



REBECCA
HARDENBROOK
1972 - 2025
DEAREST CRABBY

**WATCH THE
SKIES**



Murder Your Employer

By Rupert Holmes

25.8

Murder, is it really most foul? What if instead it was an art? McMasters Conservatory for the Applied Arts presents itself as the perfect place to receive the proper education as a deletist. While it appears a wonderful place to learn, there are a few small drawbacks. Number one of course is the fact that everyone there has either decided to commit a murder or has already successfully accomplished one. Then there's also the fact that students are encouraged to practice the deadly arts that they are learning – upon one another. Cliff Iverson, Gemma Lindley, and Doria Maye all have their reasons for being at McMasters and each one has a name. The world just might be a better place without those particular names. Can they learn enough to pull off the perfect murder and complete their final thesis for McMasters or will they succumb to the deadly hijinks of their classmates?

-Welcome to the 25th year of Watch the Skies, a whole quarter century!
August's meeting is on the 20th, in person, at the Simpson Library,
Mechanicsburg (unless otherwise announced) and the book of the month
is – Clockwork Boys – T. Kingfisher
-Cover art by Eric V. Hardenbrook

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

REST IN PEACE, REBECCA HARDENBROOK, FOUNDING MEMBER

In the time since our last issue, one of our longest standing members has passed away. Rebecca Hardenbrook was with the group since the beginning, though her attendance at the physical meetings had been less in recent months. She read, debated and laughed her way through many of the group's reading choices. She attended the extra events like movies or watch parties and was a long-standing convention attendee as well. She latched onto fandom and wouldn't let go, even going as far to publish some fan fiction on Archive of Our Own.

It came as a surprise to some that she was the voice behind a long running piece in Watch the Skies titled "Dear Crabby". The concept being that of an advice column, similar to Dear Abby, but with science fiction related themes and... less than political responses. The questions and responses ran from 2014 all the way into 2022.

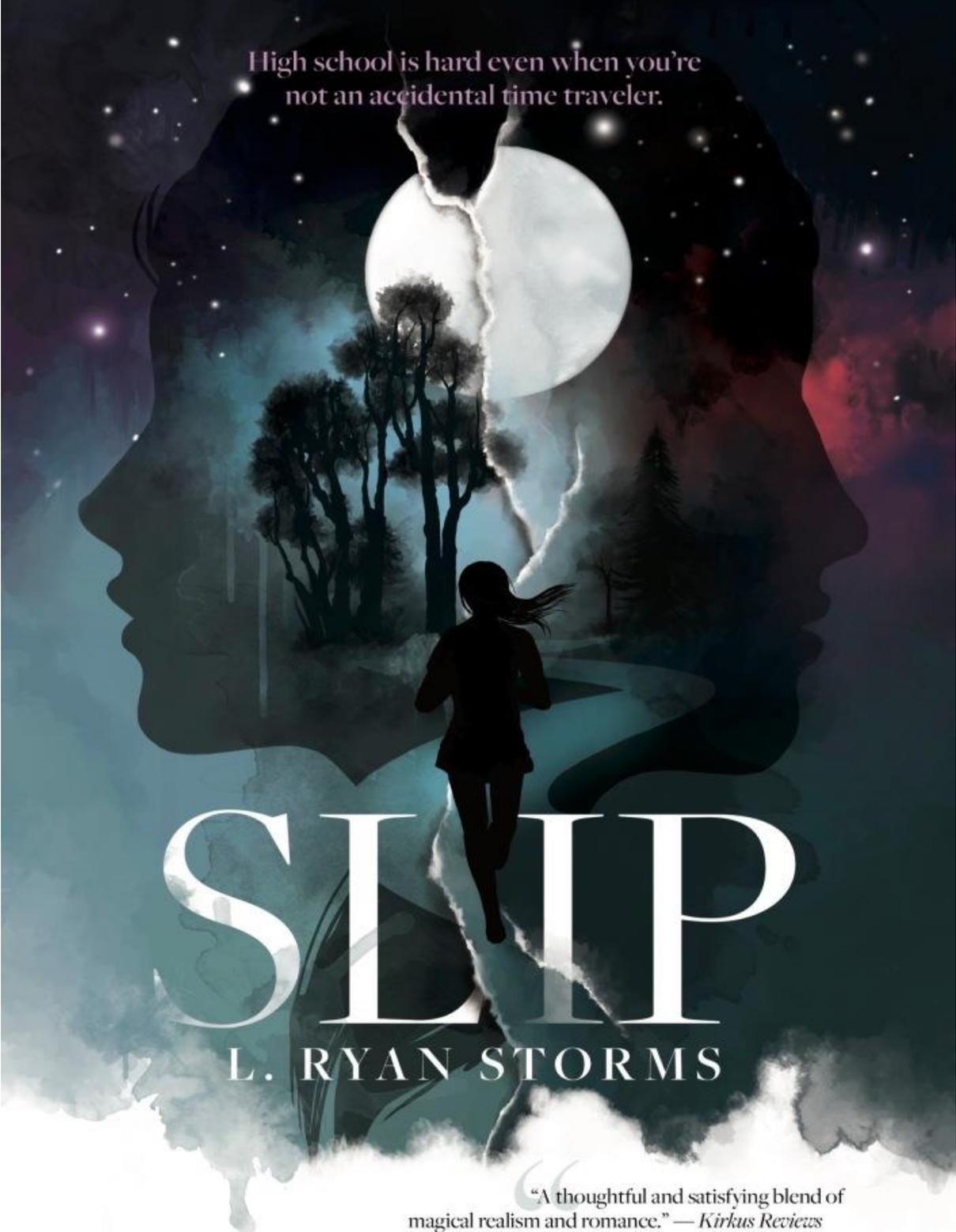
To quote another member of the group, "I remember how fearless Beck was and how that one particular smile would begin to grow as she listened to someone full of themselves or who just didn't have a solid sense of reality. It would form on her face like an archer pulling back on their bow, and I knew whatever she launched at the person would be DEVASTATING, but in the most loving way imaginable. She did not suffer bullies or fools."

