

WATCH
THE



SKIES



THE SHADOWS OF THE SHORT DAYS

By Alexander Dan Vilhjalmsson

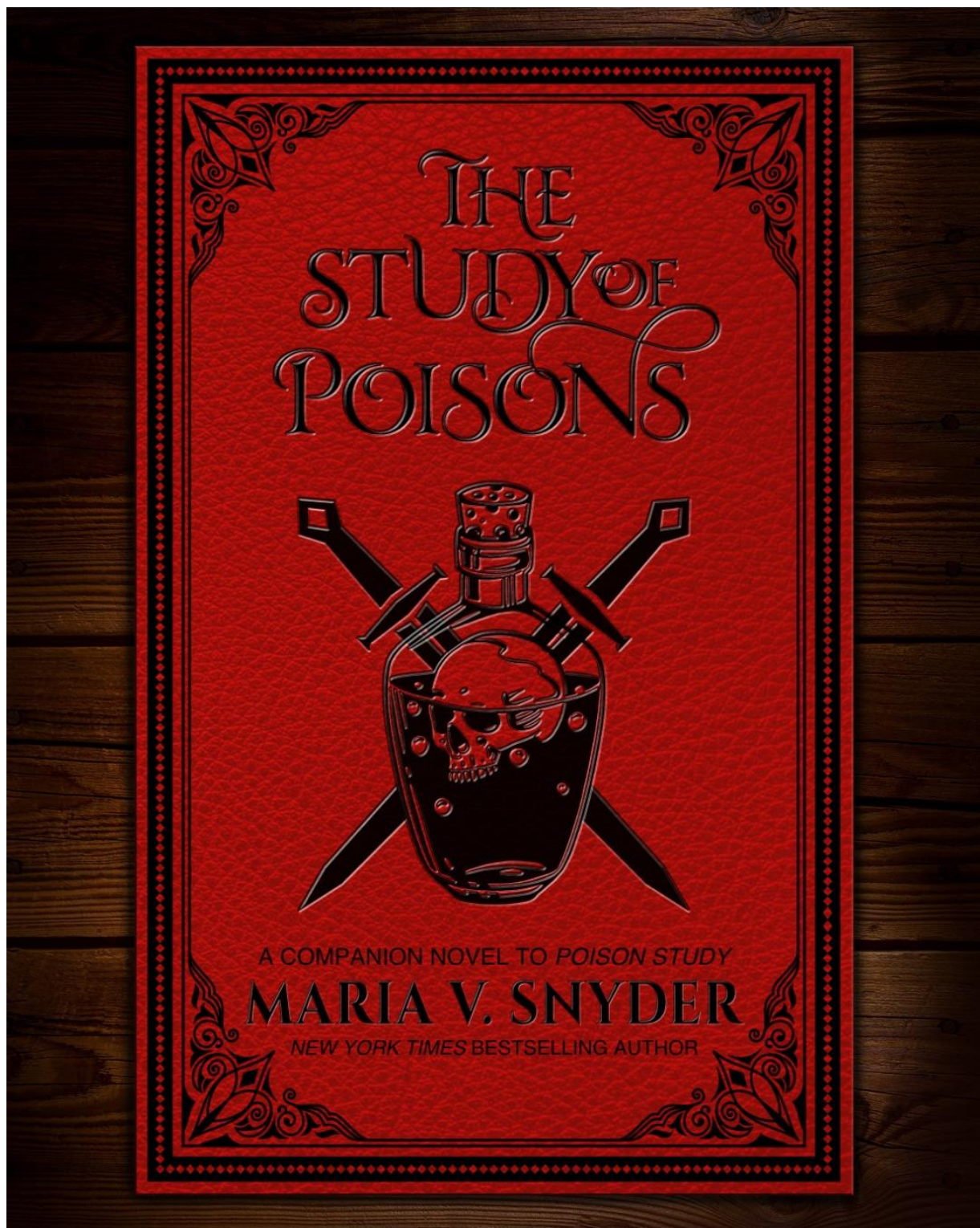
23.7

Hrimland lies under the iron heel of the Crown and Garun will do anything to free her nation. But is it really her country? As a Blendigur, she is neither human nor huldafolk, tolerated, not accepted. Using magical influence, she and her friends will push for revolution and change. Their protests and political tracts are only getting them so far. They need something more and that may be Garun's ex, who has rather extreme plans of his own. Unlike her, Saemundur's quest for knowledge will lead him past the bounds of reason to power enough that even the government will turn its attention to him. While apart, they struggle towards their goals; together, they could change everything- but means they would have to look past their individual driving passions and that's not going to happen. Will Reykjavik survive two such egos? It remains to be seen.

