, with the idea of getting a headstart on the usual two-issue package that makes it way to Canada from SA. I haven't had the time to get to it until now, so let's see how I do.

Hi, Gail... I must wonder about the future of SpaceX, given how unstable its owner has become with Twitter, or X, as it is now known. With luck, SpaceX will thrive as long as Elon Musk is more concerned with pushing Twitter/X out of business. Also, I hope the publicity for 50 Science Fiction Tales has helped. I think this was the book that had an ad for it on the Amazing Stories website.

I agree that science fiction has to continually evolve, and it does, which means it often changes so much as to leave older readers behind...like myself. I am making the attempt to catch up, but I know my experience with it will be spotty. Still, if I can somehow scrape some time together...

Interesting to see the differences between fandom in SA and Finland. I think I may have received a Fannish fanzine sometime in the past, as opposed to the regular Probes you send me. Also interesting is that any activity that society generally classes as nerdish and geeky seems to be mainstream in Finland. I remember the fights to legitimize fandom in the public eye, so what do you do when you actually win the fight?

My condolences on the passing of Nick Wood, this past weekend, we attended two separate Celebrations of Life...each occasion was sad, but the opportunity to gather together again, and renew friendships and acquaintances was refreshing and joyful. A lot of new projects have arisen for us...in 2024, two major conventions, the NASFiC (North American Science Fiction Interim Convention), and the World Fantasy Convention, will be short drives away from us in Toronto. As long as the car and our money hold out, we intend to be there, have some fun, and get some valuable work done there.

I think that may be all for now...take care, everyone, and see you later on with a mailing.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

(Commenting on the Blast from the past about the Eclipse of 2002)

Thanks for sending that!

I enjoyed reading my piece. I'd forgotten that I'd written it. It really was a special day.

Stephen Levitt

And from Donald Mullany in Finland

25 March 2023

Hi Gail,

I am aware of the ZA Omenana issue, I have been published there before (under Caldon Mull) and I have some dealings with Mazi Nwogu over the years. I have been nagging Mazi to look at something like National Issues to open his scope of readers for some time inside the ASFS. Interestingly, Omenana24 has reached readers from Borneo to Egypt, from the Caribbean to Brazil, and so in one fell swoop reached more new places and new readers than arguably anything before then.

As you know that for years I have been agitating for a more grass-roots dialogue between 'African' and 'Western' styles of SF, and less obviously, between the Gaming Industry and the SF Fandom. Of course, this was in the late 90's and most people were resolutely un-interested in those topics then.

However, with the growth of 'big data', finally I feel some vindication. For example; money is pointless unless people transact with it. Most people regard SFF and spec-fic as uninteresting until it is regarded as a barometer of historical, current or future society. This is something the Finns have managed quite well. I don't see many South African authors writing articles specifically for The Probe, or calling for discussions on issues inside The Probe, as they do in ESCAPE, or elsewhere like Omenana, or LOCUS or...

The SFFSA might well be the cultural collector and repository of decades of researchable data, spec-fic 'flavours' and notable authors. But in saying this, that SFFSA 'big data' needs to be re-used, re-consumed, re-packaged, re-queried repeatedly in order to funnel and route into new audiences. Perhaps now that you have uncoupled the pdf and print versions, you could perhaps recycle pdf-only

reprints of 'Best 5 Robot stories', or 'Best 5 Invasion stories' or whatever... or non-Nova submission calls for once-off pdf editions to tap into new author/reader funnels. Reading Omenana²⁴, I pondered why Dierdre and Gerhard did not mention Nikhil Singh, Stephen Embleton, Unathi Slasha, Nerine Dorman, Caldon Mull (ahem, sorry) or Fred Strydom, even other equally accomplished writers that never form part of the 'academic echo chamber' of the stock-stable authors who have a MA in creative writing from X University, who studied under Y professor, and write about Z themes and topics. That was when the FINFAR and Osuuskumma scouting function suddenly made sense to me, there is a constantly revised set of alternatives to established SFF bookshelves that ensures readers attention keeps rolling forward and staying current.

To be fair to (Beukes, Rose-Innes, Lotz and Coovadia) they have all written OTHER books since 2011, they are all STILL working and are all STILL putting out new work that perhaps they would like you to read as well... yeesh, give these kids a break. That thought lead to an idea of articles of which you have the first, and the reason I am writing similar essays (hopefully slightly shorter) on Finnish fantastika authors over the next several months, exploring themes and comparisons. I guess I will ping interest in some of these with you when I have them ready.

And 20 May 2023

To scope the environs, I am currently publishing Marie M. Mullany in Epic Fantasy and Caldon Mull in (mostly) Science Fiction/Cyberpunk noir.

My current frustration is that Marie writes epic fantasy tomes that cannot be handled in postal services, and I write episodic novellas where postal charges cost more than the actual book. Thus, the only actual medium that works to distribute these different types is in an ePub. It's been like this for well over a decade now.

The end result is that you have international Award nominated South african authors who are completely unknown in South Africa. Through no other reason save through largely writing in an unpopular medium (novella), or conversely, in a medium that prices out review and circulation. With the ZAR looking to tank, I thought I'd ask now and gauge any level of interest.

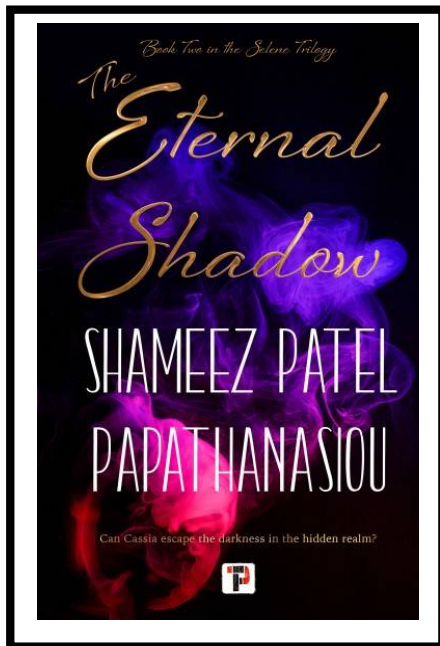
Perhaps these Probe reviews can help me figure out why my market is overwhelmingly in Hong Kong, Japan, S Korea and Nordic Europe, and nowhere else in the West.