Crabby's identity was a loosely guarded secret so that nobody would feel unjustly targeted or as if the response to their question was a personal attack... well, no more than would be expected from an advisor whose monicker literally meant irritable.

From "I hate to make light of the situation but, does it matter?" in response to a question about smashing photons in an experiment to "you do realize that life on other planets could conceivably consist of what amounts to a sentient mold, right?" when responding to a question about UFOs and visitors from other planets, Crabby's responses had something for everyone along the way. That something might have been thoughtful, or it might have been thoughtful combined with acidic, but the responses were genuinely her own. The archive of her work is still on the Watch The Skies page dedicated to her [HERE](#).

Rebecca will be missed. This world, and those others populated by fandom are less without her.





High school is hard even when you're
not an accidental time traveler.

SLEEP

L. RYAN STORMS

“A thoughtful and satisfying blend of
magical realism and romance.” — *Kirkus Reviews*

“Endearing to memorable and evocative.” — *IndieReader*

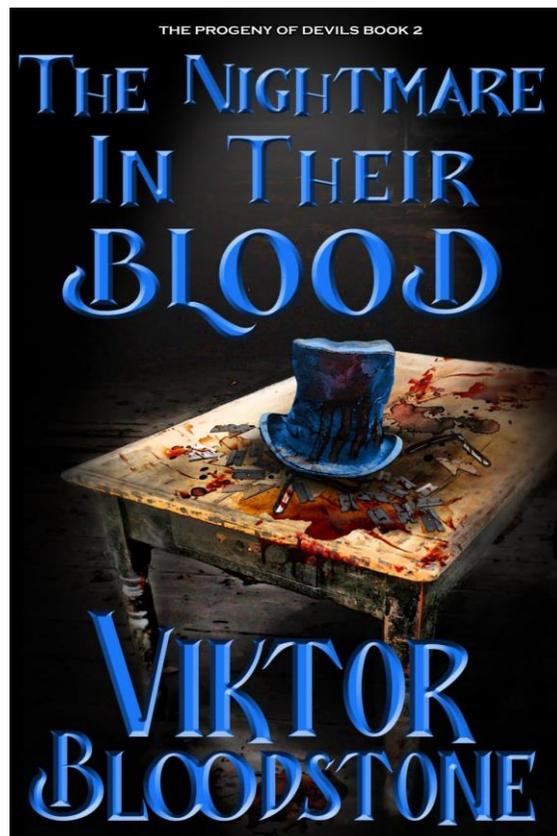
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NEW RELEASES

