
WATCH
THE
SKIES

Three Body Problem

By Cixin Liu

22.6

Is the Three Body Problem an old theoretical physics conundrum? Is it a VR game that puts the user through a series of mental challenges to preserve a civilization that may not reflect their own? Is it a representation of the star system closest to our own? Or is it in truth all of these things and affecting our world subtly all the way from the time of the cultural revolution until now? Ye Wenjie survived her father's political fall from grace and became part of the Red Coast secret project. Wang Miao's work on nanotechnology is interrupted when he is asked to keep an eye on a scientific group whose members are mysteriously dying. Together they are connected by the VR game that may represent a clear and present danger to humanity. But what can they do when the advice they receive is "The world is about to change. Everyone should live out their lives in peace. That would be best. Don't worry too much about matters. It's all useless anyway."

-July's meeting is on the 20th in person at the Simpson Library, Mechanicsburg (unless otherwise announced) and the book of the month is *Shadow and Bone* by Leigh Bardugo.
-Cover art by Eric V. Hardenbrook

Check out the website at: watchtheskies.org or
contact us at: wtsnewsletter@gmail.com

NEW RELEASES

JULY 2022

CATHERINE ASARO - The Jigsaw Assassin
BECKY CHAMBERS - A Prayer for the Crown-Shy
MICHAEL, COBLEY ED. - Night
ZABÉ ELLOR - Silk Fire
RAYMOND E. FEIST - Master of Furies
SARAH GAILEY - Just Like Home
LIZ GORINSKY, ED. - Imagined Spaces: An Anthology of Innovative Science Fiction and Fantasy Roleplaying Games
EILEEN GUNN - Night Shift
GRADY HENDRIX - How to Sell a Haunted House
EMMI ITÄRANTA - The Moonday Letters
T. KINGFISHER - What Moves the Dead
MARKO KLOOS - Centers of Gravity
TJ KLUNE - Heat Wave
DEAN KOONTZ - The Big Dark Sky
SARAH KUHN - Holiday Heroine
TIM LEBBON - The Last Storm
JONATHAN MABERRY & JUSTIN CRIADO, EDS. - Weird Tales: Best of the Early Years 1923-25
JONATHAN MABERRY & KAYE BOOTH, EDS. - Weird Tales: Best of the Early Years 1926-27
FOZ MEADOWS - A Strange and Stubborn Endurance
SILVIA MORENO-GARCIA - The Daughter of Doctor Moreau
ANYA OW - Ion Curtain
LUCINDA ROY - Flying the Coop
C.T. RWIZI - Primeval Fire
DONNA SCOTT, ED. - Best of British Science Fiction 2021
PAUL TREMBLAY - The Pallbearers' Club
HARRY TURTLEDOVE - Three Miles Down
TAD WILLIAMS - Into the Narrowdark
A.C. WISE - Hooked
TIMOTHY ZAHN - The Icarus Plot

Up To The Challenge

A FANTASY AND SCI-FI ANTHOLOGY

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

MARIA V. SNYDER

AVAILABLE NOW

NEWS OF THE REALM

Nominations for the Dragon Awards for 2022 are being accepted right now until July 19th. Books, short stories and more can be nominated here - Dragon Con 2022 - Dragon Awards Nominations