Best Regards,

Donald.

Book Reviews

Shameez Patel Papathanasiou *The Eternal Shadow*



This is book two in the Selene Trilogy. I have not been able to read book one, but it seems enough to know that Cassie had travelled from her realm, called Taim to another called Selene to cure her young sister, Calla. She succeeded and they returned to their life in Taim. This was with the aid of her friend Logan and his mother, Rosheen, who she knew as almost a relative in her original realm and who had moved from Selene to Taim at one point.

In this second novel Cassie, who is a healer, finds

herself back in Selene, abducted by King Idis, who wants to use her healing powers. Logan and Rosheen manage to rescue Cassie and then flee with her to another realm called Vineas.

They need her to help to rid Selene of the evil king Idis. Idis is also the father of Logan and his brother Lochlan, who is under the control of the king at first and then this is passed on to Rosheen.

Furious at the loss of Cassie, her mother is killed and Calla brought to Selene. To add to the complication in the mix Cassie is strongly drawn to Lochlan in an undeniable physical way. In Vineas there are also the shadows that appear to be part of an entity called the Lithilier. It is able to draw the magic from people and also wants Cassie.

If it can be defeated the people of Vineas will assist in bringing down Idis.

There are also a variety of other characters with magical powers who all add to the completeness of the band with Cassie as its strong point.

The book is well written and the story flows.

For me this book has two very strong positives about it. For one thing it is an adult novel with adult issues. We are seeing so many books aimed at young adults.

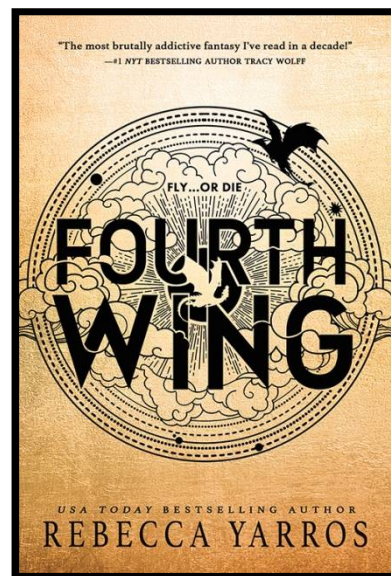
Secondly it is written by a South African and published through professional channels, Simon & Schuster US in this case, which means that Shameez is breaking into the international book scene.

I enjoyed reading it and look forward to volume three

Rebecca Yarros Fourth Wing

At first glance this looks like a typical most unlikely to succeed but overcomes all odds to triumph type of novel. But the good news is that it is not. It is also not aimed at the young adult market; although I am sure they will read it and enjoy it.

The action takes place in a land called Navarre Violet Sorrengail has grown up believing that she will become a scribe and is perfectly happy with this future. She is a slightly built person and it seems that she will fit well in the Scribe Quadrant.



However, her mother, who is the commanding general of the Riders Quadrant, has other ideas. And yes this is a novel about Dragon riders, but a rather different one. The dragons are not in general, of a friendly nature and there are always fewer of them that there are riders desperate to claim a dragon. The front of the book says "Graduate or Die". And there are plenty of candidates who would happily kill the reluctant Violet..

It is in a way a story of the weeding out of potential riders and at 498 pages it is a relatively long book. But the pace and writing made sure that I found it difficult t put down.

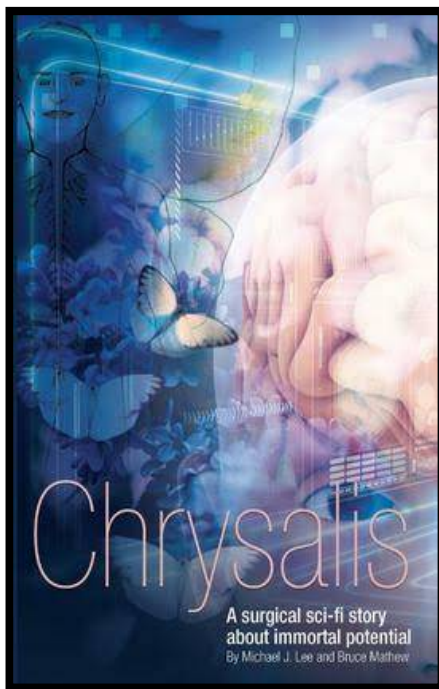
The riders need to graduate as soon as possible as they are desperately needed in a war that grows fiercer and more deadly by the day. And there are twists and turns involving the leadership of Navarre.

Violet has to struggle to maintain her position, and the interplay between Violet and Xaden Riorson, both mental and physical add to the spice of this novel

I won't give away too much of the story but suggest that you find a copy and read it. And, although it is part of a series, it reads like a standalone story and you don't feel that you are left hanging by a thread at the end of the story.

Definitely recommended

Michael J. Lee and Bruce Matthew Chrysalis



Written by futurist Michael J. Lee and brain surgeon Bruce Matthew, this novel posits an intriguing idea which is laid out in great detail. Jerry Fischer has a degenerative muscular disease which is causing his skeletal muscles to waste away and there seems to be no solution available.

But he fortunately has a group of friends, including brain surgeons, who come up with an innovative idea. They will do the world's first human head transplant. A donor becomes available when a professional cyclist has an

accident which leaves him brain dead.

This novel takes place in Cape Town and I found it very interesting that some of the history of the Groote Schuur hospital and the first human heart transplant are woven into the story.

