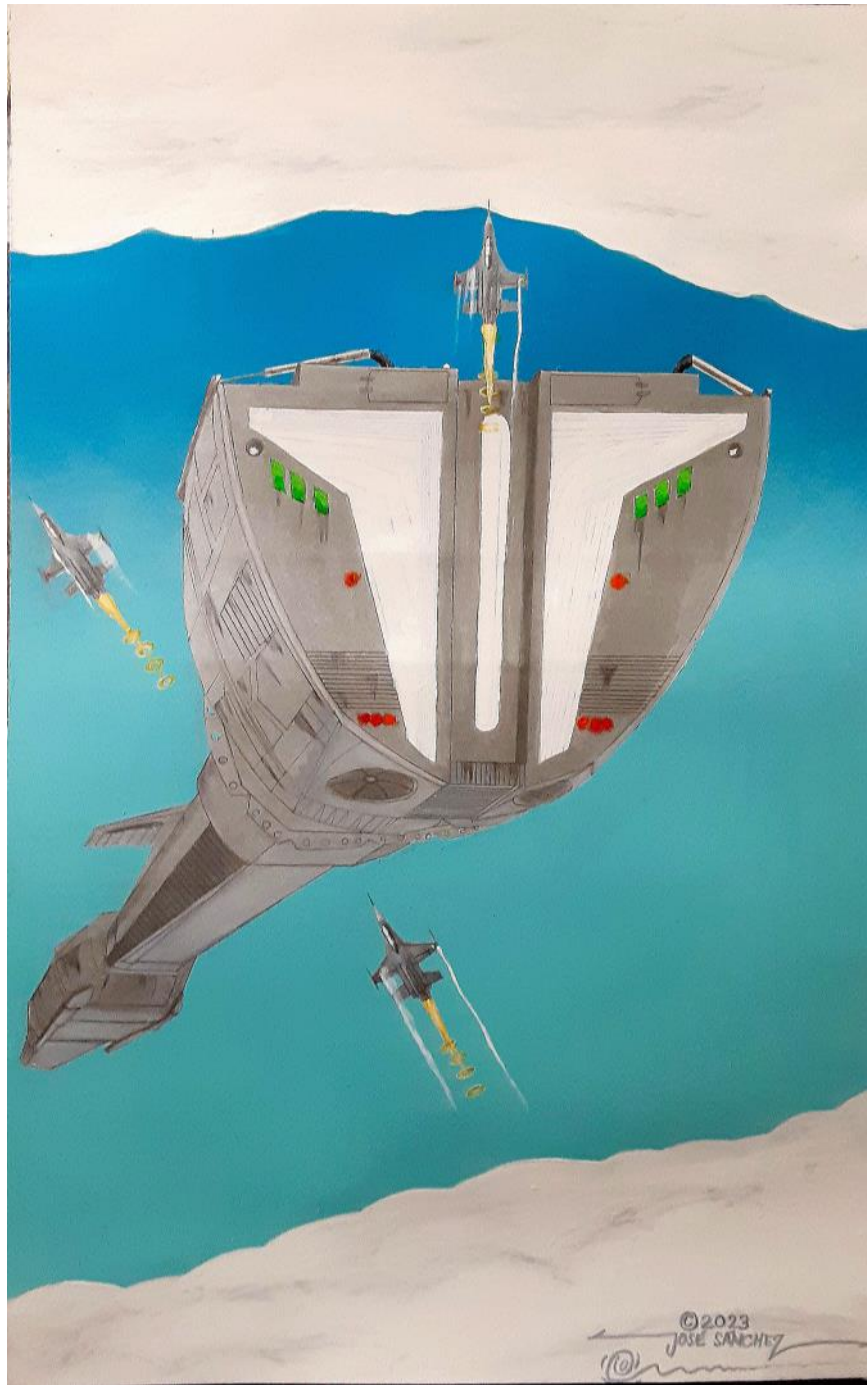


# Tightbeam 344

May 2023



Visitor by José Sánchez

# Tightbeam 344

May 2023

What is Tightbeam? We are the N3F literary fanzine, not the novel and anthology fanzine, but the fanzine that tries to cover all tastes in fandom, such as anime, comics, cosplay, films, novels, biographies, poetry, music, short stories, food, ...

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Tightbeam is published approximately monthly by the National Fantasy Fan Federation and distributed electronically to the membership.

The N3F offers four different memberships. To join as a public (free) member, send phillies@4liberty.net your email address.

To join or renew, use the membership form at <http://n3f.org/join/membership-form/> to provide your name and whichever address you use to receive zines.

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Additional memberships at the address of a current dues-paying member are \$4.

**Public (non-voting) memberships are free.** Send payments to Kevin Trainor, PO Box 143, Tonopah NV 89049 . Pay online at [N3F.org](http://N3F.org). PayPal contact is [treasurer@n3f.org](mailto:treasurer@n3f.org).

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## N3F Laureate Awards Nominations

Behold the final list of nominations for the N3F Laureate Awards. This year we had no fewer than three nominations for None of the Above. As the nominees are incommensurate, those nominations will be voted on as “Yes” or “No”. We will allow two months for people to present cases for nominees. Reviews of Novel, Anthology, and Shorter Work nominees will be welcome in The N3F Review of Books Incorporating Prose Bono. All other reviews will be welcome here in Tightbeam. Extended discussions are especially appropriate for N’APA.

### Best Novel:

The Other Side Of Night by Adam Hamdy  
 Ordinary Monsters by J. M. Miro  
 Fairy Tale by Stephen King  
 The Janus File by David Weber and Jacob Holo  
 Lords of Uncreation by Adrian Tchaikovsky  
 Ashes of Man by Christopher Ruocchio

### Best Shorter Work or Anthology:

Venomous Lumpsucker by Ned Beaman  
 Return to Glory by Jack McDevitt  
 The Moonday Letters by Emmi Itaranta  
 The Best Science Fiction and Fantasy, edited by Rebecca Roanhorse  
 Stellar Instinct by Jonathan Nevair  
 Stand Against the Dark by Denton Salle

### Best Anime/Comic Book/Graphic Novel:

Monstress by Marjorie Lie & Sana Takeda  
 New Think Volume 1.0 an anthology  
 Mindset by Zack Kaplan and John J. Peterson

### Best Anime:

Chainsaw Man

### Best Manga:

EVOL by Atsushi Kaneko  
 Mindset

### Best Fan Writer:

John Thiel  
 Martin Lock  
 Robin Rose Graves, the Book Wormhole

### Best Fan Editor:

Jefferson Swycaffer  
 George Phillies  
 Gideon Marcus

**Best Book Editor:**

Lisa Kaits  
Toni Weisskopf

**Best Fan Website:**

SciFi4Me from Jason Hunt and Mindy Hunt  
Fanac.org and the Fancyclopedia from Joe Siclari, Edie Stern, and Mark Olson  
efanzines.com from Bill Burns  
Galactic Journey

