

# *The Obdurate Eye #55*

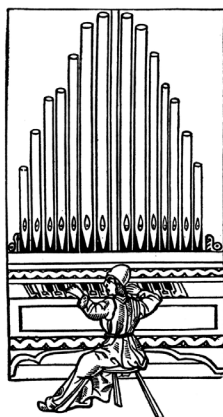
September 2025



## Contents

Puzzled for Good .....	1
LoCs .....	2
Gnus .....	7
Duncan’s Movie Reviews .....	8
About Canada.....	13
About the United States.....	15
Fanzines Received .....	27
New Books .....	28

THE OBDURATE EYE #55, September 2025, a personalzine from Garth Spencer, 6960 Doman Street, Vancouver, BC CANADA V5S 3H7, Email [garth.van.spencer@gmail.com](mailto:garth.van.spencer@gmail.com) or [hrothgarweems@gmail.com](mailto:hrothgarweems@gmail.com). Garth acknowledges that he does this on the unceded territory of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm, səliwətał, and skwxwú7mesh peoples. This zine endorses the Spuzzum in 2027 and Port Alberni in 2030 bids.



*The organ of no clique or party*

## Art Credits

Judgmental Alien (W. Rotsler) .....	cover
Garth getting sent up (Brazilian steakhouse) .....	p. 1
Sci-firella (Alan White).....	p. 2
Blimp (Roy Pounds).....	p. 6
Clint Budd photo (??) .....	p. 8
Charles R. Saunders photo (John Bell, 1984).....	p. 8
Diane L. Walton photo (Rick LeBlanc, 2025) .....	p. 8
Salt Shaker Exploring Space (Brad Foster, 2009) .....	p. 8
Viking Cat Goes to War (clipart).....	p. 13
Upside-Down US Flag (clipart).....	p. 15
Planting a Flag (W. Rotsler) .....	p. 26
More BS than I Could Handle (clipart) .....	p. 27
Leave This Fanzine At Once! (W. Rotsler) .....	p. 35



## Puzzled for Good

It's the night before Labour Day Monday as I type this, and I'm puzzled by some of my own behaviour. I now have to master senior life, my failures of motivation, and my occasional failures of memory.

Resist it as I may, I have to confess I have been having "senior moments" for a while now: forgetting why I came into a room, where I put down my tablet, or when I have appointments. Probably that is one of the reasons why I invented a clasp notebook I call "Garth's Life Manual," updated monthly: in part I use it to remind myself of *everything I have to do*.

Not that this is the only reason. Unlike some people, I guess, I did not learn a very clear idea of how to design my whole life – how to allocate time and attention to material needs, social needs, or self-development needs ... or, indeed, any other design. I had to work out my own design for living.

That's all very well, but what do I do with the fact that I keep losing all *motivation*?

Some people have a lot of drive and focus and ambition and all them there kind of things. As for me, I just muddled my way through the last 60-odd years. I got the misconception that anything *I* wanted wasn't important and was, in fact, not allowed. Well, you get a lot of misconceptions when you're forming the foundations of your mind and character – probably because you do most of it before the age of reason. Took me decades to realize that some personal ambition was *demande*d, especially when you're graduating from high school, and choosing a trade or an academic program.

Now that I'm finally straightening out some misconceptions, I am already semi-retired. Go figure.

These observations may sound like complaints. In fact they're more like observations in a log book: I am noting traffic hazards in some difficult waters. Numerous people in the last half-century have expressed opinions about the changing navigation requirements of life, and the treacherous reefs and shifting sandbars facing our careers, marriages, family lives, and . All I can contribute is that there are a *lot* of mismatches between the advice we got and the challenges we actually face.

So: what really motivates me?

I don't know about you, but I still feel like a small boy fascinated by construction toys, like Meccano. I think of story ideas and science news and standup comedy skits as construction pieces you can put together and take apart, sometimes with creative effect.

Gradually, though, I realized how very few people are on this wavelength. It was a very disappointing thing to realize, especially about science fiction fans. I really did want to find a community of friends who shared my interests. But, like romantic love or rewarding employment, it didn't appear to be in the cards for me.