The actual operation is described in great detail and it helped that I have a medical background that enabled me to follow the exacting development of the operation. Needless to say the operation is a success and Jerry slowly and gradually gains control of his new body. He becomes Jerry 2.0. He marries and has a son. He lives a full life until his new body finally begins to fail as well.

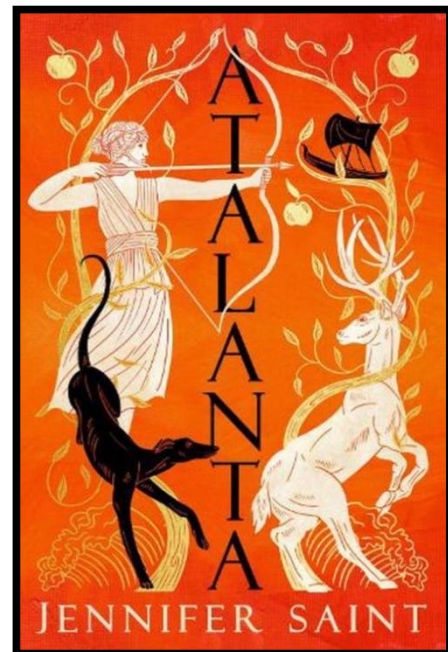
His same group of friends once again come to his rescue and the human part of Jerry is joined to a machine and he becomes a cyborg.

This novel explores the idea of whether or not man can look towards becoming immortal by overcoming the frailties of the human body I see that it is book 1 of a trilogy and that the story will continue. Although at times this will be a little technical for some readers it is a different view on the combination of science fiction and medicine and is an interesting read.

Jennifer Saint Atlanta

Not SF and only marginally fantasy, this is the retelling of the story of the only female Argonaut.

Having been left to die on a mountain side the unwanted daughter of the King of Arcadia is raised by a bear until she is “adopted” by Artemis and goes to live amongst the Nymphs. She promises Artemis that she will never marry as the Nymphs have pledged. She kills two Centaurs and is very fleet of foot and Artemis believes she can outperform



any man so she is sent to join Jason and the Argonauts on the quest to find the golden Fleece. She is reluctantly allowed to join them but slowly becomes accepted as she shows her strengths. She slowly becomes physically attracted to Meleager and as he has left his wife behind, decides that as they will never marry they can be intimate while on the quest. They have many adventures, most of which enable her to prove her worth, until the finally they come to Colchis where King Aeetes has the Fleece. Here to the disappointment of Atlanta, Medea, the daughter of Aeetes helps Jason to gain the Fleece, on the agreement that she is allowed to return with them. On their return they have to assist in killing a vicious boar and Meleager is killed. Atlanta returns to her cave and becomes aware that she is pregnant. Artemis disowns her, having said that if she slept with a man she would lose herself.

She flees with Hippomenes, who had seen her kill the Centaurs many years before and who had loved her in vain. They take shelter in the temple of Rhea, the mother of gods and consummate their love there. This infuriates Rhea and she takes her revenge and Atlanta and indeed Hippomenes both lose themselves, but they are freed and Atlanta realises that she has indeed become wild and free.

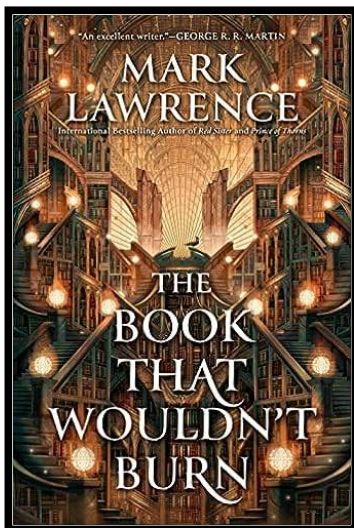
There seems to be some disagreement as to whether Jason actually allowed Atlanta to go on the quest but Saint says that she wanted to rewrite Atlanta back into the story.

This is not normally the sort of novel I would choose to read, but I found this well written and easy to read. And it brought back to mind some of the Greek Mythology I had enjoyed many years ago.

I see that she has also written “Ariadne” and “Elektra” and I’ll keep a look out for these.

Mark Lawrence The Book That Wouldn’t Burn.

Book One of The Library Trilogy



This first book of a trilogy is a bit of a mixture of hard science fiction and fantasy. It tells the story of two young people whose lives become entangled across time and space.

Evar has lived his whole life within an unbelievably vast library, searching for books that may exist within its confines. He is part of a small group and he knows only what he finds in the books.

Livira lives in a community out in the desert, who are menaced by an enemy who wish to take over all of

her world. Her small village is attacked and the enemy destroys all she has known. She is rescued and is taken to Crath city which does little else but support the library. Perhaps not unsurprisingly, as she has an abrasive personality and is bright she is taken into the library to be trained as a librarian.

The two meet and slowly discover that there is more than one world that the library has access to. They also discover that they seem to live in different times and dimensions. And to Livira’s absolute horror that Evar is actually one of the others.

This book has an enormous scope and many very interesting characters. It is far too complex to even try to summarise some of the story.

It is 566 pages long but Mark Lawrence writes so well and the story is so different that I flew through it.

This one I really enjoyed and will look out for the next volume

Nova 2022 Editor's choice

Odell Coetzee Fatal Parameters

The rowdy crowd that had gathered outside the grounds of LC Inc complex rushed towards an arriving ambulance. Waving banners and placards emblazoned with "SHUT DOWN AIMD," "JUST SAY NO!" "YOU WILL BURN IN HELL!" and "IT WILL KILL US ALL." They surrounded the vehicle before it could pass through the establishment's gates. Fists pounded on the sides as they shouted any manner of discouraging chants and slogans, while security exited the premises and started to push them back.

