

WATCH

THE



SKIES



# The Body Scout

By Lincoln Michel

## 24.4

Washed up, looked down upon, and hated by the purists – Kobo used to be in the spotlight, and now he spends his time finding the next big star for the baseball leagues of the future. His cybernetic upgrades are a former hot idea as bioware takes over upgrading athletes. Rebuilding your body is a constant process as humanity strives to make itself perfect and sportsball competitors hone their abilities to ultrafine expectations. When his adopted brother dies under mysterious circumstances, Kobo sets aside the day job and goes hunting for the killer instead of prospects. No one seems to know why or how JJ Zunz died on the field that day, and he's not getting a lot of help. In fact, if it's not the mysterious musclebound Coppelius from a shady government agency chasing the same leads, then it's the twin enforcers providing bodily harm to ensure Kobo pays back the debt on his own modifications. Somewhere in the gritty world of New York, is the killer, but can Kobo find them before the World Series is over?

-May's meeting is on the 15th, in person, at the Simpson Library, Mechanicsburg (unless otherwise announced) and the book of the month is *Foundryside*-Robert Jackson Bennett

-Cover art by Eric V. Hardenbrook

Check out the website at: [watchtheskies.org](http://watchtheskies.org) or  
contact us at: [wtsnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:wtsnewsletter@gmail.com)