-August's meeting is on the 16th, in person, at the Simpson Library, Mechanicsburg (unless otherwise announced) and the book of the month is *Hotel Paradox* by Rob Hart.

-Cover art by Eric V. Hardenbrook.

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



AVAILABLE NOW

NEW RELEASES

AUGUST 2023

EUGEN BACON, ED. - **Languages of Water**

JOSIAH BANCROFT - **An Empyrean Retinue**

RAMSEY CAMPBELL - **The Lonely Lands**

JACQUELINE CAREY - **Cassiel's Servant**

M.A. CARRICK - **Labyrinth's Heart**

WESLEY CHU - **The Art of Destiny**

OGHENECHOVWE DONALD EKPEKI & EUGEN BACON, ET AL., EDS. –
The Year's Best African Speculative Fiction

AINE FENN - **Polestars 1: Strange Attractors**

SUSAN FOREST - **Gathering of Ghosts**

CHRISTOPHER FOWLER - **Word Monkey**

LIZ GORINSKY, ED. - **Imagined Spaces: An Anthology of Innovative
Science Fiction and Fantasy Roleplaying Games**

J.T. GREATHOUSE - **The Pattern of the World**

PAULA GURAN, ED. - **The Year's Best Fantasy: Volume 2**

KATE HEARTFIELD - **The Embroidered Book**

ALICE HOFFMAN - **The Invisible Hour**

T.L. HUCHU - **The Mystery at Dunvegan Castle**

RICHARD KADREY - **The Secrets of Insects**

ALLAN KASTER, ED. - **The Year's Top Tales of Space and Time 3**

T. KINGFISHER - **Thornhedge**

DEREK KÜNSKEN - **The House of Saints**

JOE R. LANSDALE - **Things Get Ugly: The Best Crime Stories of Joe R.
Lansdale**

KAREN LORD - **The Blue**

JONATHAN MABERRY - **Cave 13**

JONATHAN MABERRY - **Long Past Midnight**

JOSH MALERMAN - **Spin a Black Yarn**

L.E. MODESITT, JR. - **Contrarian**

JAMES A. MOORE - **The War Born**

GARTH NIX - **Sir Hereward and Mister Fitz**

CLAIRE NORTH - **House of Odysseus**

TEMI OH - **More Perfect**

EHIGBOR OKOSUN - **Forged by Blood**

CAT RAMBO - **Devil's Gun**

LILITH SAINTCROW - **The Salt-Black Tree**

JASON SIZEMORE & LESLEY CONNER, EDS. - **Robotic Ambitions**

L. NEIL SMITH - **Ares**

JONATHAN STRAHAN, ED. - **The Book of Witches**

WOLE TALABI - **Shigidi and the Brass Head of Obalufon**

LISA TUTTLE - **Riding the Nightmare**

ROGER ZELAZNY - **The Best of Roger Zelazny**

XIRAN JAY ZHAO - **Heavenly Tyrant**



NEWS OF THE REALM



Confluence – Pittsburgh’s Literary Science Fiction and Fantasy convention is July 21st-23rd at the Sheraton Hotel Pittsburgh Airport Hotel in Coraopolis, PA. Guest of Honor will be Ada Palmer, winner of the John W. Campbell Award and the Compton Crook Award in 2017. Featured musical guest Sassafrass is an a cappella troop lead by Ada Palmer.

For more information: <https://confluence-sff.org>

Dragon Con – is now accepting nominations for the Dragon Awards. Nominees and voting are all done by fans, no fees, or memberships necessary.

[Dragon Con - Largest Multi-genre and Pop Culture Convention](#)

The Locus Awards 2023

Science Fiction Novel Winner – *The Kaiju Preservation Society* – John Scalzi

Fantasy Novel Winner – *Babel* – R.F. Kuang

Horror Novel Winner – *What Moves the Dead* – T. Kingfisher

Young Adult Novel Winner – *Dreams Bigger Than Heartbreak* – Charlie Jane Anders

First Novel – *The Mountain in the Sea* – Ray Nayler

Novella Winner – *A Prayer for the Crown Shy* – Becky Chambers

Novelette Winner – “If You Find Yourself Speaking to God, Address God with the Informal You” – John Chu