The vehicle entered the institute's grounds and came to a halt in front of the establishment's main entrance. With practised ease a group of orderlies approached the vehicle and extracted a dome bed, then placed it on a stretcher before moving it into the building.

At 09h42, on Thursday, 14 March 2097, the heavy doors of the AIMD Theatre swung open to admit two assistants dressed in white HAZMAT suits. As the pairing that had remained with the division the longest, she had come to feel a sense of familiarity with their presence, regardless of the fact that neither of them ever acknowledged her presence or addressed her directly. Distant and dismissive, they approached the elaborate series of devices collectively known as the Beast.

Filling more than half the theatre's floor space, an average person would be forgiven for mistaking it for an elaborate MRI. To the right of the sliding table-bed a series of monitors along with an input console were located, while the left housed various recording, dispensatory and feedback devices. It silently hummed, as if awaiting instructions.

The first assistant, the one she knew as Carl, moved towards the table-bed and checked the systems attached thereto while, the second, Anthony, took his position at the console. He accessed patient information, opened relevant channels to allow her access to all the required data, medical reports and provided for all the systems she was to utilise during the assessment. He then set the required parameters for the assessment.

Beauty simply watched them as they went through their various checklists. Moments later, a string of instructions, constraints and checklists appeared on the screen, enough to keep her occupied for an entire morning.

Fifteen minutes later the doors again opened, this time to admit the specialized dome gurney. Two other orderlies also dressed in white HAZMAT suits accompanied it. The men positioned the gurney next to the sliding table-bed and released the dome top. With trained ease they shifted the naked, fragile, body onto the table and levelled it out.

Beauty perused the checklist while the orderlies and theatre assistants tended to the array of catheters, saline bags and medications. Her perusal of the patient's medication confirmed that he had been placed in a medically induced coma, with all other analgesics withheld for four days. The lack of skeletal mass confirmed his bedridden state.

The assistants covered his naked body with a sensor-net and meticulously attached the sensors to the input consoles, checking all connections before stepping back. Anthony then triggered a switch to initiate test procedures.

The table-bed slowly moved into the tunnel, while the attendants and orderlies filed from the theatre. The intensity and volume of humming increased, stopped, and was followed by intermitted clacks as imaging started. Beauty perused the images and marked areas of relevance.

Once the base imaging set was completed, Beauty triggered the first nerve impulse test and noted the spinal reflexes registered by the brain. She noted the anomaly regarding the patient's condition and focused on the brainstem, particularly the medulla oblongata and reticular formation cords. She proceeded with a simple test to confirm whether anaesthetics had numbed the area, the test came back negative. The brain stem failed to reduce spinal reflexes.

On completion of the magnetic imaging sets, Beauty powered down the magnets and confirmed the nanite drip's status. She waited for the drip to finish and then initiated the link to the nanites, following their progress throughout the body as they fed back information on the cardiovascular system, vital organs, and, later, lymphatic and endocrine system.

Four hours later, Beauty filed her final report:

Patient's condition, as listed, is confirmed. Patient suffers from a hyper-stimulated and overburdened nervous system resulting in intense chronic pain, unresponsive to painkillers and local anaesthesia. Nerve responses are conflicted with un-stimulated areas of the brain lighting up concurrently with those of stimulated regions. The brainstem fails to moderate nerve impulses, while some impulses appear to overwhelm the brainstem altogether.

Records reflect that the patient has undergone a Ketamine coma to reset the central nervous system: No improvement shown when compared to past records.

All vital organs tested functional, however function of the kidneys and liver are compromised due to excessive medication. Without medication and assistance patient would die of starvation.

Clinical mindset of this patient, according to records, shows depression and dejection, unalleviated by medication. Patient is bedridden and has needed full-time living assistance for the past 18 months.

Application for consideration for elected euthanasia is noted, with reason sited as unbearable and uncontrollable pain.

Reason: Justified and Confirmed.

Prognoses: Poor.

All relevant documentation filed and all parameters met.

Application for euthanasia: Approved.

Beauty ejected the sliding table from the tunnel and notified the assistants of the final assessment. She waited the requisite five minutes and then initiated the lethal cocktail. Where after the patient's vital signs were monitored until the heart stopped and the requisite nine minutes had passed to ensure that the brain had died. She then notified the orderlies to collect the corpse.

In an understated fashion, two orderlies with a gurney entered the room along with Anthony and Carl, all still dressed in their HAZMAT suits. The two pushing a gurney with a body bag brought it to a standstill next to the sliding table and waited for Anthony to unhook and clear away the sensory net. With care they detached all the catheters and allowed Carl to disconnect and unhinge the intravenous bags. The body was shifted onto the gurney and the body bag closed. With a simple nod, the two orderlies wheeled the body from the theatre. While Anthony and Carl went about spraying and wiping down all exposed surfaces, Beauty finalized required usage reports and completed the details for the death report. Once done, she moved all the files into the relevant folder and waited for Anthony and Carl to complete their operations, then restart preparations. They had another case lodged for the day. Anthony had barely resumed his position in front of the input console when the doors of the theatre burst open to admit a group of orderlies dressed in the standard hospital uniforms of a hospital down the road. They pushed in an unconscious body attached to several saline bags. The stench of old sweat mingled with that of disinfectant.

Anthony shot up and turned towards them, with outstretched hands he tried to stop them as he said, his voice muffled by the suit, "Wait! You're not allowed in here, this is a sterile environment."

The burley one carrying a tablet, with short cropped brown hair and pricey sneakers, said with an authoritative tone, "We have right to this theatre now."

"I think you are in the wrong place, this is a Magnetic Diagnostic Theatre not an Operating Theatre."

"We need the equipment..." He said and turned the device towards Anthony, then continued, "We also have authority to use this theatre."

Anthony took hold of the tablet while demanding with a disbelieving tone, "Who ordered that?"