**Best Non-N3F Fanzine:**

Portable Storage from William Beeding  
Beam from Nic Farey and Ulrika O'Brien  
Pablo Lennis  
Simultaneous Times Newsletter

**Best N3F Fanzine:**

Eldritch Science  
Tightbeam  
Ionisphere

**Best Fan Artist:**

Brad Foster  
Alan White  
Jose Sanchez

**Best Pro Artist:**

Stephen Youll  
Jim Burns  
Austin Arthur Hart

**Best Television Show, Film, or Video:**

Star Wars: Mandalorian  
Heath Row's productions  
Avenue 5

**Best None Of The Above:**

Best SF Poet, Michael Butterworth

Best Podcast - Simultaneous Times

The effort by Manuscript Press (Rick Norwood) and aruffo.com (I dunno the company name or the person responsible) for publishing the series of trade paperbacks that are reprinting the entire run of the Alley Oop daily comic strip beginning with the very first V.T. Hamlin strip and running all the way to the end of the 20th century. This is a monumental effort, making available a wonderful comic strip that is clearly science fiction/fantasy and has been recognized as one of the most important comics strips ever published. The original Comic Book Achievement Awards created by comic book fandom in the early 1960s were named the Alley Awards, with a pic/statue of Alley Oop as the symbol. Finally, a chance to read everything, the entire run, all shot from the original syndicate stats, now in an affordable format. This deserves much wider recognition, and an award or two on its own.

## Letter of Comment

Editors:

I am trying to move forward a little bit, and get onto the April Tightbeam before they start piling up, kinda like most fanzine titles I get these days. So, here's something on Tightbeam 343.

It's always good to examine what you've got in each issue of each fanzine the N3F produces, and see if each interest can be better packaged. Tweak a little here and there...

My letter on the previous three issues...the Harry Potter play that is running in downtown Toronto will be closing soon. I haven't heard any more about the movie version, and like I said before, I think the Wizarding World has run its course. I hope not to drop fanzines as an interest, but managing time wisely might require me to do that. We do plan another Kickstarter, so we might get enough the next time to restart the magazine.

Gallifrey One used to get a lot of Whofen from the Toronto area, but now, it looks like the farthest they can afford to go is Chicago TARDiS. Who fandom here is still together, even with no conventions or similar events to bind them.

Great to learn some more about James Gunn. Besides his scholarly work, we seem to forget his own writings. I have *The Immortals* in paperback, and I found on my bookshelf a James Gunn book called *Some Dreams are Nightmares*. It was illustrated by Leonard Everett Fisher, and contains four of Gunn's novelettes... *The Cave of Night*, *The Hedonist*, *New Blood* and *Medic*.

I have run out of gas on this one...it's been a long, hard day of editing and writing. Time to sleep, and let my head unwind. Thanks for this issue, and send more soon!

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

## Comics

### Asterix and the Chieftain's Daughter Review by Chris Nuttall

The key to understanding the popularity of graphic novels like Asterix and TinTin – and also books like the Hardy Boys – is that they combine characters who are largely kids themselves with an adult world that takes them (more or less) seriously. On one hand, Asterix is clearly drawn to resemble a child in his early teens – he's easily the shortest character in the series who isn't an actual child – but, on the other hand, he's the foremost warrior in the village, a guile hero who outsmarts his enemies as much as he beats them with his fists and a member of the village council. TinTin is drawn to look like his in his mid-teens – he's often referred to as the 'boy reporter' – yet he's treated as an adult by just about everyone. Such characters work, at least in part, because they combine adulthood with childhood. Children can pretend to be them without any adult issues to gross them out.

This leads to some awkward issues when the opposite sex is introduced. Sex itself does not feature in such books. The main characters either shun female company – the relationship between TinTin and Captain Haddock is a male friendship, not a romance – or find it unwanted. In TinTin, the only female character of note is Bianca Castafiore and she is a guest star rather than one of the main characters. In Asterix, the hero finds himself locking horns in one story with a female bard (who, if the genders were reversed, would certainly be guilty of sexual harassment at the very least.) The story highlights double-standards and the general unfairness of life, tropes that would have been very important to the target audience in many ways. People outside the target audience tended to accuse the writer of sexism.

But, generally speaking, romance doesn't really exist within the series. The characters, whatever their actual age, remain suspended in early adolescence. It's why they appeal to preteen boys.

Asterix and the Chieftain's Daughter turns all that on its head.

The basic plot is fairly simple. The remnants of the Gaullist resistance have been sheltering Adrenalin, the daughter of Vercingetorix, ever since the disastrous defeat at Alesia. Now, the Romans are closing in on her and there's only one place she can be safe. Britain? America? No, the unnamed village that plays host to Asterix and his friends.

The problem, however, is that Adrenalin doesn't want to be a figurehead for the resistance. She wants to run away, which is fraught with danger as the Romans, the pirates and a small horde of traitors want her for themselves. Asterix is assigned to look after her, a mission that rapidly turns sour when Adrenalin befriends the other teenagers in the village and they try to help her escape.

On the face of it, the story has potential. There are many funny moments and a handful of new characters (including the teenage sons of the village fisherman and blacksmith, neither of whom were mentioned before). However, it falls apart when Asterix is used as a wholly adult character. His role in the story is to be both adult and child. Here, he's the old fogey, the stick-in-the-mud, the person who tries to keep the kids from doing what they want to do. It's not a good role for him and it weakens the story.

The story also suffers because of Adrenalin herself. It's entirely understandable why she wants to run away – everyone treats her as a thing, rather than a person – but she also comes across as a selfish little brat. She doesn't want to carry on her father's legacy, either with the resistance or by joining Julius Caesar's family (Brutus gets a nice line about not being one for families ... while sharpening a dagger, naturally). The story even implies the resistance won't have any trouble finding another figurehead, which suggests they didn't need to bother with Adrenalin. But, at the same time, the Romans were hardly going to let her travel freely. The resistance leaders had a very good point when they insisted she needed to be protected.

The story might have worked better, I suppose, if Adrenalin had talked Asterix into waging war on Rome, leaving the older villagers to be the voices of adult reason. But this would have required Asterix to be separated from the adults ... again, weakening the character.

Overall, the story is definitely a mixed bag. There are plenty of good moments. It's amusing to see the two teenage boys insisting on swapping roles and apprenticing with each other's father, rather than carrying on the family trade. The artwork is good, although not perfect. But the overall story weakens the main characters and has too many references to modern-day things that will leave the story outdated fairly quickly. It isn't as bad as Asterix and the Falling Sky, but it's no Asterix in Britain either.

## Action Comics #1052 Review by Heath Row Previously seen in Telegraphs & Tar Pits

The current issue of Action Comics, #1052 (DC, April 2023), is slightly thicker than most single issues of the Superman-related title, and features a cover banner reading "Dawn of DC." I'm not aware of an event by that name, and the issue number doesn't suggest a reboot or event similar to The New 52. But the cover also offers cover lines for bonus features focusing on Lois and Clark and Power Girl—backup stories don't always get cover treatment, so perhaps there's something serious going on!