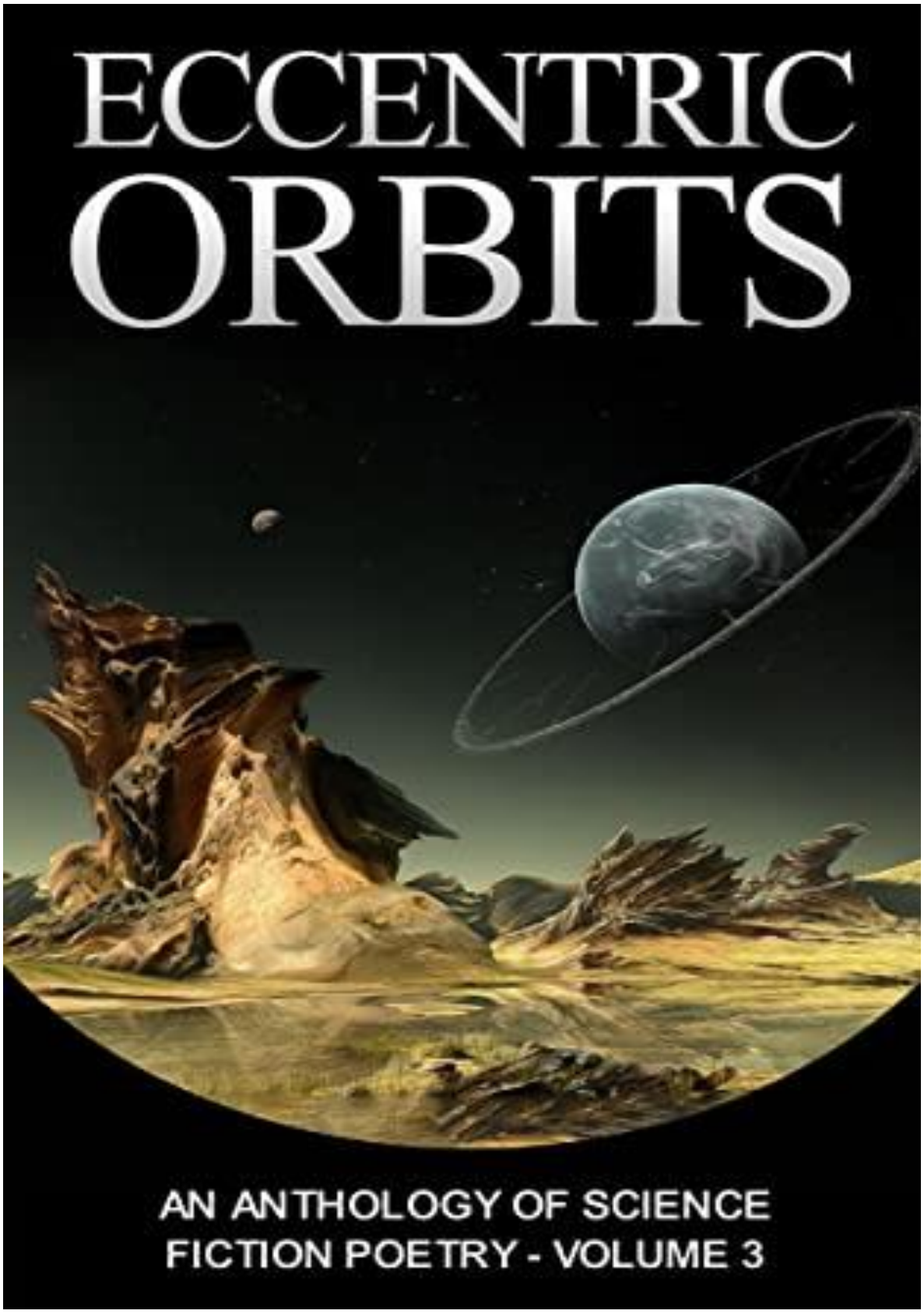
Upcoming conventions:
SCI-FI Valley Con – June 17th – 19th, Altoona, PA at the Blair County Convention Center. Featuring media guests: E.G Daily, Billy West, Nolan North, Rob Paulsen, Grey Delisle, Coleman Townsend, along with 300 exhibitors and more.

Shore Leave – July 15th – 17th, Hunt Valley, MD, at the Delta Hotels Baltimore Hunt Valley. Featuring guests: Adam Baldwin, Summer Glau, Gates McFadden, Eddie McClintock, Brandon Routh and more.

Confluence – July 29th – 30th, Pittsburgh, PA, at the Sheraton Pittsburgh Airport Hotel. Guest of honor, Neil Clarke of Clarkesworld magazine. Musical guest of honor, Tim Griffin. Featured artist, Kathryn Carr.

SCIENCY STUFF

-Crossing genetics with Neandertals may have cost us in the Covid pandemic in an unexpected way. Professor James Davies of Oxford University points to a union between species probably about 60,000 years ago whose resulting child brought with them a gene that makes us more likely to have lungs that are more susceptible to the viral attack. That gene could rest in many of us and it's a ticking bomb when it comes to Covid-19, which typically attacks the lungs. As many as a million deaths could be linked to the expression of this gene. Can you find out if you have the gene? Well, it is possible, but the genetic tests are often costly, and results often vary in accuracy.
-While we're talking about genetic testing scientists are working on a new method which could be put into use as soon as two years from now enabling technicians to look for up to 50 diseases. This new method called Nanopere Sequencing scans a DNA sample, typically from blood, and compares it to 40 or more genes associated with known diseases. The system looks for long repeated sequences that are often hallmarks of illness. But instead of testing for a single issue, they are looking at multiple possibilities. Better yet the machine involved in the process has been reduced to a size that fits in the palm of the hand and costs about $1000. Scientists also believe that using it to perform tests on groups of individuals may allow us to find diseases we haven't even identified yet. The big win for the test is its predictive ability, which will allow doctors to identify in advance diseases that often do not present until adulthood.