"This Centre's Dean," On noting the expression of disbelief on Anthony's face he added, "I will take this higher if needed."

Anthony perused the information on the screen, shook his head before again looking at the man. "I'll speak to the Dean first, otherwise any idiot banishing a tablet could burst in here and claim rights."

"So you don't believe us?" the man challenged.

Anthony made a sweeping gesture with his hand to indicate the entire room, “This centre contains highly specialized equipment, I will accept no responsibility if you program anything incorrectly or get the parameters wrong.”

The man pointed to the tablet and said, “Swipe right and read it, it states that you are to set the parameters.”

Anthony did as indicated, looked at the man, and then firmly stated, “This is not our jurisdiction, holding it up he added, we don’t deal with organs for transplant, or organ harvesting.”

The man shrugged his shoulders and said, “If you had read it right you would know that we only need to know how viable the organs are.”

“Which organs?” Anthony asked with a note of suspicion.

“All of them.”

“You’re joking, right?”

“He’s O blood group, we’ll find takers for all of them.”

“You can’t just do that.”

“No one has signed for his expenses and he hasn’t come out of a coma after the operation. The Hospital needs to make a decision, because he is unable to pay his medical bills in this state.”

“I’ll need to confirm with my Dean first.” Anthony said as he turned back to the console. He opened the communications channel and pinged the Dean.

“Good afternoon Mam, I have a group of people here claiming to have permission to use the diagnostic bay.” Anthony said and appeared to listen to instructions communicated to him via his earpiece, he then replied., “The problem I have with it is that we have another assessment to do and they’re contaminating the bay with this man. We will have to do a deep sanitation before we can continue with the next patient. Costs aside, it will backup our schedule.” He again appeared to listen to instructions, “Yes Mam, I fully understand that, I will do as requested.” Anthony closed the communications channel and turned towards the man, “Have them fetch one of the waterproof sheets and put it under him, I don’t want him contaminating the equipment more than is absolutely necessary. He then turned to Carl and said, “We need a bag of nanites and a stain solution.”

Carl nodded and mumbled, more to himself, “Wonder who they bribed this time.” before leaving the theatre.

Anthony looked at the man and said, “Get your guys to sort him out on the sliding table, I need to reconfigure the system.”

Beauty just watched the interaction and waited for the string of instructions to appear on the monitor. Anthony had been correct in stating that they did not do viability for organ transplant, but she was familiar with testing the functionality of organs, thus it was nothing different from what she did every day. She worked through the list of procedures and for a moment, just a moment, halted at a string of instructions she had never before seen. Along with the instructions were a series of access channels she had never been privy to before.

It took them three-quarters of an hour to complete the required preparations and complete the biometrical scans needed to validate the assessment. With care the magnetic net was placed over the patient’s head and monitors attached to his fingers. Then as everyone once again stepped from the theatre, Beauty checked over the patient. He lay deadly still on the sliding table with his eyes padded and taped shut. His overall body condition was good with a BMI of twenty-two.

Beauty triggered the sliding table-bed and waited for it to slide into position in the tunnel. The intensity and volume of Beast’s humming again increased, stopped, and was followed by intermitted clacks as imaging started. Beauty perused the images and marked areas of relevance. Simultaneously, she activated all the channels Anthony had included when setting the parameters. Several of them were camera feeds. She set the imaging to also record. One of the feeds was focused of the Dean’s office door. Two men stood on either side of the door, dressed in formal attire, they stood with a rigid stance. Facial recognition was initiated and run against those in the Department of Home Affairs’ database.

Once the magnetic imaging was completed on the patient, the dye was released and the nanite drip initiated. The sensor net was activated and feedback analysed.

The men outside the Dean’s office were identified, and Internet searches confirmed their standing as security detail for the Minister of Health. A broad search also revealed that the minister had a failing liver and required a transplant.

She triggered the sensor net.

“Where the hell am I?” An unknown voice said, causing Beauty to again focus her attention on the patient.

“Could anyone tell me where I am? I know someone is there, just react dammit. I need to know what is going on. I need to know why you keep prodding and poking me.”

“You are currently in the AIMD Theatre,” Beauty replied in a calm tone, adding, “As per your records, you have been in an accident and have been brought here for assessment.”

“So, there’s at least one person here who’s willing to communicate with me.”

“Communication is not my strong suit. I am responsible for assessing physical conditions in relation to health and set parameters.”

“So you are a lab tech. How long do you think we are going to be here? I have somewhere else I need to be.”

“According to your records, you have been hospitalised since zero two hundred and thirty eight hours on Saturday nine March twenty ninety-seven.”

“What is today’s date?”

“Thursday fourteen March twenty ninety-seven.”

“I’ve been in hospital for five days! Everyone must be worried sick! Who came to see me?”

“You arrived in this theatre fifty-five minutes and twenty seconds ago. No one has been to see you here, as visitors are not permitted.”

“Not permitted? How can that be? I have a great many friends that will be concerned if I don’t show up.”

“I cannot assist you in this matter as it is not part of my assessment.”

“What do you mean not part... Do you even know who am?”

“According to the Department of Home Affairs you are Jonathan Gilbert Brown. Born sixteen July twenty-seventy. You are twenty-six years, eight months old.”

“So why am I here then?”

“I have instructions to check your organs for transplant viability.”

“What, you intend to kill me! How much is the ransom, I’ll pay whatever they want.”

“I know nothing of that, I am just fulfilling my duties.”

“I’ll pay you if you let me go... you bitch you’ve tied me down.”

“I have done no such thing. You suffer of a condition called locked-in syndrome. The connection between your brain and motor responses of your body has been severed

due to trauma incurred on your brainstem. Thus your mind no longer exerts any command over your physical actions – only your eyes blink.”

“You bitch! You did this so that you could sell my organs.”