Written by Phillip Kenedy Johnson and drawn by Rafa Sandoval—with a solid cover by Steve Beach that uses costuming and cape as negative space to good effect—the main story focuses on the aftermath of battle with Metallo, formerly John Corben, who seems to be taking cues from Lex Luthor. Youthful Warzoon survivors Osul and Otho are getting used to their calmer life as children with parents (see the Warworld storyline for back story), and that results in an affectionate and effective bedtime sequence. It's not often people brush their teeth in comic books. The Lois & Clark backup story concentrates on the arrival of Glyanna of the planet P'Luhnn and meeting Jon. They attract a cybernetic enforcer—well drawn by Lee Weeks—which requires Superman's assistance.

And the closing piece, a Power Girl backup, is a more feminine offering, reminding me of Bill Woggon's Katy Keene in tonality, posture, and coloring. Two friends help Power Girl get in touch with her feelings and regain her voice. It's a bit of an odd duck compared to the rest of the issue.

## Con Report

### Anime Detour 2023

By Jessi Silver

\*Tries to pretend that she wasn't absent for months\*

Recently I (forcibly? sort of) switched my focus back to anime, because as some of you are aware I work as volunteer staff for an anime convention in Minneapolis, MN called Anime Detour. Not only do I provide content for the convention in the form of running various panels with my husband J.C., I also do things on the back end like coordinating the convention's AMV contest and helping to plan out the schedule. This year there were some changes, including J.C.'s somewhat unplanned promotion to head of programming, and my sort-of promotion to Programming sub-head, which came with it some additional responsibilities. This meant changing our focus from running so many panels at the convention to putting more work toward keeping the convention running. It was a different but overall positive experience, and I wanted to record some of that here so I'd remember it by the time things start to ramp up next year.

One other additional thing to add here is that, after several years of trying to make it happen, J.C. and I are expecting a baby in a few months! This is certainly a happy development, and it remains to be seen if this will further affect how things look here around the blog. Writing about anime has been a hobby and constant companion to me for many years now, and I don't intend to stop, but simply the intensity of the first couple of weeks of each season and the amount of time and writing it takes to tackle all those episodes probably means that simply the structure of the site itself and the type of writing I do will be different. This is something I've been looking at changing for many years now – there are a lot of websites, both amateur and professional, that cover new episodes in a similar manner to how I've covered them, so I feel less of a need to grind out first episode reviews in the way I've been doing them in the past.

Having gotten that out in the open, below are some thoughts and reactions to the convention this year. I hope this provides a little insight into what goes into the back end of making such a large event a success!

### Thursday, Pre-Convention

As staff members, we tend to arrive to the convention venue (the hotel) the day before the event actually kicks off. There is usually some set-up work to be done, including making sure signage is correct and each panel room has A/V equipment. It's also a good time to get one's bearings.

One change that came into play this year was that J.C. and I changed the type of activities we were doing at the convention. This included taking on more Programming department shifts, which meant being available in the office in case we were needed, as well as doing some hourly set-up activities and counting attendees for each panel in the panel blocks to which we were assigned. This is to help us get an idea of how well-attended certain events are, so that if they become repeat events or if someone submits a similar panel in subsequent years, we have a better idea of where and when to schedule it. Something that made this work a bit more challenging this year was the fact that the event hotel was performing maintenance on the escalators that serve many of the floors on which events were scheduled, so getting to all the rooms either meant trying to catch an elevator, which could be tough considering more attendees were using them at any one time, or using the access stairs, which could be tiring. This was a fluke we worked through all weekend and I ended up getting a pretty decent work-out from the stairs, which definitely wasn't a bad thing.

Thursdays before the start of conventions are always the days I'm the most anxious, because at that point you know from experience that things here and there are bound to go a little bit wrong, but you're not entirely sure what those things are going to be yet. I also tend to just get a little bit of stage fright in general. But there's also something cool about being in an event space as it's being constructed and knowing that it will be filled with people soon.

### Friday, Day 1

Convention activities at our convention kick off around noon on Friday. This includes some video rooms and some panels. Last year our registration system got entirely overwhelmed by the number of walk-up attendees who want-



ed to join the event. In previous years we'd estimated attendance pre-convention by the number of pre-registrations, but considering the weirdness with Covid the last couple of years, our prediction turned out to be inaccurate and we ended up getting a record number of folks who showed up at the door. This year the convention was much more prepared, and despite the fact we set yet another attendance record, things seemed, to my eyes at least, to be going pretty smoothly. There was also a Thursday evening badge pick-up session for both staff and pre-registered attendees, which I think must have really taken some of the day-of pressure off to some extent.

One change we instituted this year as far as scheduling was concerned was that Opening Ceremonies, which takes place on mainstage and introduces the convention and the guests of honor, was moved up a few hours to be earlier in the day. This seemed to make more logical sense – why wait until 5 or 6pm, when events have been running for hours already, to “open” the convention? And appeared to work out well.

We took a little time in the afternoon to walk through the Artist Alley and Dealers Room, where we each picked up a couple of things. I have a bit of a love-hate relationship with dealer's rooms/exhibition halls, because in spite of the fact that many of them have gotten very large over the years, I rarely find unique merchandise there, but I did pick up a couple of things.

J.C. and I didn't have any panels going on until fairly late in the evening, due to the fact that one we'd had scheduled earlier in the day we'd decided to cancel before the schedule came out simply due to the amount of work that typically goes into it (in case you were there and wondered about where “Manga for Grown-Ups” was, that was the panel in question). We spent some time in the Programming office, got lunch and dinner at a couple of local restaurants (partly so we'd have some leftovers for Saturday, which was set to be much busier), and managed stuff fairly leisurely. It was a good day, although I hadn't gotten very good sleep the night before (convention hotel mattress and poor temp control in the hotel room) so I was feeling a bit out of it in spite of everything.

The specific events we participated in were:

Anime By Numbers – a Trivia game of J.C.'s creation where all answers are number-based and teams win by coming up with answers that are the closest to the actual answer (as calculated by the game program that J.C. has created for it).

AMV Showcase – A showcase of Anime Music Videos that I put together every year of exhibition entries into the convention's AMV contest.

## Saturday, Day 2

Saturday was, as usual, our busiest day at the convention. This was because we each had scheduled ourselves for more shifts and more events throughout the day. However, it was also a really fun day and I don't think I ever felt overworked or over stressed, simply because the workload was split pretty well among the people performing the work.

Our first panel of the day was Anime for Grown-Ups, which is typically a panel that I put in the majority of the work to put together. This year, due to my health and other commitments, I asked J.C. to take the lead based on a concept I'd come up with based loosely on the convention theme for that year, and he really knocked it out of the park. I'll post the materials for it in a separate post for those who are interested.