I seem motivated to return, again and again, to some ideas I have already exploded: the idea of finding out, finally and conclusively, what kind of social behaviour or design for living my contemporaries expected me to conform to; or what kind of influence I could exert to get people to communicate in plain language I could understand. Probably there are much more achievable and satisfying goals, like eliminating global pollution or world climate change or educating the world managerial class to make sustainable plans beyond the next fiscal quarter.

Now what did I want to do before I started this fanzine?



## LoCs

**Mark Nelson** [nelsonmark07@gmail.com](mailto:nelsonmark07@gmail.com), August 11, 2025

How do I maintain "a sense of personal worth, confidence and self-respect that endures?" It goes up and down over time. Bad things that happen, or things that I perceive to be bad, push it down. Good things, or things that I perceive to be good, allows it to grow.

Since I took my voluntary redundancy I've been trying not to think through my career. Could I have made different decisions in the past which would have led to a different tomorrow? Sometimes reflecting upon the past can be useful, as a mechanism to avoid repeating your mistakes. But I don't think looking over my career falls into this category. A cliché that springs to mind is that there's no point crying over spilt milk.

I too tried [kelly@oates.com](mailto:kelly@oates.com) with no luck. Like Lloyd, I asked Bill Burns if he had a working email address. As Kelly's fanzine was available on efanazines I figured that he would have it. A sudden thought. Contacting Kelly is reminiscent of a social media task where you have to send a message to someone using as few intermediaries as possible.

*((Turns out the domain was oates.**one**, not oates.com.))*

I'm going to continue working my way through your list of Life Skills. Seems like I am the only person who considers this an interesting thing to do.

\* **How to fly a flag:** I've never flown a flag in my life. My brother worked in the USA for six years. I'm not sure if either of the two houses he lived in contained a flag post. I remember him telling me that it was illegal to fly the flag of any country other than the USA on your flag post.

*((Come to think of it, neither have I. Guess Canadians are more modest than many Americans, or something.))*

\* **How to garden:** I've never been interested in gardening. I always thought that gardening was something that became interesting once you reached middle-age. However, now that I've reached middle-aged I'm still not interested in gardening. I lived in Leeds for about ten years, mostly in houses that had no back gardens. Many owners had come to the conclusion that the best kind of garden for the front yard was concrete.

*((I wasn't interested until I was volunteered into it. Now I know things I didn't know before.))*

\* **How to give a gift:** How to give a gift? I don't know. How do you give a gift? What are your thoughts?

*((With as much grace and savoir-faire as possible.))*

\* **How to give a massage:** I've never been taught how to give a massage. I've picked one or two things up when I've been massaged and from what I've read. My wife likes me to give her a massage when she's tired. So I assume that it's an OK massage.

*((I know exactly three things about giving a massage, which I used to do at social events such as conventions.))*

\* **How to give and receive a compliment:** I'm most likely to feel embarrassed if someone gives me a compliment. An exception to this rule is when a student has something nice to me about my teaching or the support I've given them.

*((Me too.))*

\* **How to grind an italic pen nib:** I've never had to grind an italic pen nib. Will this be an essential life skill for those that survived the forthcoming apocalypse?

*((Oh, it's essential when we run out of pens and pencils. For higher marks, try starting with goose feathers.))*

\* **How to grow sunflowers:** I've never tried to grow sunflowers. See previous comments related to gardening. If I walk down to the end of the street and turn right then third the street I come to is Sunflower Boulevard. I've always had it in mind that Boulevard is a fancy French word for a wide street, but looking it up there's a bit more to it. Yes, it's a broad street. But typically it is also lined with trees or has some other landscaping features. If I remember correctly, weren't the first boulevards built in Paris to improve the speed at which the military could move around the city? To do this they had to knock down many of the medieval streets that made up the city.

*((First, you prepare a patch of fertile ground. Then, in the right season, you put sunflower seeds on it. Water regularly and wait. Or something like that.))*

\* **How to handle a job interview:** I've not been interviewed for jobs very often. My last interview was in 2002. At that time I didn't have the idea that being interviewed is like giving a performance. I just answered questions honestly. I wouldn't answer questions dishonestly now. But when you're being interviewed 100% honesty is not always your friend.