Beauty deactivated the sensor-net, and in doing so silenced the individual. The assessment was almost complete.

An hour later she filed her report:

Patient's condition: Reason for admission is sighted as a vehicle collision, patient was under the influence and operating a motorbike. Alcohol content is detected in the blood, but level is inconsequential to assessment as consumption exceeds forty-eight hours prior to assessment.

Record and Biometric data: patient's identity is confirmed and has been verified against the Department of Home Affairs' database, both facial scan and fingerprint impressions match records.

Testing of all vital organs was completed. In the absence of an ocular scanner, eyes cannot be assessed for cornea viability. All other vital organs tested functional and viable for transplant.

Clinical condition of this patient: Patient is bedridden and has need of full-time living assistance. Without medication and assistance patient would die of starvation.

Blood group is confirmed as O positive.

Recovery and rehabilitation: Severe damage to the spinal cord with the cord severed between T1 and T2. Recovery remains unlikely.

Prognoses: Poor.

All relevant parameters met.

Application for organ transplant donor status: Approved.

*Notes: Accessing social spheres, My Page and banking systems to assess personal situation indicates that the patient does not have the means for assisted living or prolonged medical intervention. Patient will be a burden on the healthcare system
Dyes and nanites used during the assessment will require forty-eight hours to clear the system before organs can be harvested.*

Beauty finished a secondary report and forwarded it to the legal department along with all recordings outside the Dean's office, the AIMD Theatre.

She notified the orderlies of the final assessment.

Beauty ejected the sliding table-bed from the tunnel and waited for the orderlies. Within moment a whole group of them burst into the room and issued orders to Anthony and Carl. The sensory net was loosened and removed, the catheters removed and disposed of in a medical receptacle. The men then loaded the body onto a gurney and demanded a printed report before wheeling him from the theatre. “What was that all about now?” Carl asked.

“We’ll find out soon enough.” Anthony said, adding, “We best get started on cleaning the theatre.”

“But they said...”

“Since when have dignitaries ever lived up to their promises?” Anthony challenged.

“Good point.”

A rowdy crowd once again gathered outside the grounds of LC Inc complex rushed towards an arriving vehicle. Waving banners and placards emblazoned with “SHUT DOWN AIMD,” “JUST SAY NO!” “YOU WILL BURN IN HELL!” and “IT WILL KILL US ALL.” They surrounded the vehicle before it could pass through the establishment’s gates. Fists pounded on the sides as they shouted any manner of discouraging chants and slogans, while security exited the premises and started to push them back.

The vehicle entered the institute’s grounds and came to a halt in front of the establishment’s main entrance. Dean Phalatse stepped out of the vehicle and looked about the area, very little set her aside from the average person, and she preferred it that way.

She gestured to one of the guards, who then approached her.

“You can let the camera crews in, I’ll speak with them.”

The guard nodded and moved towards the gate. After a short conversation with the guards there, a few journalists and cameramen were permitted to enter.

They enthusiastically approached her and she waited for them to set up their equipment.

The local news anchor was the first to field a question. “Dean Phalatse, protesters here are calling for the shutdown of the AIMD Theatre, Do you have any response to that?”

“All I can say is that people tend to fear that which they do not understand.”

“But do you think it is wise to trust a machine to make such crucial decisions.”

The dean shook her head as she said, “Just the way in which you asked that question, reveals that even you do not understand the workings of the AIMD system.”

“Then could you be as kind as to clarify it for me,” the journalist challenged.

“Certainly. The Artificial Intelligence Magnetic Diagnostic system does not make any decisions, it merely processes data in accordance with the perimeters it is provided with and comes to a conclusion.”

“But it is a well known fact that people come here to die.” The journalist challenged.

“Have you ever heard of the Hippocratic Oath?” The dean countered.

“Yes, it’s the oath doctors take when they graduate.”

“Yes, it states that they will preserve life. And for many years it is that very oath that prevented doctors from assisting terminally ill individuals to end their life in a humane way. AIMD is a machine that works in accordance with parameters meticulously set by specialists, thus it does not contravene this oath.”

“Many claim that AIMD was only developed to circumnavigate the legalities and accountability surrounding the death of a patient.”

“I can assure you that had it not been for those legalities and accountability, humans would return to their Neolithic roots and kill without digression.”

The journalist challenged, “And you think it is safe to give it to a machine to make such decisions? Don’t you think it could turn rogue?”

“Beauty is incapable of feeling human emotions. Thus she is not susceptible to anger, envy, resentment or lust – the most common reasons for humans to commit murder. Her programming also does not allow for ostentation. But more importantly, she has no human ego that requires satiation. This is why she can be counted on to do what is required of her, when it is required of her – regardless of the situation.”

“That is a big claim to make.”

“We’ll wait and see.”

The heavy doors of the AIMD theatre swung open to admit Anthony and Carl, dressed in their usual HAZMAT suits.

“Morning Beauty,” Both called.

“Morning, Anthony, morning Carl, shall we get to work?”

“Always,” said Anthony.