AVAILABLE NOW

You Should Be Watching

Love, Death & Robots

I went back through the list of shows that I have recommended in the history of these articles and was stunned to see that I had not brought up Love, Death & Robots. I don't know how this has escaped previously, but no longer.

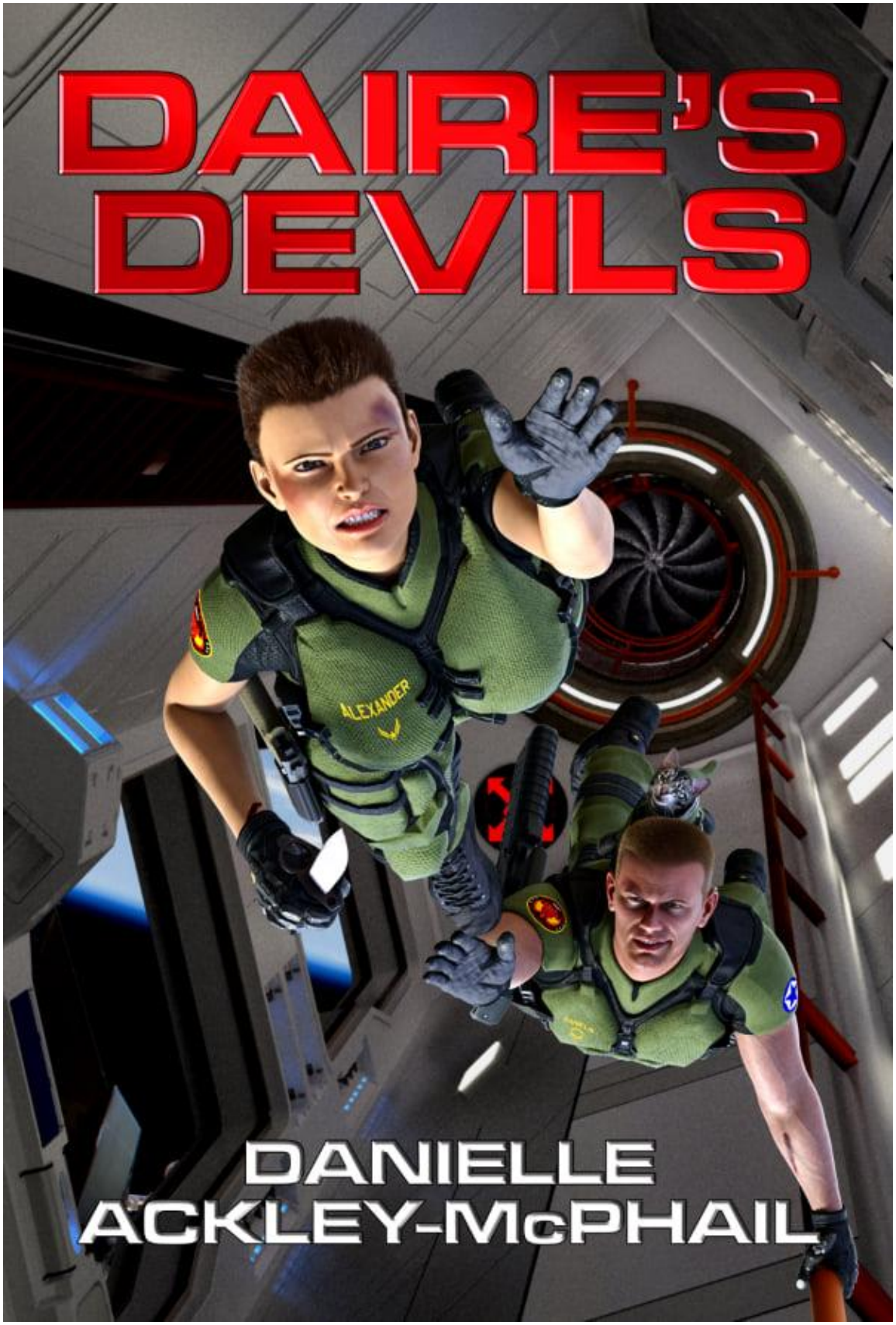
Love, Death & Robots is an animated series, but this is very specifically aimed at adults. The creator's original intent was to have something similar in nature to the animated film Heavy Metal (from 1981). Do not for a moment think this is a children's cartoon. It is NOT. It is brutal, sexy and mind rattling in varying degrees throughout. Netflix loaded up the first season of LD&R back in March of 2019. There were 18 episodes for the series, each coming in with a viewing length under 20 minutes. The second season of 8 was released in May of 2021, and the most recent season of 9 episodes launched just last month (May of 2022).