Short Story Winner – “Rabbit Test” – Samantha Mills

Anthology Winner – *Africa Risen: A New Era of Speculative Fiction* – ed. Sheree

Renee Thomas, Oghenechovwe Donald Ekpeki and Zelda Knights.
Collection Winner – *Boys, Beasts, Men* – Sam J. Miller

Magazine Winner – Tor.com

Publisher Winner – Tor

Editor Winner – Ellen Datlow

Artist Winner – Charles Vess

Nonfiction Winner – *Terry Pratchett: A Life With Footnotes: The Official Biography* – Rob Wilkins

Hugo Awards 2023 – Finalists

Best Novel

The Daughter of Doctor Moreau, by Silvia Moreno-Garcia

The Kaiju Preservation Society, by John Scalzi

Legends & Lattes, by Travis Baldree

Nona the Ninth, by Tamsyn Muir

Nettle & Bone, by T. Kingfisher

The Spare Man, by Mary Robinette Kowal

Best Novella

Even Though I Knew the End, by C.L. Polk

Into the Riverlands, by Nghi Vo

A Mirror Mended, by Alix E. Harrow

Ogres, by Adrian Tchaikovsky

What Moves the Dead, by T. Kingfisher

Where the Drowned Girls Go, by Seanan McGuire

Best Novelette

“The Difference Between Love and Time,” by Catherynne M. Valente

“A Dream of Electric Mothers,” by Wole Talabi

“If You Find Yourself Speaking to God, Address God with the Informal You,” by John Chu

"Murder By Pixel: Crime and Responsibility in the Digital Darkness," by S.L. Huang
"The Space-Time Painter," by Hai Ya
"We Built This City," by Marie Vibbert

Best Short Story

"D.I.Y.," by John Wiswell
"On the Razor's Edge," by Jiang Bo
"Rabbit Test," by Samantha Mills
"Resurrection," by Ren Qing
"The White Cliff," by Lu Ban
"Zhurong on Mars," by Regina Kanyu Wang

Best Series

Children of Time Series, by Adrian Tchaikovsky
The Founders Trilogy, by Robert Jackson Bennett
The Locked Tomb, by Tamsyn Muir
October Daye, by Seanan McGuire
Rivers of London, by Ben Aaronovich
The Scholomance, by Naomi Novik

Best Graphic Story or Comic

Cyberpunk 2077: Big City Dreams, by Bartosz Sztybor, Filipe Andrade, Alessio Fioriniello, Roman Titov, Krzysztof Ostrowski
DUNE: The Official Movie Graphic Novel, by Lilah Sturges, Drew Johnson, Zid
Monstress vol. 7: Devourer, by Marjorie Liu and Sana Takeda
Once & Future Vol 4: Monarchies in the UK, by Kieron Gillen / Dan Mora
Saga, Vol. 10, by Brian K. Vaughan, Fiona Staples, Fonografiks
Supergirl: Woman of Tomorrow, by Tom King, Bilquis Evely, and Matheus Lopes

Best Related Work

Blood, Sweat & Chrome: The Wild and True Story of Mad Max: Fury Road, by Kyle Buchanan
Buffalito World Outreach Project, by Lawrence M. Schoen
Chinese Science Fiction, An Oral History, Volume 1, by Yang Feng
"The Ghost of Workshops Past," by S.L. Huang

Still Just a Geek: An Annotated Memoir, by Wil Wheaton

Terry Pratchett: A Life With Footnotes, by Rob Wilkins

Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form

Avatar: The Way of Water, screenplay by James Cameron, Rick Jaffa, and Amanda Silver, directed by James Cameron

Black Panther: Wakanda Forever, screenplay by Ryan Coogler and Joe Robert Cole, directed by Ryan Coogler

Everything Everywhere All at Once, screenplay by Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert, directed by Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert

Nope, written by Jordan Peele, directed by Jordan Peele

Severance (Season 1), written by Dan Erickson, Anna Ouyang Moench et al., directed by Ben Stiller and Aoife McArdle

Turning Red, screenplay by Julia Cho and Domee Shi, directed by Domee Shi

Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form

Andor: "One Way Out," written by Beau Willimon, Tony Gilroy, and George Lucas, directed by Toby Haynes

Andor: "Rix Road," written by Tony Gilroy and George Lucas, directed by Benjamin Caron

The Expanse: "Babylon's Ashes," written by Daniel Abraham, Ty Franck, Naren Shankar, directed by Breck Eisner