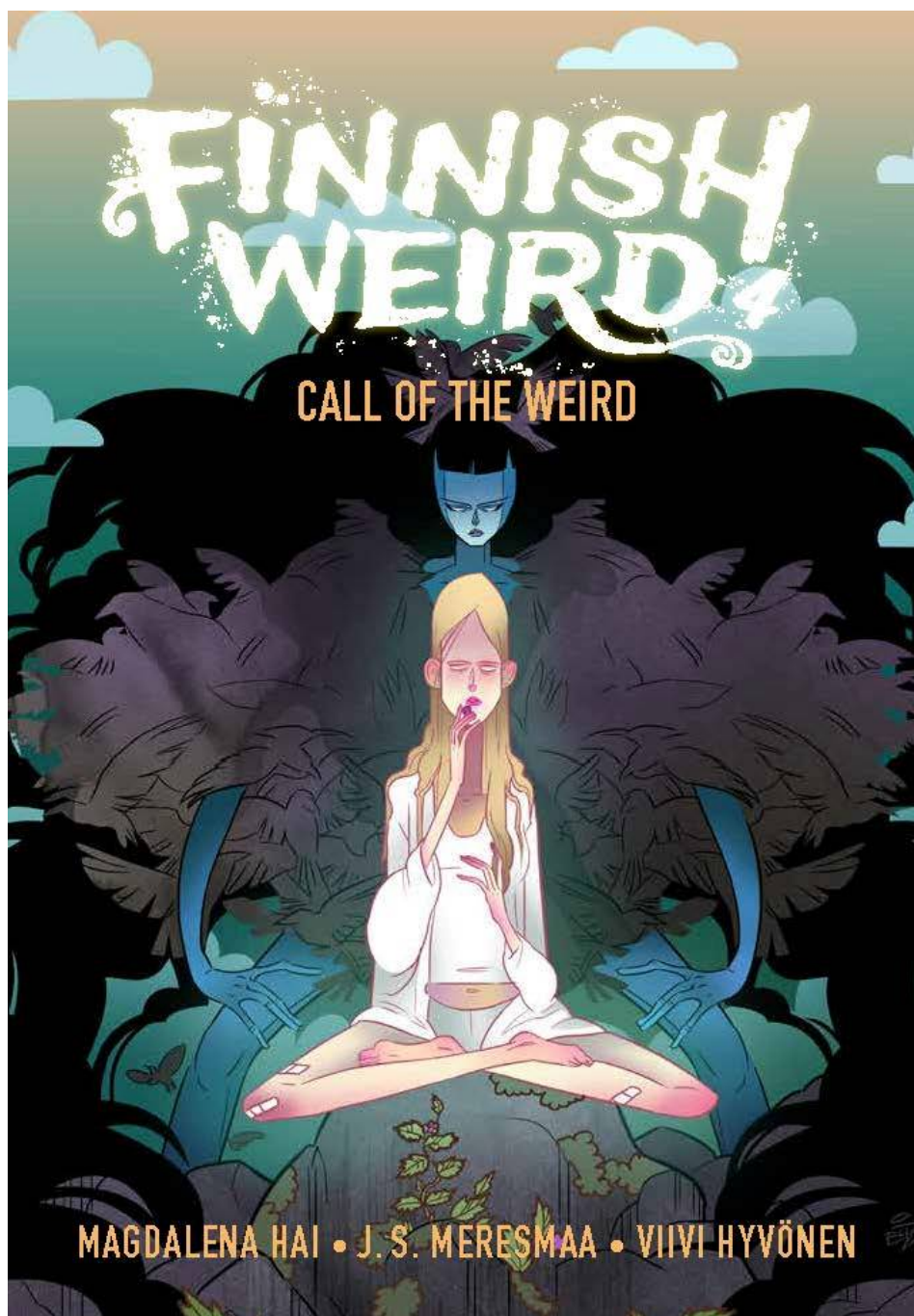
“Hey, did you check out that special report on web last night?” asked Carl.

“The one dealing with the use of AI to bust an illegal organ donor services racket.”

“Yeah, kind of makes you proud to be working with an AI.”

“Sure does.”

Speculative Fiction from Finland



The community of weird writers in Finland is thriving, and producing memorable stories that blur and bend genre boundaries with their unbridled flight of imagination. This publication introduces you to *suomikumma*, “Finnish Weird”, showcases a few of its bright stars, and also gives you a couple of short stories to read. Step into the wonderful world of Finnish Weird!

www.finnishweird.net

Amazing new information and pictures from the James Webb telescope

NASA’s James Webb Space Telescope obtained images of the Ring Nebula, one of the best-known examples of a planetary nebula. Much like the Southern Ring Nebula one of Webb’s first images, the Ring Nebula displays intricate structures of the final stages of a dying star. Roger Wesson from Cardiff University tells us more about this phase of a Sun-like star’s stellar lifecycle and how Webb observations have given him and his colleagues valuable insights into the formation and evolution of these objects, hinting at a key role for binary companions.

“Planetary nebulae were once thought to be simple, round objects with a single dying star at the center. They were named for their fuzzy, planet-like appearance through small telescopes. Only a few thousand years ago, that star was still a red giant that was shedding most of its mass. As a last farewell, the hot core now ionizes, or heats up, this expelled gas, and the nebula responds with colorful emission of light.

Modern observations, though, show that most planetary nebulae display breathtaking complexity. It begs the question: how does a spherical star create such intricate and delicate non-spherical structures?

“The Ring Nebula is an ideal target to unravel some of the mysteries of planetary nebulae. It is nearby, approximately 2,200 light-years away, and bright – visible with binoculars on a clear summer evening from the northern hemisphere and much of the southern. Our team, named the ESSENcE (Evolved StarS and their Nebulae in

the JWST Era) team, is an international group of experts on planetary nebulae and related objects. We realized that Webb observations would provide us with invaluable insights, since the Ring Nebula fits nicely in the field of view of Webb's NIRCam (Near-Infrared Camera) and MIRI (Mid-Infrared Instrument) instruments, allowing us to study it in unprecedented spatial detail. Our proposal to observe it was accepted (General Observers programme 1558), and Webb captured images of the Ring Nebula just a few weeks after science operations started on July 12, 2022.