The stories for these animations all come from some of the best writers in modern science fiction, fantasy and horror. Names like, Bacigalupi, Asher, Scalzi and Sterling. There's even an episode showing a storywritten by Harlan Ellison. These stories carry weight and have real punch in such a short time frame. The set up to the closure, if there is any, come right at you. The first two seasons each won an Emmy. The story telling is only rivaled by the pictures that accompany the stories.

IF you dislike 'cartoons' for some reason, I challenge you to watch these and NOT become a fan of animation. The art, the sheer beauty of so many of these works will make you question how they were created. Admittedly, they are not all hyper realistic, but even the goofiest stories are well animated. The colors, the smoothness, and the pure vibrancy of even the darkest pieces still amazes me. I have some that I re-watch for the story and many that I re-watch just to see them. Just to experience their beauty again. I don't believe they needed more marketing, but the third season has actually done something neat to accompany all this art. There were some clues hidden in certain episodes of the third season. If you followed the clues, you'd find your way to some computer art from the show. The hunt, and the clues have continued on various social medial platforms since the third season was released.

I highly recommend this show. You should definitely be watching.

Check out the trailer for season three here:
https://youtu.be/Xj2b0swdpX8



COMING SOON

Tillyer's News of the High Frontier

June 2022

-Sometimes you have to watch the quiet ones because they are accomplishing amazing things in the background – the Gaia space telescope is just such a case. It's not an easily recognizable name like the newly stationed James Webb telescope, the Hubble or the Spitzer, but Gaia since its launch in 2013 has daily sent us data on our own galaxy that continues to fill in the gaps in our knowledge. Funded and maintained by the European Union, the Gaia is different the other telescopes because its actually two scopes oriented to view 106 degrees from each other whose light is composited onto a billion-pixel camera. About seven and a half feet across, Gaia is hidden behind a sun shield over 30 feet in diameter and parked at the L2 Lagrange point in the ballpark of one and a half million kilometers distant. Here it is protected from the interference caused by the Sun and able to view the universe around us. But Gaia's focus is mainly on our galaxy. It takes two months for Gaia to scan the whole heavens and its telescopes are more concerned with the fine details of the Milky Way rather than capturing spectacular images. Gaia's photometers allow astronomers to gauge the age of stars as well as their compositions and the radial spectrometer allows them to track their motions. Each day, Gaia downloads anywhere from 20 to 100 gigs of data to Earth. Astronomers comb through this to build new and more accurate maps of the Milky Way. So far there have been four "data dumps" from the telescope released and each comes with a better map and more understanding of the galaxy we live in. It's estimated the information received from the telescope generates as many as five scientific papers every day. The most recent data dump was on June 13th. What else have we learned? Well, being able to track the motion of stars over time allows us to extrapolate their former positions. This means that like a planetarium, we can generate a virtual version of the galaxy and rewind it to points in time to create a window into the past. Such activities have allowed us to prove that 10 billion years ago, the Milky Way collided with a smaller galaxy. This gave rise to a number of the stars that comprise the Milky Way's halo. Other observations revealed that another galactic collision threw our galaxy out of a stable orbit, and it now wobbles and is not completely disc shaped. Gaia is expected to continue to operate until sometime in 2025 when it will run out of fuel. Until then, hopefully it will continue to provide data that allows us to learn more about our galactic home.


WATCH THE SKIES
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