For All Mankind: "Stranger in a Strange Land," written by Matt Wolpert and Ben Nedivi, directed by Craig Zisk

She-Hulk: Attorney at Law: "Whose Show is This?," written by Jessica Gao, Francesca Gailes, and Jacqueline Gailes, directed by Kat Coiro

Stranger Things: "Chapter Four: Dear Billy," written by Matt Duffer, Ross Duffer, and Paul Dichter, directed by Shawn Levy

Best Editor, Short Form

Scott H. Andrews

Neil Clarke

Oghenechovwe Donald Ekpeki

Sheree Renée Thomas

Xu Wang

Feng Yang

Best Editor, Long Form

Ruoxi Chen
Lindsey Hall
Lee Harris
Sarah Peed
Huan Yan
Haijun Yao

Best Professional Artist

Sija Hong
Kuri Huang
Paul Lewin
Alyssa Winans
Jian Zhang
Enzhe Zhao

Best Semiprozine

Escape Pod, co-editors Mur Lafferty & Valerie Valdes; Assistant editors Benjamin C. Kinney & Premee Mohamed, host Tina Connolly, producers Summer Brooks and Adam Pracht
FIYAH, edited by the entire FIYAH team
khōréō, edited by Team khōréō
PodCastle, co-Editors Shingai Njeri Kagunda and Eleanor R. Wood; Assistant Editor Sofia Barker; Host Matt Dovey; Audio Producers Peter Adrian Behraves, Devin Martin, and Eric Valdes
Strange Horizons, edited by The Strange Horizons Editorial Team
Uncanny Magazine, publishers, and editors-in-chief: Lynne M. Thomas and Michael Damian Thomas; managing/poetry editor Chimedum Ohaegbu; managing editor Monte Lin; nonfiction editor Meg Elison; podcast producers Erika Ensign and Steven Schapansky.

Best Fanzine

Chinese Academic SF Express, by Latssep and Tianluo_Qi
Galactic Journey, by Gideon Marcus, Janice Marcus, Tammi Bozich, Erica Frank, Arel Lucas, and Mark Yon
Journey Planet, by Regina Kanyu Wang, Yen Ooi, Arthur Liu, Jean Martin, Erin Underwood, Steven H Silver, Pádraig Ó Méalóid and their other co-editors.

Nerds of a Feather, by Roseanna Pendlebury, Arturo Serrano, Paul Weimer, Adri Joy, Joe Sherry, Vance Kotrla, G. Brown
Unofficial Hugo Book Club Blog, by Olav Rokne and Amanda Wakaruk
Zero Gravity Newspaper, by RiverFlow and Ling Shizhen

Best Fancast

Coode Street Podcast, presented by Jonathan Strahan and Gary K. Wolfe, produced by Jonathan Strahan
Hugo, Girl!, by Haley Zapal, Amy Salley, Lori Anderson, and Kevin Anderson
Hugos There, by Seth Heasley
Kalanadi, created and presented by Rachel
Octothorpe, by John Coxon, Alison Scott, and Liz Batty
Worldbuilding for Masochists, by Cass Morris, Rowenna Miller, Marshall Ryan Maresca

Best Fan Writer

Chris M. Barkley
Bitter Karella
Arthur Liu
RiverFlow
Jason Sanford
Örjan Westin

Best Fan Artist

Iain Clark
Richard Man
Laya Rose
Alison Scott
España Sheriff
Orion Smith

Lodestar Award for Best Young Adult Book (presented by the World Science Fiction Society)

Akata Woman (The Nsibidi Scripts), by Nnedi Okorafor
Bloodmarked, by Tracy Deonn
Dreams Bigger Than Heartbreak, by Charlie Jane Anders
The Golden Enclaves, by Naomi Novik
In the Serpents Wake, by Rachel Hartman

Osmo Unknown and the Eightpenny Woods, by Catherynne M. Valente

***Astounding* Award for Best New Writer (presented by Dell Magazines)**

Travis Baldree (1st year of eligibility)

Naseem Jamnia (1st year of eligibility)

Isabel J Kim (2nd year of eligibility)

Maijia Liu (1st year of eligibility)

Everina Maxwell (2nd year of eligibility)

Weimu Xin (2nd year of eligibility)