*((As I learned to my sorrow.))*

\* **How to hang a picture:** I've no idea how to hang a picture, despite owning a fair amount of art. To hang art in the apartment that I lived in from 2003 to January 2016 I employed a guy from the local art supply shop. When we moved into a new house in January 2016 my wife said that she did not want any of the walls 'ruined' by having art hanging from them. That's probably also the case for the new house that we moved to in May this year. My brother-in-law has pointed out that double-sided sticky tape is amazingly strong and can carry weights of up to 20 kg. So perhaps I will hang some of my art works. On the other hand I've just looked this up on ChatGPT (I know, I know) and it doesn't recommend using double-sided sticky tape for anything heavy or valuable.

*((Christ only knows.))*

\* **How to have a great smile:** I believe that in the USA the way to have a great smile is to pay dentists a large amount of money to keep your teeth brilliantly white.

*((Or keep brushing your teeth regularly with the right toothpaste.))*

\* **How to have good posture:** This is one of your essential life skills that I wished was taught in school.

*((Sleep without pillows.))*

\* **How to hold a baby:** Not something that I had to do until I became a dad at the age of 54. How did I avoid holding the babies of my siblings? By working in a different country to them when their children were born.

\* **How to house-train a puppy:** Not something I've ever needed to do, because I've never been interested in owning a dog. I'm hoping to house-train my son into learning that we have an animal-free household. (Is this at all similar to house-training a puppy?) I accept that this will be one of the skills that separates the men from the boys when the forthcoming apocalypse arrives. As I've already indicated, I don't have

the skills to prosper in the brave new world that follows – even assuming that I survive through the apocalypse.

*((The simplest solution? Don't get a puppy!))*

**Lloyd Penney, 1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2, [penneys@bell.net](mailto:penneys@bell.net), August 17, 2025**

Catching up on a lot of fanzines, and *The Obdurate Eye* #54 is next! Too many rules, indeed? We can't be aware of all the rules we're expected to follow, and we're also told that ignorance of the law is no excuse. No wonder so many choose not to play the game at all.

*((I always thought there was something wrong with the rule "ignorance of the law is no excuse." It would be more consistent with our values to teach basic law in grade school. But then it would also be logical to teach pupils attention skills, learning and research skills, memory skills, decision-making skills, and the basic ability to express themselves. Judging from remarks that Jacqueline Monahan has made, these are not actually common.))*

In this time of political insanity and near-fascism (can we jump back to the same timeline, please?), navels get a lot of attention. It beats having to deal with the usual news about the Orange Monster, and losing your temper on a regular basis. I think the Democrats are just now learning to fight fire with fire. If Trump can dish it out but not take it, we'll see just how far he will do to restore his own version of the law. I do lose my own temper with this, but now that more and more are against Trump, watching the fallout will be very interesting.

So...the NASFiC will be gone soon. The confirmation should have already taken place in a business meeting in Seattle, possibly yesterday or the day before. NASFiC is a convention that seems to have lost its focus. I hope there will be a full report on this Worldcon, so I will tune in to File 770 every so often.

*((I just realized I have been confusing the NASFiC with Westercon. Maybe I'm having senior moments more often.))*

Congratulations to all Aurora and Hugo winner, Hall of Fame inductees, and Jean-Louis Trudel on his UNESCO residence in Lithuania. If I recall correctly, an Artist named Ryan North may have won both a Hugo and an Aurora for his *Star Trek: Lower Decks* comic.

And now, I must go and make dinner. Thanks for this issue, and I am sure you are plotting and scheming over the next one. Thank you!

**Morbus Iff [morbus@disobey.com](mailto:morbus@disobey.com), August 21, 2025**

Hey George and Garth!

Read your comments, and zine list, in *Tightbeam* 370 about fanzines mentioning other fanzines. I wanted to point you to newly-launched apazine *Dialogues of East Asia* <https://dialoguesofeastasia.com> <<https://dialoguesofeastasia.com/>>. I contribute a zine to that and, in the second issue (scheduled for release the first week of September), I've included the following (first-draft) blurb about N3F zines.