September 2025

EUGEN BACON - **The Nga'phandileh Whisperer**
JOSIAH BANCROFT - **The Hexologists: A Tangle of Time**
STEPHEN BAXTER - **Hearthspace**
NICHOLAS BINGE - **Extremity**
HOLLY BLACK - **Thief of Night**
KRISTEN BRITAIN - **Falling in a Sea of Stars**
MARTIN CAHILL - **The Audition for the Fox**
CLAY MCLEOD CHAPMAN - **Acquired Taste**
C.L. CLARK - **Fate's Bane**
C.L. CLARK - **The Sovereign**
PAUL CORNELL - **The Gnomes of Lychford**
ELLEN DATLOW, ED. - **Night & Day**
DELILAH S. DAWSON - **House of Idyll**
SARAH GAILEY - **Spread Me**
CHRISTOPHER GOLDEN - **The Night Birds**
CHARLIE N. HOLMBERG - **The Shattered King**
CHARLIE N. HOLMBERG - **Whimbrel House #5**
KATHLEEN JENNINGS - **Honeyeater**
BITTER KARELLA - **Moonflow**
ALMA KATSU - **Fiend**
STEPHEN KING & MAURICE SENDAK - **Hansel and Gretel**
T. KINGFISHER - **What Stalks the Deep**
RICH LARSON - **Changelog**
SEANAN MCGUIRE - **Silver and Lead**
PREMEE MOHAMED - **The First Thousand Trees**
LOUISA MORGAN - **The Faerie Morgana**
NAOMI NOVIK - **The Summer War**
K.J. PARKER - **Making History**
GARETH L. POWELL - **Who Will You Save?**

RHIANNA PRATCHETT - **Tiffany Aching's Guide to Being a Witch**
CAT RAMBO - **Wings of Tabat**
ALASTAIR REYNOLDS - **Halcyon Days**
LEZLI ROBYN - **In Her Wake**
VERONICA ROTH - **To Clutch a Razor**
ANTHONY RYAN - **The Infernus Gate**
ANDRZEJ SAPKOWSKI - **Crossroads of Ravens**
JOHN SCALZI - **The Shattering Peace**
SAMANTHA SHANNON - **Among the Burning Flowers**
SHARON SHINN - **Shifter and Shadow**
WEN SPENCER - **Black Tie and Tails**
CADWELL TURNBULL - **A Ruin**
FRAN WILDE - **A Philosophy of Thieves**
RICHARD WOLINSKY, ED. - **Space Ships! Ray Guns! Martian Octopods!: Interviews with Science Fiction Legends**



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NEWS OF THE REALM

Hugo Awards 2025:

Best Novel - *The Tainted Cup* - Robert Jackson Bennett

Best Novella - *The Tusks of Extinction*

Best Novelette - "The Four Sisters Overlooking the Sea" - Naomi Kritzer

Best Short Story - "Stitched to Skin Like Family Is" - Nghi Vo

Best Series - *Between Earth and Sky* - Rebecca Roanhorse

Best Graphic Story or Comic - *Star Trek: Lower Decks: Warp Your Own Way*

Best Related Work - *Speculative Whiteness: Science Fiction and the Alt-Right* - Jordan S. Carroll

Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form - *Dune: Part Two*

Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form - *Star Trek: Lower Decks: "The New Next Generation"*