Right after that was a panel called “This Anime is Good, But...” which we ran as co-panelists with our friend Evan (also a Programming staffer). During this panel we talked about anime that we felt could have been great, but somehow got hamstrung by various narrative, character, or production issues. We also spoke up about some series that weren't received well that we thought were way better than they were given credit for, which was the idea I contributed to the panel □ As someone who'd rather talk about things I like rather than things I have a problem with (at least in public while being a panelist), I felt that was my time to shine. Some anime that came up during that part of the panel were Wonder Egg Priority and The Perfect Insider, just to give you a little insight into what we were arguing for.

Because I run the convention's AMV contest, we put in an appearance at the official showing of the AMV entries. We actually had something fun to announce to the audience – we were opening up audience voting for two new audience-based awards! This is something that I'd wanted to implement for a long time, and finally with J.C.'s

help we got it done. While I have confidence in the winners that I and the other judges choose every year, I know that our experience as current/former editors, AMV contest coordinators, and long-time AMV-appreciators usually makes our criteria a little bit different than the general AMV viewing public, so it was a nice chance to acknowledge that.

After a bit of a meal break and some additional Programming Department work, we set up for our last item of the day, a game called Don't Judge an Anime by its Cover. During this game, we show off weird, wild anime OPs and EDs, and have audience volunteers describe the plot of the anime being represented. Their job isn't to actually guess the actual plot (although that does occasionally happen) but to essentially make up something that fits the imagery being shown. For history's sake, the OP that spawned this idea many years ago (and thank you to my friend Lxri for coming up with it) was the opener to an anime called Tsukuyomi Moon Phase:

### Sunday, Day 3

Our Sunday, as with our other days, was comparatively light on actual panelist work this year.

Our first item at 10am was the AMV Awards, where we gave out awards for the winners in the AMV contest. It's a fun chance to watch some of the show's AMVs again, and also something very chill to have right away in the morning when our brains are still tired from the previous evening, lol.

After that was our "big" panel of the convention, Shiny New Anime, where we talk about anime we liked from the past year. This year, considering the sheer amount of anime, and good anime we were dealing with, I made a concerted effort to spend more time on series that I felt didn't get as much attention (though I included some bigger, more familiar titles on the handout we give out so people didn't feel like they were being sent astray). I think it went well, and I ended things right on time which always feels pretty good.

After that, the rest of the day was taken up with Programming department work, meeting up with some friends, and tearing down and packing up our department's supplies and equipment. This last bit was something I'd never really participated in – usually after our last panel, J.C. and I like to get home right away. But considering our new levels of responsibility this year we decided it would probably be best to stick around and help. Apparently this made things go much more quickly, and our pallets were wrapped up and ready to go well before the staff appreciation dinner in the evening. The dinner was nice; there wasn't really anything there I could eat (it was all carbs, carbs, and more carbs, when I have to be really conscientious of that at the moment due to gestational diabetes), but it was nice to listen to all the kudos given out, and I was able to get my 15-year staffer pin, so it was all good.

### Reactions

Having had a couple of weeks to look back on the convention, my reactions now are similar to how I was feeling in the moment – this was probably one of the better years for me. I think this was mostly because we were able to strike a balance between behind-the-scenes responsibilities and panelist commitments, and I never really felt that stressed out about anything. One thing that I've noticed about myself is that, in spite of the fact that this pregnancy is slightly complicated, both by my age and by the gestational diabetes (I keep reminding myself that it's temporary, but it's still an extra mental/physical burden) it's also provided me with a sense of calmness that's difficult to describe. My anxiety has really been held in check for the past several months, which is something that hasn't been the case for me in a really long time. While I don't expect that this feature will continue past my due date, I'm trying to enjoy the zen while I'm able to.

Another thing worth mentioning is that I sensed a distinct change in atmosphere this year. Last year had a lot of challenges – it was the convention's first in-person year back after Covid cancellations and there was no good way to plan for the absolute onslaught of attendees we got that year – we were deeply unprepared. This year, despite the fact that we broke our attendance record once again, there were no terrible lines for registration and the crowds didn't seem nearly as intense. Major kudos to our registration team for making sure everything was extremely on track.

I went through a whole lot of emotions this past year, once again asking myself if this anime stuff is a hobby worth pursuing. It takes time, and time is something that I know I'm not going to have nearly as much of at my fingertips pretty soon here. I also have mental health concerns that have made it difficult to stay on top of anime fandom for many months – pretty much since I went back on medication for the fertility stuff back in September/October and could no longer self-medicate some of my issues with daily caffeine. But I think I'll stick around, even if that ulti-

mately looks different than it has. I still believe there's room in anime fandom for people who are a little older, and I want to be able to serve as a good example of that. Plus, I just like watching good anime and talking about it with people, and I suppose that's what's most important.

## Films

### Paramount's Scream Review by Jim McCoy

I was hesitant to watch Scream because I'm a LOOOOOONG way from being the world's biggest fan of reboots, but it wasn't really a reboot in the same way that the new Ghostbusters wasn't a reboot, so I figured I'd check it out. If nothing else, it was a movie with Courtney Cox and Neve Campbell in it, right? I've had a thing for both of those women for years. (NEWSFLASH: They're still beautiful.) And turns out that I was right: It's not a reboot, it's a requel.

There are all kinds of rules about what makes a requel versus what makes a sequel versus what constitutes a reboot, but Scream definitely is one. It's all explained in one of the movies meta moments and honestly, it wouldn't BE Scream without the meta moments. Those have to be there and they were. There has never been a Scream (or for that matter, one of its Scary Movie parodies) that wasn't very heavily meta. What would be over the line in any other entertainment, on- or off-screen, is normal and necessary for Scream and, as someone who saw the original Scream in movie theaters back during the Clinton Administration, I can assure you that they did it right once again.

Seriously, this was a good movie. It had the kill scenes, the jump moments, the circuitous logic, the big plot twist, and everything else you would expect. Scream is a whodunit wrapped in a slasher flick and they pulled this one off brilliantly. The only thing it was missing was the popcorn and that's my fault. I had two bags and just didn't put one in the microwave.

To be fair, I'm uhhh...

Not totally certain that was the film's fault. I just can't think of who else's fault it might be.

Listen, I've never admitted to anything being my fault. Just ask my ex-wife.

Anyway...

I like the new cast of youngsters. Scream started out as a movie about young people and it looks like the franchise is headed back that way. I approve. Running for your life from psychotic killers is a bad career choice in your 40s (which is where the remaining original cast members are). Us forty-somethings don't have the high energy levels, physical conditioning and ability to bounce back once injured that we did twenty years ago. There is a reason most professional athletes retire before they hit forty and it's not because they don't love the millions.

Which isn't to say that the original cast members aren't important to the movie. They for sure are and their presence makes sense. I remember reading somewhere about how Leonard Nimoy had refused to do Star Trek: Generations because there was no reason for Spock to be there. The character served no purpose. That's not the case here. All three returning Screamers are there for valid reasons and are central to what's going on. You won't see any "human exclamation points" here.