AVAILABLE NOW

You Should Be Watching

NIMONA

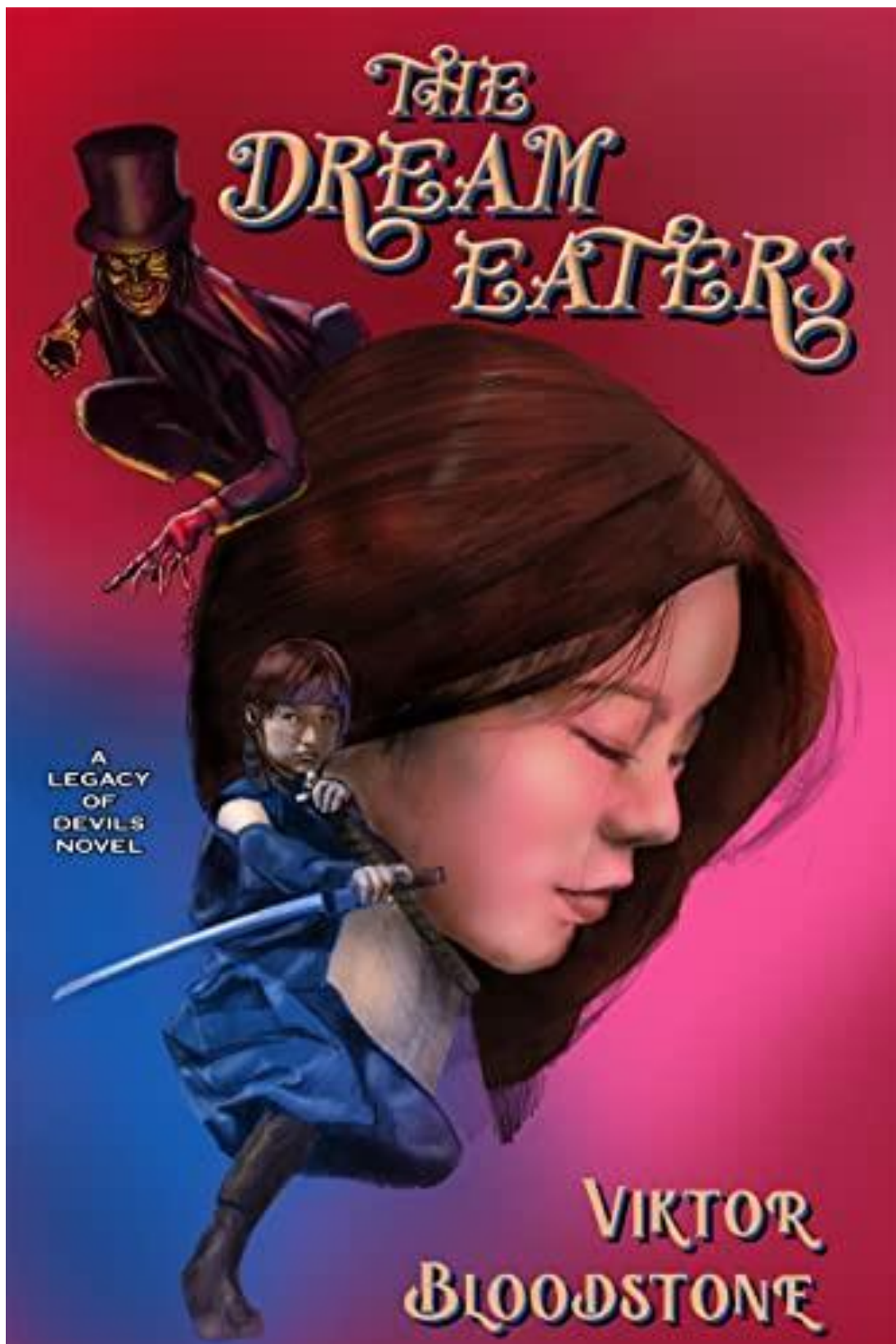


As a group we spend considerable time searching for new, interesting, and diverse stories. *Nimona* (2023) fits that bill entirely. The Netflix show is a story of love, revenge, struggle, and acceptance. Even saying all that, it is another movie that falls into the family friendly category. An animated feature set in a futuristic quasi-medieval land where knights have struggled against monsters for a thousand years, the story tells the story of a disgraced knight trying to clear his name. This knight partners reluctantly, with an unlikely person named Nimona. Together they set out to solve the mystery surrounding the events of the knight's downfall.

This film clocks in around an hour and forty-five minutes and feels significantly shorter. The story is fast paced, and the action is almost constant. While certain aspects of the plot might stand out or seem fairly obvious, the characters and the relationships they find themselves in make the whole story worth the effort. The animation is fluid, colorful and matches the needs of the story. The main characters are believable, and they grow and learn by the end of the film.