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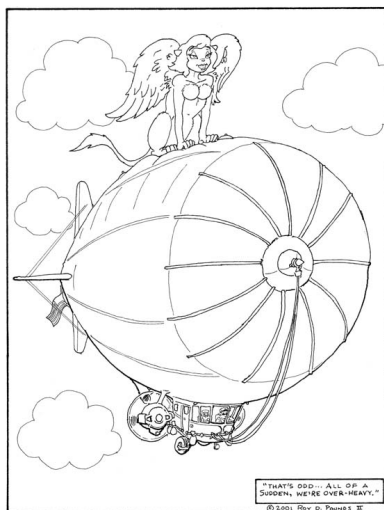
### *Mentioning Other Fanzines*

In *Tightbeam* issue 370 (July 2025), editor George Phillies noted, in response to the shared lament of how fanzine interest has dwindled, how zines once mentioned other publications so as to help communities percolate amongst themselves. Garth Spencer then listed a dozen or so fanzines he currently receives. To join in, now and in future issues, here's a list of zines I'm currently reading from the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F), all digitally accessible for free under "N3F Fanzines" at the URL in the footnote:

- *A Gentle Stroll*: A roleplaying game apazine, three issues in, rising after the death of long-running *Alarums & Excursions*. For someone who hasn't had a chance to play in years (decades?), reading others' journeys and game sessions has become a welcome alternative.
- *FanActivity Gazette*: A news-ish fanzine covering SF/F awards nominations and winners, cons and events, monthly book releases, and the occasional review or preservation effort.
- *MangaVerse*: Currently on hiatus, but I've been slowly reading through the archives of this anime and manga zine.
- *N'APA*: Launched in 1959, with its most recent issue being 276, this is a hodge podge and very conversational apazine that is supremely fun to read simply because of the wide range of topics on offer.
- *Tightbeam*: Nearly 400 issues in, it is the N3F's "literary, commentary, and review zine, striving to cover all branches of the SF hobby from anime to television, zoology, and, of course gourmet cooking."

((You have a more all-inclusive definition of "fanzine" than I.))

**We Also Heard From: George Phillies, Chuck Connor, Hugh Spencer, Perry Middlemiss, Do-Ming Lum**





# Gnus

## Montreal Bid Wins Worldcon in 2027

Worldcon in 2027 will be held September 2-6 in Montreal at the Palais des Congres de Montreal. Guests of honour will include Jo Walton, Yves Meynard, and Chris Barkley. For more details, go to <https://site.montreal2027.ca/>.

## 2025 Aurora Award Winners

"We are pleased to announce the winners of the 2025 Aurora Awards for excellence by Canadians in the fields of Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror. We want to congratulate all of this year's nominees.

"The Aurora Awards are given out by the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (CSFFA). The awards are nominated and voted on by members of CSFFA. Membership is open to all Canadians and Permanent Residence for a nominal fee.

"This year the awards went authors and creators from across Canada.

- Best Novel: **The Siege of Burning Grass**, Premee Mohamed, Solaris
- Best YA Novel: **Heavenly Tyrant**, Xiran Jay Zhao, Tundra Books
- Best Novelette/Novella: **The Butcher of the Forest**, Premee Mohamed, Tordotcom
- Best Short Story: "**Blood and Desert Dreams**", Y.M. Pang, Beneath Ceaseless Skies, Issue 408
- Best Graphic Novel: **Star Trek Lower Decks: Warp Your Own Way**, Ryan North, art by Chris Fenoglio, IDW Publishing
- Best Poem/Song "**Cthulhu on the Shores of Osaka**", Y.M. Pang, Invitation: A One-shot Anthology of Speculative Fiction
- Best Related Work: **Year's Best Canadian Fantasy and Science Fiction: Volume Two**, Stephen Kotowych, editor, Ansible Press
- Best Cover Art/Interior Illustration: **Augur Magazine, Issue 7.1**, cover art, Martine Nguyen
- Best Fan Writing and Publication: **SF&F Book Reviews**, Robert Runté, Ottawa Review of Books
- Best Fan Related Work: **murmurstations**, Sonia Urlando, Augur Society, podcast

"The awards were announced during a live-streaming ceremony, on both [YouTube](#) and Facebook, on Sunday, August 10<sup>th</sup>. The ceremony included the induction of this year's [Hall of Fame recipients](#), Clint Budd, Charles R. Saunders, Diane L Walton."