In a world where school shootings continue to happen because they get press, the Scream franchise has a visceral realism that other franchises just don't. Schools get shot up by evil assholes who want to get their faces on TV, so why wouldn't someone go to a town with a history of serial killers whose exploits get made into movies and kill people? Don't get me wrong. I'm not encouraging it. I'm just saying that this story hits close to home and it makes the fear more real. A Nightmare on Elm Street movie might be scary in the moment, but on some level you know that no dead guy is ever going to murder you in your dreams. When copycat killings happen in real life, it's easy to see something like the plot of a Scream movie occurring. I'm honestly kind of surprised that it hasn't.

Somewhere out there exists an EMT/trauma surgeon type that's going to tell me I'm wrong about this, but the injuries looked totally realistic to me. Even down to the blood spatter (not spray! I watched CSI, so I know this) on the walls, floors and the characters themselves. This movie left me disgusted when I needed to be and in shock when I needed to be.

Speaking of in shock, I want to compliment both the writers and the actresses here. Sydney Prescott (played by Neve Campbell) and Gale Weathers (Courtney Cox) have been through a lot in the previous four movies. It would have been very easy to write and play them as jaded and immune to the types of reactions that most people would have upon encountering some of what is in this movie. In some parts, they actually are. But in the parts where you need to feel the shock that the characters would, those two characters shine. It wasn't until I sat down to write this that I thought about how well those scenes were done, but they were flawless. I should probably mention David Arquette as Dewey Riley here as well. He played his part well but, to be honest, I've never been a fan of either the character or the actor. Still, he did a better job than I expected him to and I really enjoyed him.

Anyone who says that horror movies in general, or Scream movies in particular, are not highly formulaic is lying. That much having been said, that's part of why I enjoy them. You never know what the details are going to be, but there's always the sense that, at least in a vague way, you know what's coming up. It's an unthought of comfort when someone is screaming, the blood is flying and you're starting to get that queasy feeling in the pit of your stomach. That is very much here. As part of the generation that grew up on Michael Myers, Freddie Krueger, Jason Voorhies, Pinhead and whoever else I'm forgetting you have an expectation. Out there in Internetland, some egg-head is complaining that the plot of Scream is the result of a formula. They're right. They're also an idiot. OF COURSE IT'S FORMULAIC. THEY'VE BEEN MAKING THESE TYPES OF MOVIES FOR DECADES NOW BECAUSE IT WORKS. Moviegoers love the formula. So seriously, go file the point off of your head and join the rest of us who like to have a good time, If you want big serious boring crap go watch something that won a Nebula or a Hugo. I'll be over here with the people having a good time. For those of you who like to watch something you can enjoy, go watch Scream. You'll be glad you did.

Bottom Line: 5.0 out of 5 Long Bladed Knives

## Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1920)

### Review by Heath Row

Previously seen in Telegraphs and Tar Pits

This screening I watched was accompanied by a live Wurlitzer organ soundtrack performed by Randy Woltz, who is an excellent player. (His playing for this was much better than the soundtrack for the streaming version of The Cameraman we watched on my birthday weekend.)

John Barrymore is excellent as the dual role of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde adapting Robert Louis Stevenson's 1886 novella Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. It's a story viewers might already know. You know what's going to happen, and you know how it's going to happen. Sometimes you even know when. Yet the movie remains a wonderful experience as you watch it all unfold, even if expected.

Given Barrymore's alcoholism, it's a fitting role for him to play: a man torn between two selves and lives, that separation caused by drink. The print projected at the Old Town was duochrome, interior shots a softer sepia or brown tone, and exteriors a darker blue tint. The transformation undertaken by Barrymore is accomplished solely via makeup, costuming, and physical posture, and is something to see. Better than the Tracy version by far.

## Black Panther: Wakanda Forever (2022)

### Review by Perry Middlemiss

In the way of such things in the MCU, there was always going to be a sequel to Black Panther (2018). That film introduced Chadwick Boseman as T'Challa, the Black Panther, and the country of Wakanda. Boseman looked like he was in for a long run as the Panther but he unfortunately was diagnosed with cancer and died in 2020, before this film was in production. Marvel could have taken one of two paths following that: 1. they could have cast someone else in the role; or 2. incorporated the death of Boseman/Panther into the script and carried. They have opted for the second of these alternatives. The main problem with that approach is that, while it will work in the long run, it requires another origin story, and, in order to add the tension required, the origin of Namor, the Sub-

Mariner, another Marvel villain. So what we end up with is a rather long series of expositions as the script has to set the stage for the evolution of the Black Panther lineage, and the interactions between Wakanda and Namor's kingdom of Talokan. As you might expect, the shadow of Boseman's Panther hangs heavily over this film though it doesn't stray into the mawkish, for which we can be grateful. The producers here obviously had a lot of problems to overcome, and they've done a reasonably good job of it. It is enjoyable – as always a joy to look at with its high production values – though in the end I came out thinking it was just so-so. It is more of a transition film for the MCU rather than something new and revelatory like the original Black Panther. R: 3.3/5.0

Perry Middlemiss's reviews appear in his zine *Perryscope*.

## The Incredible Two-Headed Transplant (1971)

### Review by Heath Row

Previously seen in *Telegraphs* and *Tar Pits*

Inspired by watching *Flesh Gordon* (T&T #53) and Bjo Trimble's work in movies, a friend and I watched *The Incredible Two-Headed Transplant* in early March. It's an unconscious, if fitting, pairing with *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* above. Instead of one person made two through a scientific substance, this movie concentrates on one man made two by way of physical surgery. A multi-minded Frankenstein of sorts. Trimble, while she worked as wardrobe mistress in the costume department for this production, received no credit in the film. A surgeon ostracized by his former employers and profession focuses his attention on performing vivisections that result in two-headed living creatures: snakes, rabbits, foxes, and eventually humans.

But human bodies are hard to come by, and the surgeon, aided by a delightfully creepy assistant, turns to the oversized dimwit next door (who suffered a head injury as a child in an abandoned mine and therefore fixates on said mine) and the newly dead body of an escaped sex fiend and serial killer who licks his lips a lot. Chapped lips might very well drive one to kill, I suppose.

In any event, Bruce Dern's otherwise mellow mad scientist grafts the murderer's head on the dimwit's body, and their two personalities strive for dominance, the more violent mind succeeding. The movie's cast is otherwise interesting to fens. Pat Priest of *The Munsters* stars as Dern's love interest. Casey Kasem appears in a rare performing role rather than voice acting—making me want to track down movies such as *2000 Years Later*, *Wild Wheels*, *The Cycle Savages*, and *The Girls from Thunder Strip*.

Dern is an odd choice for a mad scientist character, and the movie is what it is, but it's still fun to watch: Not too great, but not too bad. Trimble's costuming work doesn't really stand out. The characters are basically wearing clothes. The collars are wide, and the waistlines are relatively high.