This movie is also self-contained. While it may become popular enough to have fans clamor for more, if this were the only story produced it would be enough. Non-conforming gender roles, bad guys you love to hate and just a touch of rude humor really make for a fun ride. Turn this one and give it four thumbs up – it's totally metal. You should be watching *Nimona*.

You should check out the trailer here: https://youtu.be/f_fuHRyQbOc



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Tillyer's News of the High Frontier

JULY 2023

Organic molecules on Mars? Yes, according to Perseverance. In the past, scientists have discovered organic molecules in pieces of Mars that made their way to Earth, as well as in the Gale Crater explored by Curiosity, so this isn't completely surprising. Now our rover is finding similar ones in the Jezero Crater. Scientists are quick to point out that such molecules can also occur naturally, so while they are considered the "building blocks of life," they do not imply life. In all ten samples considered, organic signals were detected. Their presence in this location means that the molecules are not limited to one area. Sadly, scientists are not able to identify exactly which molecules are present because that would require samples to be returned to Earth. That part of the plan has quite been realized, but NASA has ideas in the works. In the meantime, Perseverance will continue to explore.

How long until Betelgeuse blows up? Astronomers believe it could only be decades. Separated from us by 650 Light Years, the red giant is an object of intense observation as it continues through its remaining years. Located at the left shoulder of the constellation of Orion, this former O-type star has been causing some consternation as it first dimmed in 2019. This event is thought to be the result of the star emitting some sort of dark cloud that obscured our view. This year, Betelgeuse did the opposite and grew 1.5 times brighter than normal. This odd behavior has astronomers both fascinated and confused. O-type stars have short lives and Betelgeuse could be as young as 10 million years. One of things that observers are still trying to nail down is an accurate measure of the size of the star. Before, astronomers believed Betelgeuse to be about 800-900 times the radius of our own Sun. This gives them clues about the point the star is in its lifecycle as older stars go through series of expansions and contractions before reaching their end state. New evidence suggests that radius measurement could be more like 1300 times that of the Sun. This would imply that the outer layers of the star are pushed further from the core and that the processes at the center of Betelgeuse are moving faster than predicted, eating up the fuel and leading to the inevitable stellar collapse and outwards explosion of a nova. That's great news for astronomers who are looked forwards to using modern telescopes and instruments to explore the results of a nova. Fortunately, we are a comfortable 650 LY away, so the Earth is in now

immediate danger from resulting incoming radiation. The real mind bender is that given the distance from Earth, it is possible that the nova has already taken place and the light front simply hasn't reached us yet. It's also possible that Betelgeuse could fool us all and continue to shine for years to come. Currently, the star inhabits a strange Schrödinger's Cat kind of existence – possibly it has already gone nova and possibly it hasn't. We'll simply have to wait to find out.

Could metallic clouds cause an exoplanet to shine like a mirror?

Apparently, the answer is yes. LTT9779b kicks back 80% of the light that falls on it from its parent star. Even though our world is covered with an excess of water, Earth only reflects back about 30% of the Sun's light. The placement of the planet so close to its star creates an environment where metals are boiled off into floating clouds which creates its reflective atmosphere. LTT9779b even beats out Venus with its 75% reflectivity. Found by the European Space Agency's Cheops mission, 264 light years away and about five times the size of the Earth, the exoplanet is so hot that it could have titanium rain falling from silicate clouds.

Strangest for last – is it possible that gravity can turn into light?

Researchers are starting to think so under very specific conditions. At the quantum level there are virtual particles that come into existence simultaneously with their opposite counterparts and then disappear. So, something arriving from what appears to be nothing is not unknown. The Standard Model does not go along with the translation of massless particles into those with mass. But smacking a photon (massless) into an atom with a large atomic mass can make it split into an electron and a positron, particles with mass. How does that get us to gravity? First, we have to go back in time to post Big Bang eras where the energy of gravitational waves created at the beginning were much more energetic. These waves would have traveled through the hot dense area and there bouncing back and forth would have agitated the electromagnetic field of the early universe. This built up a resonance that pumped energy into things until it was possible to have it expressed as light. Of course, given the expansion of the universe post big bang this could only go on for so long. As noted earlier, the resultant photons could then also be converted into particles with mass. Yet another interesting glimpse into the workings of the past of the universe.