# **NEW RELEASES**

**MAY 2024**

PETER S. BEAGLE - **I'm Afraid You've Got Dragons**

TERRY BISSON - **Tomorrowing**

D.J. BUTLER - **All Along the Watchtower**

JACK CAMPBELL - **In Our Stars**

V. CASTRO - **Immortal Pleasures**

GENEVIEVE COGMAN - **Elusive**

SARAH DASS - **It Waits in the Fores**

DAVE DUNCAN - **Corridor to Nightmare**

DAVE DUNCAN - **The Traitor's Son**

JASPER FFORDE - **Red Side Story**

ANDREA HAIRSTON - **Archangels of Funk**

STEPHEN KING - **You Like It Darker**

JONATHAN MABERRY - **NecroTek**

VICTOR MANIBO - **Escape Velocity**

JODY LYNN NYE, ED. - **L. Ron Hubbard Presents Writers of the Future Volume 40**

SUYI DAVIES OKUNGBOWA - **Lost Ark Dreaming**

SUZANNE PALMER - **Ghostdrift**

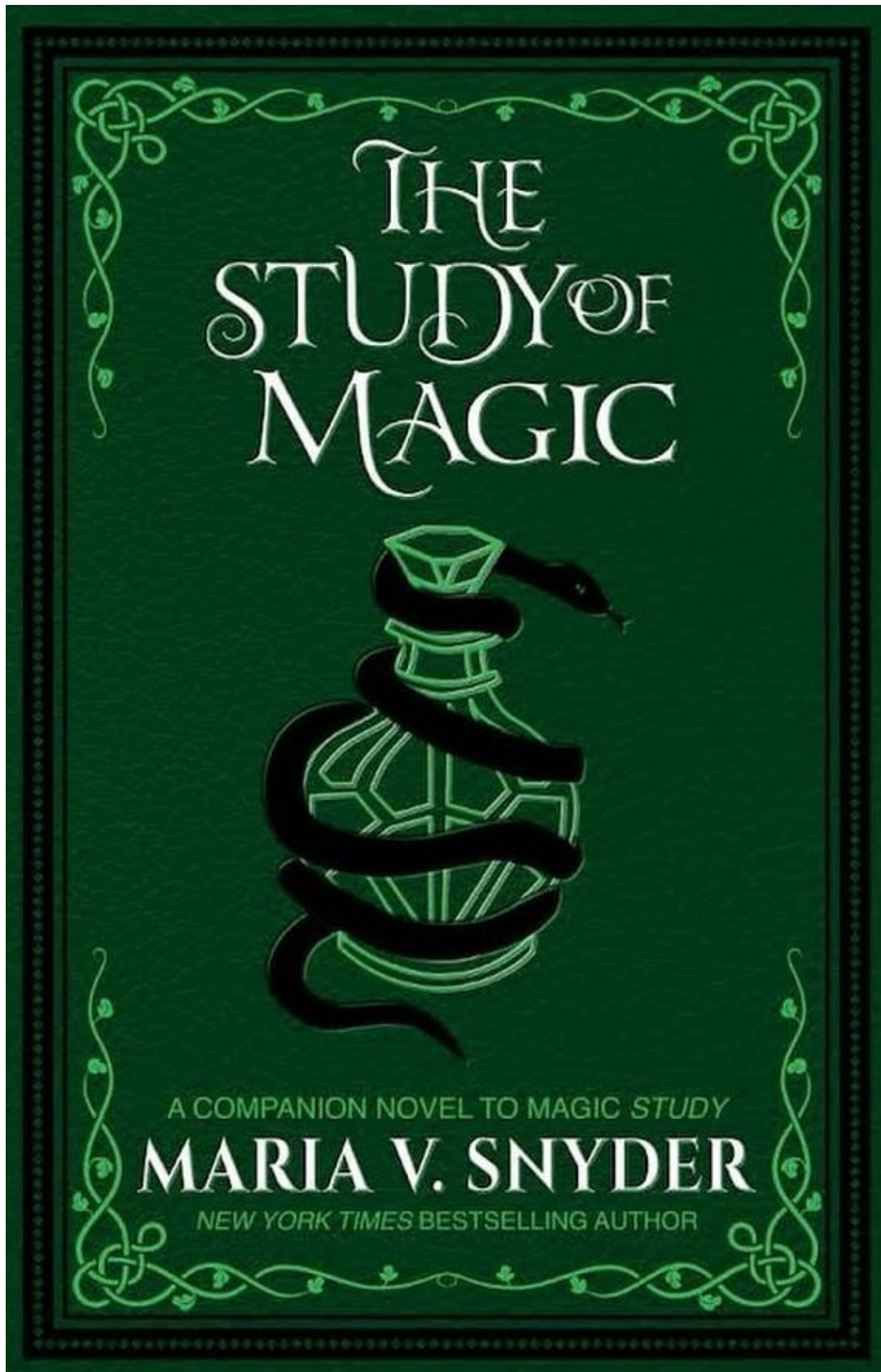
VERONICA ROTH - **When Among Crows**

ROBERT J. SAWYER - **The Downloaded**

JARED SHURIN, ED. - **The Big Book of Cyberpunk Volume 2**

CATHERYNNNE M. VALENTE - **Space Oddity**

NGHI VO - **The Brides of High Hill**



**AVAILABLE APRIL 19TH**

# NEWS OF THE REALM

## 2024 Compton Crook Award Winner

Kemi Ashing-Giwa has won the 42<sup>nd</sup> Compton Crook Award for the best new Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror book. The prize of \$1000 will be presented at this year's Balticon convention.

## CONVENTIONS

-Registration and rooms are now available for Balticon 58 (May 24-27) to be held at the Renaissance Hotel in Baltimore Inner Harbor. Guests of honor L.E. Modesitt, Jr. and Sheila Williams. 300+ hours of programming, filk, film festival, cosplay Masquerade, Art Show and more await you.



-SciFi Valley Con, June 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> will be at the Blair County Convention Center, Altoona, PA featuring Billy West, Phil Lamarr, Greg Baldwin, Lauren Tom, Steven Ogg, Ned Luke, and Shawn "Solo" Fonteno.



-Hershey Comicon – the sweetest Comic Con on Earth – will run from June 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> at the Holiday Inn, Grantville, PA. Guests include Mark Morales, Bob McLeod, Scott Hanna, Geof Isherwood, Wayne Faucher, Deegan Puchkors and Chris Ring. Comic Sellers, Exhibitors, Cosplay, and more.

-Also, the same weekend – Horror on Main located at the Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey Hotel, Harrisburg, PA. Guests include Oded Fehr, John Russo, Daniele Serra, Jeffrey Reddick, Jeff Goodwin, Chris Alexander, and Rio Youers.



-Shore Leave 44, July 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> has relocated to the Wyndham Lancaster Resort, Lancaster, PA and features such guests as Amanda Tapping, Teryl Rothery, Greg Grunberg, and Ingvild Deila.



-And at exact the same time - Confluence – Pittsburg’s Literary Science Fiction and Fantasy convention will occur on July 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> at the Sheraton Hotel Pittsburgh Airport Hotel in Coraopolis, PA. Guest of Honor will be New York Times Bestselling author, Richard Kadrey. Featured musical guest is Bonnie Gordon.



**eSpec Books Available at Tell-Tale Steampunk Convention**

# The Art of Fandom

What Covereth Thine Noggin?

When considering what to chat about with our next talented member of our crowd, I needed to figure out what in particular I could ask about! Our fabulous editor in chief is a multi-talented renaissance man worthy of this interview format! In the end, asking about Helm Haven Renaissance Wear was the place we decided to land.