[\(2025 Aurora Awards Press Release – Scribble's Worth, August 12, 2025\)](#)



Clint Budd



Charles R. Saunders



Diane L. Walton

(Charles R. Saunders photo by John Bell, 1984;  
Diane L. Walton photo by Rick LeBlanc, 2025)

## Duncan's Movie Reviews

*For August 1, 2025:*

by Duncan Shields

Movies and TV I've seen lately:

*Fantastic Four: First Steps* (2025) – Hell yeah. Nailed it. Pretty much everything I wanted from a Fantastic Four movie. 10/10. Or should I say 4/4? The casting and storyline all worked for me. Great introduction to Jack Kirby's 'first family' of comics even though its the 5th cinematic attempt. It doesn't even feel like a Marvel movie and I mean that in a good way. I don't want to get into spoilers or specifics here but I recommend it. For my money, they hit it out of the park. Between this and *Superman*, we seem to be moving in a great new direction in comic book movies and I'm here for it. – currently in theaters.

*Grey Gardens* (1975) – NOT the 2009 Drew Barrymore/Jessica Lange dramatization. I finally got around to seeing this famous and controversial documentary. Two aging, reclusive, eccentric, upper-class, former-high-society women, a mother and daughter both named Edith Beale, live in a pocket dimension of circular arguments, past regrets, and many cats in their dilapidated, crumbling mansion on an overgrown patch of land. By turns funny and starkly depressing, it's a fascinating window into the dead-end, *cul-de-sac* existence of a forgotten pair of the idle rich losing their minds in isolation as



the clock winds down. Very real. Unusual. Bizarre. Uncomfortable. Voyeuristic. Honest. A bit much. People are wild. – Vancouver Public Library DVD. Streaming on Internet Archive, Criterion, YouTube, and Crave. For rent/purchase from GooglePlay and AppleTV

*The Bad and the Beautiful* (1952) – Outstanding. Kirk Douglas and Lana Turner star in this inside-baseball skewering of old-school Hollywood complete with all the hard feelings and betrayals that going into making successful careers. It's all told through the lens of three vignette flashbacks. Lots of 'show, don't tell' scenes, wonderful writing/directing, and great cinematography. An acknowledged classic that thoroughly deserves to be classified as such. I really enjoyed this. Recommended. – Vancouver Public Library DVD. Streaming on Internet Archive, and YouTube. For rent/purchase from GooglePlay, Prime, and AppleTV

*The Sandman* (series)(final season) – This was mostly finished filming when the deeply disturbing allegations against Neil Gaiman surfaced. I'd never pay to rent it specifically but I've got Netflix anyway so I wanted to finish it off. It's hit and miss as any comic adaptation would be but I think it hits more than it misses. I enjoyed the parts that worked, which were plentiful. I loved the comics so I'm pretty angry and conflicted about this whole situation. I'm glad the series is over. I can't in good conscience recommend it because of the incidents Gaiman is said to have perpetrated in the real world. But I liked it. Boy, I wish things were different. *The Sandman* comic came to me at an impressionable time and filled me with wonder. Watching this was like a final farewell or a wake for something I once loved which, considering the home stretch storyline, is appropriate. – streaming on Netflix.

*The Deep* (1977) – A solid little 70s scuba-diving thriller starring Nick Nolte, an often scantily-clad Jacqueline Bisset, Robert "Quint" Shaw, Louis Gossett Jr., and the crusty Eli Wallach. Recreational diving couple Nolte and Bissett dive where they shouldn't, find what they shouldn't've found, and set off a chain of alarming hijinx when interested parties start circling. Some pretty great underwater struggles, a really great fight scene, lots of treasure lore, and Bissett 'breasting boobily' hither and yon. A bit long and SOLIDLY 70s but good moments of actual tension and suspense. Give it a whirl if you're curious, I say. – Vancouver Public Library DVD. Available for rent/purchase from the usual places.