## Novels

### Stand on Zanzibar by John Brunner

#### Review by Perry Middlemiss

This novel was the winner of the 1969 Hugo Award and the 1970 BSFA Award, and was shortlisted for the 1969 Nebula Award. In the future world of the year 2010 the number of humans on the planet has increased to seven billions. A lot of countries, and states within the USA, have enacted strict birth control measures, only allowing couples to procreate if they are free of major genetic disorders. As the novel progresses we discover that the list of these prohibited disorders is steadily increasing, with the latest included being colour blindness. The novel has two main plotlines: the fictional African state of Beninia is negotiating with the major world corporation, General Technics, to take over the management of the country in order to raise the standard of living there to first-world levels; and in the fictional South East Asian country of Yatakang a scientist believes he has discovered a major breakthrough in genetic engineering which will allow for direct gene modification of any embryo. Brunner runs these two plotlines in parallel as well as interweaving chapters featuring lists of news reports, book quotes, songs, advertising material and other fragments of texts from various sources in order to give the reader an overall sense of the world of the novel. This is sf world-building laid bare and supposedly follows a template used by John Doe

Passos in the USA Trilogy in the 1930s. It is certainly an innovative approach not seen in an sf novel prior to this one – Kim Stanley Robinson does something similar in his latest novel *The Ministry for the Future* (2020). Brunner’s novel is long, deep and complicated and it demands the reader pay attention. I wouldn’t recommend any reader starting to read Brunner with this novel as it would give them a very skewed impression of the author’s work and style. The book is very much a creature of its time with women playing very minor and very suppressed roles. This is not to excuse it, just to make the observation, and for any reader to be aware of its limitations in this regard. In any event it is one of the most interesting sf novels to be published in the 1960s for all its failings. R: 4.3/5.0

Perry Middlemiss’s Reviews appear in his zine *Perryscope*.

## Prozine Review

### Realms of Fantasy

#### Review by Heath Row

Previously Seen in *Faculae* and *Filigree*

The title was one of several published by Sovereign Media, which also published *Science Fiction Age* and later *Sci-Fi Entertainment*. Sovereign’s publishing model was similar to that of *Fangoria*, *Starlog*, and *Comics Scene*, though focusing on fiction magazines. As glossies, they secured an interesting and surprisingly lucrative niche that lasted much longer than I’d have imagined: from the 1990s to the early 2000s.

*Realms of Fantasy* debuted in 1994. The issue I recently read, Vol. 1 #6, is dated August 1995. Featuring a cover by Don Maitz, this issue of *Realms of Fantasy* includes six short stories as well as columns considering then-recent books, movies, art, video games—and the folkloric roots of fantastic literature. The advertising offers a broad perspective on adjacent fandoms: video games and collectible trading card games, Renaissance fair and re-enactor costuming and equipment, limited edition art prints, books, and figurines.

Cartoonist Gahan Wilson contributes a book review column as well as a short story in this issue. His reviews consider four novels and an anthology, offering a sidebar touching on five additional books. Eric Niderost’s *Movies* column takes a look at the role Native Americans play in fantasy films of the time, including *The Indian in the Cupboard*, based on Lynne Reid Banks’s book. And Terri Windling’s *Folkroots* column considers the heroes’ quest and the transformational power of fairy tales, lending a historic and literary finish to the subsequent stories.

The stories are why we’re here, after all. Beyond the black-and-white digest prozines, the glossy fiction slicks offered something else: Color artwork illustrating short fiction. That’s actually why we’re here. The artist’s profile in each issue — this edition focusing on the art of Thomas Canty — also serves that purpose.

Deborah Wheeler’s “*Transfusion*,” illustrated by David Beck, considers what might occur if a vampire participated in a blood transfusion. The relationships between Jacob, Victor, and the narrator of the piece are worth exploring, and the biological aspect of the fantasy is intriguing—as are the added nuances of Judaism, prayer, the sabbath, and Kaddish.

“*The Ruby*,” by Beverly Suarez-Beard and illustrated by Web Bryant, is even more fascinating. A jewel thief ends up facing an embodied dragon claiming a cost for his crime. The story is wonderful — fodder for a television series, perhaps — and Bryant’s portrayal of an aerial Chinese dragon is glorious.

Some of the stories get a little weird, like those in *The Twilight Zone* magazine of the 1980s or *Interzone*. Carrie Richerson’s “*Geckos*” is the first example of such here, illustrated by Alan M. Clark. A woman house sitting in Texas becomes more acclimated to her new environment. It is a grand story, physically outre, and I’m slightly surprised it only appeared as a chapbook before inclusion here—this could be anthologized even today.

Wilson’s story, “*The Frog Prince*,” illustrated by Michael Dubisch, takes a new tack on the traditional fairytale. The incorporation of psychotherapy makes it particularly clever and interesting—though I expected more out of Wilson’s prose given his artwork.

The best story in the issue is S.N. Dyer’s “*Radiomancer and Bubblegum*,” illustrated by Mike Wright. A cyber-

punk-adjacent story involving great American road trip mythology and pop music, the story posits a magic based on music. Wright's artwork is especially well suited for this piece, reminding me of indie rock commercial art of the 1980s, and I'm pleased to learn Dyer is a pen name for Sharon N. Farber, who's more widely published. This story, too, should have been anthologized by now.

Brian Stableford's "The Evil That Men Do," illustrated by Jon Foster, suggests another magical system, one based on scarification and flagellation. Stableford might be the biggest name in the issue—other than Wilson—and his story could easily serve as the foundation for something larger. But outside of future inclusion in Stableford collections, I don't think this piece inspired a novel or anything larger in scope.

While I thoroughly enjoyed all of the stories, I recognize that the success of a magazine like this depends on a reader appreciating the majority of the stories. There's enough else here—book, movie, and game reviews; artwork; and ads catering to adjacent fandom lifestyles, that I'm suspicious issues hit more often than they missed. One or two stories like those of Suarez-Beard, Richerson, and Dyer's work every issue, and I'd have been a subscriber. I will enjoy reading the back issues I've picked up along the way—as well as exploring the sf counterpart Science Fiction Age.

## SerCon

### Robert Sheckley Bio-Bibliography by Jon D. Swartz, Ph.D. N3F Historian

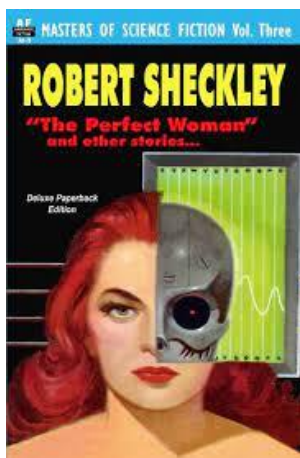


Science fiction (SF) author Robert Sheckley was born in Brooklyn, New York, raised in New Jersey, and educated at New York University (B. A., 1951). He was known for his dark comic and satirical works. English author/critic Kingsley Amis called him "science fiction's premier gadfly."