## **What brought you to start your own garb shop? How did you get started doing this?**

Jeff: Gifting. I blame gifting and also the simple idea that if I really wanted to have something to wear at Faire, I could settle for what everyone was making or create my own. Sure, you can do work for hire with many talented renfaire costumers but there's definitely something to be said about wearing your own creations. One holiday season after making gifts, one of my friends told me, "You should be selling these." The statement became reality, and I started up an Ebay shop. A few years later, I added an Esty shop. I don't do full garb unless it's for myself and primarily my items are hats, capes, handwarmers, feathers and sundry other items. I have no exact count, but I am sure that I have sold more than 1.5k individual items online.



**You do all the cutting and sewing – these are all custom, handmade, one-of-a-kind creations?**

Jeff: Mostly, these are based off of one pattern I created for each item, so some are one of a kind and others are not. Hats are usually one style in one material and different sizes. Simply, makes sense to cut more than one at a time. The capes and handwarmers are in between, I've made some exactly the same, but most have some small differences if they are of the same material. Different ornaments or trim can set them apart. I have also done custom pieces upon request. There have been several capes specifically for weddings and even a whole wedding party. I once made a hat for a sculpture of Martin Luther for a customer. The best was a set of red capes for a production of Volpone by the Red Bull Theater in New York. There needed to be two because Hamish Linklater was in New York and Andre de Shields was in L.A. and since the production was done via Zoom, they needed to appear to hand the cape from one character to another.



**Do you have a favorite piece that you've done? Or, one that you really didn't want to let go of?**

Jeff: Back to gifting once again, my favorite pieces have been given away. I made a full-length cape and handwarmer set for a friend, a capelet for another and a fighting cape for a third. Since they were gifts, I was willing to try different things and spend more time on them and was happy with the results.





**Do you have any pieces that have surprised you or given you a special reaction from the customer?**

Jeff: I am always surprised when people send me pictures of themselves wearing the items. Sometimes it's as simple as a hat completing a costume that obviously took a lot of work on their part. I love being at faire and

suddenly realizing that someone just walked by wearing something of mine. Doesn't happen a lot but it's awesome when it does.



**A very big thank you to Jeff for sharing his story with us! Head over to the shop and check out all the options!**

{Both shops are Helm Haven on Ebay and Etsy, they are currently closed but will reopen later in the month due to a recent relocation.}



# Tillyer's News of the High Frontier

**April 2024**

-Boeing's space suits for its Starliner missions are getting good marks from astronauts. If the blue color wasn't a winner, the flexibility of the gloves is often remarked upon. The helmet also attaches to the back of the suit and is out of the way of the astronaut. These are not exterior use suits but rather mission wear. They will be getting a trial soon as Boeing and NASA plan to run a crew flight test of the Starliner before May 6<sup>th</sup>. This will be a 10 hour flight to the ISS which will allow them to review the systems of the spacecraft. While SpaceX has been consistently running missions to the Space Station, Starliner has taken longer in its development and testing phase. Confident at last in its product, Boeing is willing to put it to the test. Ultimately, the goal is to have at least two methods of reaching the ISS. Given the recent issues with Russia and the Ukrainian war, we can no longer depend upon them for transport. As always, anything that we learn from the mission can be applied to future ones including Artemis. Longer missions, up to six months, are planned for 2025.

-One of the most recently discovered stellar collapse black holes turns out to be somewhat local and also possibly one of the largest in the Milky Way. The European space telescope Gaia picked out this discovery by noting the orbit of a star circling it. Annotated as Gaia BH3, it is located about 2,000 light years away. (Might not sound right next door but the Milky Way is more than 100,000 light years across, so it's relatively close or as of now, the second closest known black hole to Earth) After confirmation by other observatories, data was compiled to determine the objects mass while worked out to a massive 33 times that of the mass of the Sun. You might have noticed that this is called a stellar collapse black hole and that describes its origin as the result of the natural life cycle of stars of a certain mass. There is one much more massive black hole in the galaxy and that is the one at the center of the Milky Way. Sag A\* is the result of the accretion of stars and other black holes and is located at the center of the galaxy. The closest known black hole to Earth was also discovered by the Gaia scope, Gaia BH-1 is more than 1,500 light years away and is more than nine times more massive than our Sun. The real lesson here is that there are black holes that are scattered throughout our galaxy waiting to be discovered.