Best Game or Interactive Work - *Caves of Qud*

Best Editor, Short Form - Neil Clarke

Best Editor, Long Form - Diana M. Pho

Best Professional Artist - Alyssa Winans

Best Semiprozine - *Uncanny*

Best Fanzine - *Black Nerd Problems*

Best Fancast - *Eight Days of Diana Wynne Jones*

Best Fan Writer - Abigail Nussbaum

Best Fan Artist - Sara Felix

Best Poem - "A War of Words" - Marie Brennan

Lodestar Award for Best Young Adult Book - *Sheine Lend* - Darcie Little Badger

***Astounding* Award for Best New Writer - Moniquill Blackgoose**

2024 Endeavor Award Finalists:

Relics of Ruin - Erin M. Evans

The Rain Artist - Claire Rudy Foster

Tidal Creatures - Seanan McGuire

Better Living Through Alchemy - Evan J. Peterson

Heavenbreaker - Sara Wolf

2025 Aurora Awards:

Best Novel - The Siege of Burning Grass - Premee Mohamed

Best YA Novel - Heavenly Tyrant- Xiran Jay Zhao

Best Novelette/Novella - The Butcher of the Forest - Premee Mohamed

Best Short Story - "Blood and Desert Dreams" – Y.M. Pang

Best Graphic Novel/Comic - Star Trek Lower Decks: Warp Your Own Way

Best Related Work - Year's Best Canadian Fantasy and Science Fiction:
Volume Two - Stephen Kotowych, ed.