#### Personal Life

Sheckley was born on July 16, 1928, and died on December 9, 2005, in Poughkeepsie, New York, at the age of 77. He married Barbara Scadron in 1951, and they had a son. He and Ziva Kwitney married in 1957; and they had a daughter and a son together. His later marriages were to Abby Schulman (from 1972 to 1982), two children; and Gail Dana (1990 – 2005), from whom he was separated at the time of his death.

He entered the U.S. Army after high school, and served in Korea during the Korean Conflict.



#### Writing Career

After discharge from the Army, he began to sell stories to the main SF magazines, producing hundreds of stories over the next several years.

During this period he wrote several stories that were later adapted for radio's Tales of Tomorrow and X Minus One; he also wrote fifteen episodes for the television series Captain Video – and some 60 short-short stories that were read aloud by the actor Basil Rathbone on Monitor Radio. Sheckley also wrote "The People Trap," which became the basis for a television special.

#### Pseudonyms

He used several pen names during his writing career, including Phillips Barbee, Ned Lay, and Finn O'Donnevan.



### Genre Novels

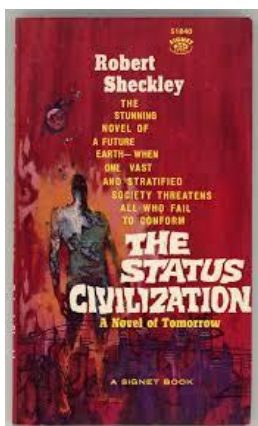
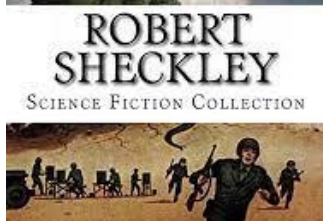
Immortality Inc. (1958) aka Immortality Delivered  
 The Status Civilization (1960) aka Omega  
 Journey Beyond Tomorrow (1962) aka Journey of Joenes  
 The Man in the Water (1962)  
 The Game of X (1965)  
 Mindswap (1966)  
 Dimension of Miracles (1968)  
 Options (1975)  
 The Alchemical Marriage of Alistair Crompton (1978) aka Crompton Divided



Dramocles (1983)  
 Watchbird (1990)  
 Godshome (1998)

### Short Story Collections

Untouched by Human Hands (1954)  
 Citizen in Space (1955)  
 Pilgrimage to Earth (1957)  
 Notions: Unlimited (1960)  
 Store of Infinity (1960)  
 Shards of Space (1962)  
 The People Trap (1968)  
 Can You Feel Anything When I Do This? (1971) aka Same to You Doubled  
 The Robot Who Looked Like Me (1978)  
 The Wonderful World of Robert Sheckley (1979)

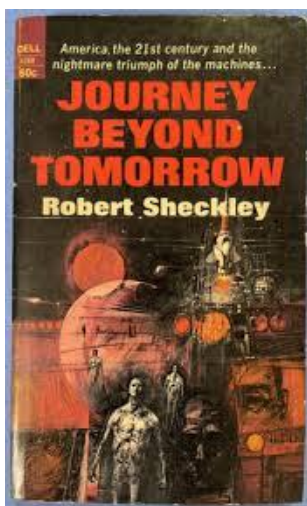


Is That What People Do? (1984)  
 The Best of Sheckley (1989)  
 The Collected Short Fiction of Robert Sheckley (1991)  
 Dimensions of Sheckley (2002)  
 Uncanny Tales (2003)  
 The Masque of Manana (2005)  
 Store of the Worlds (2012)

### Awards/Honors/Recognitions

He was fiction editor of Omni Magazine from March, 1980 through the summer of 1982, and a Visiting Scholar at the Artificial Intelligence Lab at MIT in Boston in 1983.

In 1991, he received the Raymond Z. Gallun Award for contributions to the genre of SF.



During his career, he also won Alkor (1990) and Jupiter Awards (1974).

In addition, he was named Author Emeritus by the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America in 2001.

### Some Conclusions

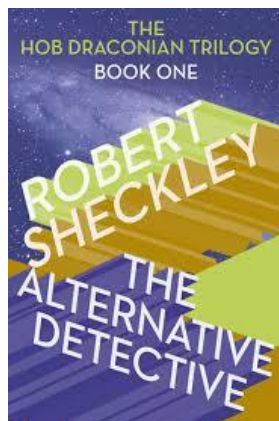
In the early 1960s, he also wrote mystery novels.

He was too ill to attend the 2005 World SF Convention in Glasgow, where he was scheduled to be the Guest of Honor.

### Sources

Currey, L. W. Science Fiction and Fantasy Authors, 1979.





Smith, Curtis C. (ed.). Twentieth Century Science Fiction Writers, 1981.

Swartz, Jon. D. Pseudonyms of Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror Authors, 2010.

Tuck, Donald H. The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy, Volume 2: Who's Who, M - Z, 1978.

Note: In addition to the above, various Internet sites were consulted, including Fancyclopedia 3, ISFDB, and Wikipedia.



## Short Stories

### From the Reading Pile: Short Stories Review by Heath Row

While in Joshua Tree recently, I picked up Isaac Asimov's *The Early Asimov*, Volume 1 in a 1973 Panther paperback edition from Space Cowboy Books.

One of three volumes in the series, this paperback—subtitled “Eleven Years of Trying” and dedicated to John Wood Campbell Jr.—collects eight stories published in 1940-1941. So far, I've read four of them: “The Callistan Menace,” “Ring Around the Sun,” “The Magnificent Possession,” and “Trends.”

While the stories are themselves enjoyable, Asimov's editorial comments before and between each are even more so. The author shares memories and stories about the writing, submission, acceptance, and publication of the stories; remarks on his reading of the prozines and pulps as a budding author; recalls his relationship with editors, particularly Campbell; and otherwise lends personal perspective to his early history as a writer.

I'm sure Matthew B. Tepper appreciated this insight as a bibliographer and collector. Without offering a citation, Wikipedia suggests that after *The Early Asimov* was published, Tepper found a copy of the original version of a story titled “Big Game” among Boston University's collection of Asimov's papers. Asimov later published it in the anthology *Before the Golden Age*.

Also of interest are Asimov's comments on other, similarly lost stories, including his first story, “Cosmic Corkscrew,” rejected stories, the sequence of his writing—and the publication—of stories, which early stories he considers important or noteworthy stories, and other such remarks. If this writing is any indication, Asimov's autobiographies and memoirs must be enjoyable reads, as well. His personal voice is strong and compelling.

Previously reviewed in *Telegraphs and Tar Pits*.