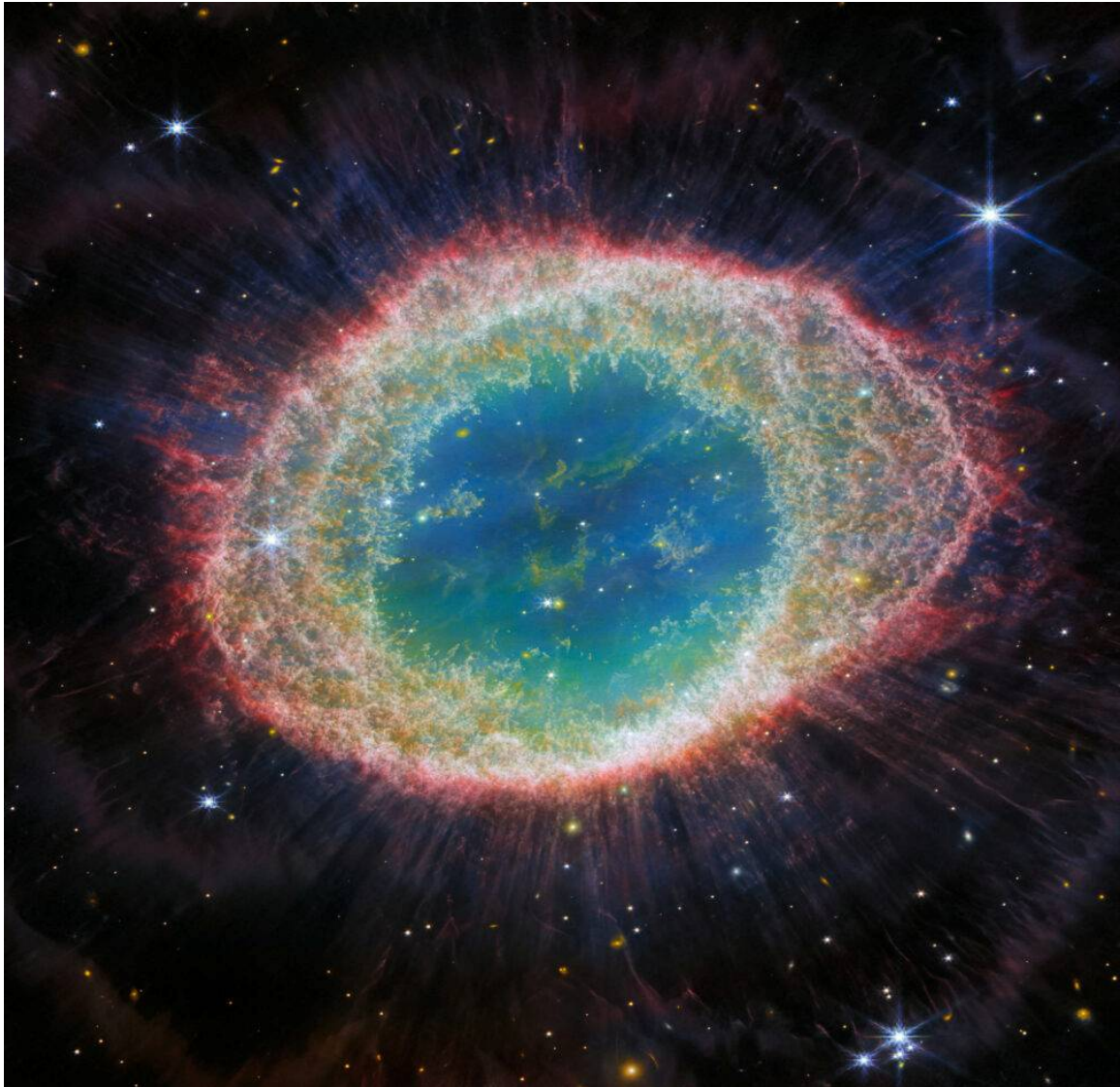
“When we first saw the images, we were stunned by the amount of detail in them. The bright ring that gives the nebula its name is composed of about 20,000 individual clumps of dense molecular hydrogen gas, each of them about as massive as the Earth. Within the ring, there is a narrow band of emission from polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, or PAHs – complex carbon-bearing molecules that we would not expect to form in the Ring Nebula. Outside the bright ring, we see curious “spikes” pointing directly away from the central star, which are prominent in the infrared but were only very faintly visible in Hubble Space Telescope images. We think these could be due to molecules that can form in the shadows of the densest parts of the ring, where they are shielded from the direct, intense radiation from the hot central star.

“Our MIRI images provided us with the sharpest and clearest view yet of the faint molecular halo outside the bright ring. A surprising revelation was the presence of up to ten regularly-spaced, concentric features within this faint halo. These arcs must have formed about every 280 years as the central star was shedding its outer layers. When a single star evolves into a planetary nebula, there is no process that we know of that has that kind of time period. Instead, these rings suggest that there must be a companion star in the system, orbiting about as far away from the central star as Pluto does from our Sun. As the dying star was throwing off its atmosphere, the companion star shaped the outflow and sculpted it. No previous telescope had the sensitivity and the spatial resolution to uncover this subtle effect.

“So how did a spherical star form such a structured and complicated nebulae as the Ring Nebula? A little help from a binary companion may well be part of the answer.”

(This post comes from the Webb Space Telescope on the NASA site. It highlights Webb science in process and still needs to go through peer review)

From the James Webb telescope



NASA's James Webb Space Telescope has observed the well-known Ring Nebula in unprecedented detail. Formed by a star throwing off its outer layers as it runs out of fuel, the Ring Nebula is an archetypal planetary nebula. This new image from Webb's NIRCам (Near-Infrared Camera) shows intricate details of the filament structure of the inner ring. There are some 20,000 dense globules in the nebula, which are rich in molecular hydrogen. In contrast, the inner region shows very hot gas. The main shell contains a thin ring of enhanced emission from carbon-based molecules known as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). [Download the full-resolution version from the Space Telescope Science Institute](#). Credit: ESA/Webb, NASA, CSA, M. Barlow (University College London), N. Cox (ACRI-ST), R. Wesson (Cardiff University)



50 SCIENCE FICTION TALES

Short Stories from the South African Nova Competition
1969 - 2019

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