Best Poem/Song – "Cthulhu on the Shores of Osaka" - Y.M. Pang

Best Cover Art/Interior Illustration - *Augur* 7.1 cover art - Martine Nguyen

Best Fan Writing and Publications - *SF&F Book Reviews*

Best Fan Related Work - *murmurstations*

2025 WSFA Small Press Award Finalists:

"All We Ever Had"- M.A. Akins

"Within the Seed Lives the Fruit"- Leah Andelsmith

"Bespoke"- Elly Bangs

"A Hero's Tale"- E. Florian Gludovacz

"A Slightly Different Sunrise from Mercury, Nevada"- Íde Hennessy

"A Pilgrimage to the God of High Places"- Marissa Lingen

"A Catalog of 21st Century Ghosts"- Pat Murphy

"Collaborators"- Michael Payne

2025 Dragon Award Ballot:

Best Science Fiction Novel

Nether Station- Kevin J. Anderson

The Folded Sky- Elizabeth Bear

Alliance Unbound- C.J. Cherryh & Jane S. Fancher

The Mercy of Gods- James S.A. Corey

This Inevitable Ruin- Matt Dinniman

Extremophile- Ian Green

Absolution- Jeff VanderMeer

Best Fantasy Novel

The Devils- Joe Abercrombie

Long Live Evil- Sarah Rees Brennan

Heart of the Mountain- Larry Correia

The Last Shield- Cameron Johnston

Shadow of the Smoking Mountain- Howard Andrew Jones

The Black Bird Oracle- Deborah Harkness

Best Young Adult / Middle Grade Novel

Rest in Peaches- Alex Brown

Sunrise on the Reaping- Suzanne Collins

Among Serpents- Marc J Gregson

Friends Indeed- Jane Lindskold & David Weber

Labyrinth Arcanist- Shami Stovall

Compound Fracture- Andrew Joseph White

Best Alternate History Novel

Gold, Gangs, and Glory- Laurence Dahners

1919: The Romanov Rising- Kacey Ezell, Tom Kratman & Justin Watson

1635: The Weaver's Code- Eric Flint & Jody Lynn Nye

The Martian Contingency- Mary Robinette Kowal

To Turn the Tide- S.M. Stirling

Gangster- Dan Willis

Best Horror Novel

Cold Eternity- S.A. Barnes

The Vengeful Dead- Darcy Coates

It Will Only Hurt for a Moment- Delilah S. Dawson

The Buffalo Hunter Hunter- Stephen Graham Jones

The Wilding- Ian McDonald

Bury Your Gays- Chuck Tingle

Best Illustrative Cover

Pierluigi Abbondanza for **Rise From Ruin**- Melissa Olthoff

Jeff Brown for **Flames of Gold**- Liz Delton

Sam Kennedy for **Blood of Her Father**- Kacey Ezell & Marisa Wolf

Kurt Miller for **Mountain of Fire**- Jason Cordova

Dave Seeley for **The Icarus Coda**- Timothy Zah

Michael Whelan for **Wind and Truth**, Brandon Sanderson

Best Comic Book or Graphic Novel

Absolute Superman- Jason Aaron- illustrated by Rafa Sandoval

Ultimate Wolverine- Christopher Condon- illustrated by Alessandro Cappuccio

Ultimate Spider-Man Volume 2: The Paper- Jonathan Hickman- illustrated by Marco Checchetto & David Messina

Transformers Volume 3: Combiner Chaos- Daniel Warren Johnson- illustrated by Jorge Corona

Absolute Batman- Scott Snyder- illustrated by Nick Dragotta

Daredevil: Cold Day In Hell- Charles Soule- illustrated by Steve McNiven

Best Science Fiction or Fantasy TV Series, TV or Internet

Andor

Murderbot

Severance

Silo

The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power

Wheel of Time

Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Movie

Alien: Romulus

Deadpool & Wolverine

How to Train Your Dragon

Sinners

*Thunderbolts**

Wicked

2025 Mythopoeic Awards Winners:

Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Adult Literature : The Melancholy of Untold History- Minsoo Kang

Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Young Adult Literature : The Isles of the Gods duology- Amie Kaufman

Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Children's Literature : Island of Whispers- Frances Hardinge- illustrated by Emily Gravett

Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Inklings Studies : The Collected Poems of J.R.R. Tolkien- Wayne G. Hammond & Christina Scull, eds.

Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Myth and Fantasy Studies : Urban Fantasy: Exploring Modernity through Magic- Stefan Ekman

THE STUDY OF FIRE



A COMPANION NOVEL TO *FIRE STUDY*

MARIA V. SNYDER

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

AVAILABLE NOW

Tillyer's News of the High Frontier

-Besides the surface of the Sun, one of the hottest places in the solar system is shrinking in size because it is actually cooling down. Since its formation approximately 4.5 billion years ago, the planet Mercury has been slowly decreasing in size. How slowly? Well, in that time period, Mercury is believed to have shrunk 2 and half to three kilometers. How do we know this? Well, familiar cooling objects and Mercury experience cracks in their surface as they shrink. Using various methods scientists have estimated the amount of shrinkage by comparing the uplifted portions of the ground created by the faults. Newer estimates now indicate the amount of change may be as much as 5.6 kilometers. Using this system, it's possible to measure changes on other planets or moons such as Mars or Europa may have changed in size since their formation. Looking back on a prior statement, it is true that Mercury is one of the hottest places, but it is not the hottest planet. That honor falls to Venus due to the run-away green house effect in its atmosphere causing temperatures as high as 880 degrees Fahrenheit. Due to the cloud cover's reflective nature, Venus is also one of the brightest objects in the sky. The one place that it is unlikely Mercury is shrinking was discovered by the Messenger probe sent by NASA. Astronomers were puzzled by the planet's dark surface and were able to prove over time that there are patches of graphite there. Scientists believe that in the past Mercury had a magma ocean that was rich in carbon. Once the ocean rose to the surface it could have deposited the layers of graphite. Mercury also has a very dense core and one of the layers may be a different kind of carbon – the kind of carbon people consider valuable. Considering the pressure at the boundary of the mantle and core, scientists feel that diamond would be the form that carbon was most likely to take at that depth. This layer could be more than a half mile thick. At the time of this diamond layer's formation, since it was lighter than the molten metal of the core, it would have floated to the top of the core and then stayed there. The short length of Mercury's volcanic period is believed to be tied to the diamond layer and the rapidity of the cooling the planet experienced. The Messenger spacecraft was also able to confirm the presence of ice in the shadows at the planet's poles as well as the intensity of the planet's magnetic field.