### Orbit 3 edited by Damon Knight Review by Perry Middlemiss

The third in this continuing series of original story anthologies edited by Damon Knight. This volume includes two Nebula Award winners: “Mother to the World” by Richard Wilson (novelette) and “The Planners” by Kate Wilhelm (short story). The Wilhelm was fine but the Wilson was just ordinary. In his introduction to that story Knight describes it as “not just a new variation on the Last Man theme; he has given it one new twist”. A new twist it may be, but it still doesn't make it any good. Apart from the Wilhelm I liked Gene Wolfe's “The Changeling”, Joanna Russ's “The Barbarian” (one of her stories about Alyx, the thief and swordswoman) and James Sallis's “Letter to a Young Poet”, which uses an sf set-up to tell a story that might just as easily have been written as a straight literary story, and does it very well. That gives the anthology four starred stories out of nine, putting it into the middle range of such volumes. Why Knight even bothered choosing Philip Jose Farmer's “Don't Wash the Carats” is beyond me. Maybe I'm becoming a bit biased about Farmer, but the more I read the more I wonder what people saw in his work. R: 2.6/5.0

Perry Middlemiss's Reviews appear in his zine *Perryscope*.

## Food of Famous Writers

### Eat This While You Read That: G. Scott Huggins Cooking by Cedar Sanderson

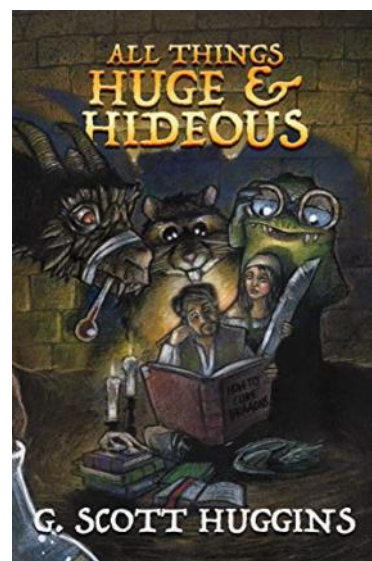


So the conversation went something like this... Scott: I don't know. Something with sausage? Maybe wurst?

Me: I'll do my wurst for you.

And on that note! You should really read Scott's book *Doctor to Dragons* if you appreciate humor. Especially low humor, because the book is about a veterinarian, and if you thought James Herriot was funny with cats, dogs, and cows, this take on dragons, basilisks, and other mythological creatures ought to be right up your alley. I loved it and am hoping for more from Scott.

But this post is about what to do with the animals who die for tasty deaths. Or: a vet's side-job in a crumbling fantasy city where money



is hard to come by and you don't ask what's in the sausage. Because this is a recipe for sausage, only it's more like guidelines. Suggestions, if you will. Techniques... I did say I'd do my wurst.

When you are cutting up tasty, tasty animals, you get steaks and chops and roasts and... a lot of odd little bits that aren't really big enough to cook by themselves, but you don't want to waste an ounce of this food. Soup, stew, and the like are great ways to cook the bones and clinging bits to make stock, or what-have-you. But someone back in the mists of time got the great idea to chop up those bits with some flavorings added – seeds, herbs, spices, salt, lots of salt – stuff the resulting mess into some nice clean intestines, and voila! sausage was born.



Green Dragon-with-no-name likes garlic in his sausage.

My Ginja Ninja, who has never made sausage before (although she's watched me do it when much younger) got in on the fun when we were talking about how to tackle Scott's tubular challenge to me. We were joking around about dragon sausage (she seemed to think it ought to be blue. Dragon meat is blue? Who knew?) when she told me she wanted to do a Chinese style sausage. So I bought a chunk of meat, the cheap kind with a bone in, and acquired a slightly-more-modern than stone age meat grinder (you'd be amazed what you can find at antique flea markets. Those old bugs sure knew a thing or two).

As a side note, when you are cutting up the store-bought roast, you'll want to make sure you get all the silverskin and stringy connective tissue cut off, or you will gum up your grinder. Sharpen your knives before you start, unless you are one of those sorts who always has the sharpest knives in the drawer. I am not. Also, I highly recommend an energetic and interested teenager to provide arm strength and sound effects, not to mention the inevitable innuendo and dirty jokes.

Now, usually you'd grind once on coarse, and then grind again with the herbs and spices and seasonings in. We didn't. For two reasons: one, the Chinese Sausage recipes I'd looked at, and the ones I've eaten, were a coarser grind than most wurst, or brats. (and no, brats are not made of naughty children) Second, the butcher job I did was



second-rate and the grinder was giving us fits and it was late and I threw my hands up and called it done. But if you prefer a sausage with less 'bite' you will want to grind on coarse, then medium. Fine, if you want breakfast sausage. If you want wurst, like liverwurst, just use the food processor and make it into paste \*shudders\* and go from there. Schlorp. Sloop... eww!" Giggles

What I did instead was grind, then mix in the flavorings by hand. This was roughly 2 lbs of ground meat bits. Dragon? maybe... or maybe dragon's meat (i.e. pork). Pigs can fly! when dangling from a dragon's talons. Added to that was:

8 oz alcoholic citrus drink

ground pepper, about 2 tsp

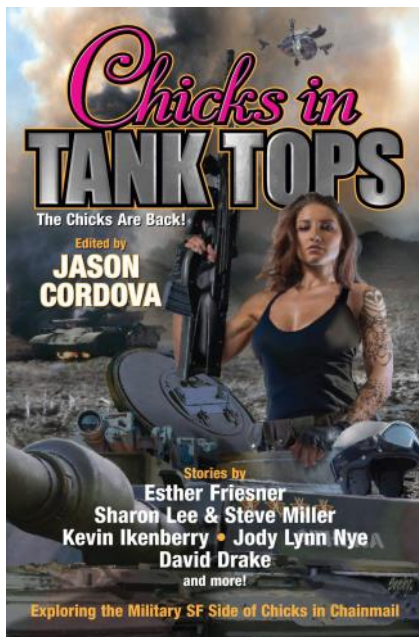
salt, about a tablespoon

more salt

sugar, about 3 tablespoons

garlic chili paste about 4 tbsps

garlic cloves (these we ground with the meat) (um. maybe a whole bulb? 10 cloves?)



Chinese Sausages are meant to be smoked, or air-dried, and they have a lot of sugar and salt in them to retard microbial growth. Since we were going to fry some up loose, as we lacked a sausage stuffer and casings, we sort of eyeballed the amounts there. I was surprised how well the meat soaked up the liquid, that was good. I was reflecting that it was like marinating the meat. Only there was so much surface area it just sucked it up like a sponge.

The flavor was good. I'd add more chilies, for heat, but the Ginja Ninja liked it this way. There was some spice, just not a significant amount. We still have some to experiment with stuffing and smoking, once I have casings in hand. I found a manual stuffer, so that part is taken care of.

We also made about a pound and a half of fresh herb sausage with the other half of the roast. Herbs picked from the garden and ground with the meat, along with a lot of garlic. We like garlic around here.



So now you know what goes into making sausage. If you make some, just don't tell anyone where the meat came from. During the process, we were explaining to the GN who CMOT Dibbler is... but that's a different book. Although, if you know who that is, you'll like Scott's book. I promise.





Boat to Golden Island by Tiffanie Gray