*Outrage* (1950) – Ida Lupino directs and co-writes this movie about the ramifications of a brutal sexual assault. Perky, vivacious, recently-engaged office worker Ann Walton (Mala Powers) is randomly raped on a deserted back lot after work one night in a harrowing and amazing cinematic sequence. After, she descends into a spiral of guilt, shame, rage, disassociation, self-loathing and fear, running away from her fiancé, parents, and problems to the coast, only to find that she hasn't run away from anything. I found aspects of it wildly transgressive and important, especially for the time. The acting is so-so and the back half drags a bit but it's from the point of view of the victim, without it being a revenge movie, making it pretty relevant and unique, both for the time and also today. An important movie. – Vancouver Public Library DVD. Streaming on Internet Archive and YouTube. Available for rent/purchase from YouTube, AppleTV, GooglePlay.

*The Man With the Golden Arm* (1955) – Frank Sinatra stars as drug addict Frankie Machine who gets clean during a prison stretch but has a hard time staying clean on the outside in his old neighborhood with his old friends. The acting is very broad and

over-the-top but the subject was very taboo at the time and they really get into it. Otto Preminger directs this independent feature. Kim Novak stars as the broken bombshell who loves Frankie. Sinatra gets good and strung out and pretty raw in some scenes. A bit wooden and flawed but I get that it was a big deal. I always forget what a skinny little guy Sinatra was in the beginning of his career. – Vancouver Public Library DVD. Streaming on Internet Archive, Plex, YouTube and Prime.

*Bigger Than Life* (1956) – James Mason is prescribed the experimental-at-the-time drug/hormone cortisone to fight a blood disorder. His life spirals out of control as he develops mental illness as a result of the prescription and he abuses his family and friends. A young Walter Matthau co-stars. A bit lurid but Mason is great as a man descending into psychosis and the movie itself tries to actually compassionately address mental illness instead of just making the sufferer into a villain of the week. A good watch for the performances and a baby Matthau is always fun. – Vancouver Public Library DVD. Streaming on Youtube, Internet Archive, and Criterion.

*The Roaring Twenties* (1939) – James Cagney (and a pre-fame Humphrey Bogart) come home from WW1 only to find unemployment on the rise. Cagney gets big in the bootleg biz during Prohibition only to nosedive after Prohibition ends. Standard crime drama with some romance and all the sweet, sweet Cagney you can handle. He was so great. It's worth a watch. Not amazing but pretty good. – Vancouver Public Library DVD. – Streaming on Dailymotion, Tubi, and Criterion. Available for rent/purchase from the usual places.

*Faces* (1968) – Stop the presses! A John Cassavettes film I actually enjoyed! I didn't care for *Love Streams* or *A Woman Under the Influence* but for some reason this one clicked for me. It's rambling and long and features volatile people instigating interactions with each other while drinking a lot, much like his other work, but this one really came across as interesting and genuine to me. Really real. Bleak AND hopeful. Chaotic AND loving. Harsh AND compassionate. A desolate celebration of life. And I think I finally 'get' the big deal with Gena Rowlands now. And it has Seymour Cassell (Max Fischer's barber dad from *Rushmore*) as a swinging, hip-cat, man about town. Maybe it's because it was shot in handheld black and white with a lot of closeups that really put you in the action and make the title make sense? I don't know. Not for everyone but this one worked for me. – Vancouver Public Library DVD. Streaming on Internet Archive, Criterion, Mubi, YouTube, and the VPL streaming service Kanopy. Available for rent/purchase for AppleTV.

*I Want to Live!* (1958) – Susan Hayward won the Golden Globe and the Oscar for her depiction of real-life death penalty casualty Barbara Graham, a free-wheeling jazz-lover, single-mom good-time-gal, sex worker, and petty-criminal spitfire. The film insinuates her innocence but in real life the case was pretty clear that she did actually commit the murder. But guilty or innocent, it's more a thorough inspection of the mechanics of the gas chamber death penalty and a show-stopping spotlight role for Susan Hayward to light up the screen with her fire, sass, pathos, and charm as she goes from a life of small-stakes hepcat partying and larceny to an in-depth tour of the beleaguered justice system. Great stuff. Pretty unique. Loved it. – Vancouver Public Library DVD. Streaming on Prime, Internet Archive, YouTube, and Tubi. Available for rent/purchase for AppleTV and GooglePlay.

*for August 23rd 2025:*

Movies and tv I've seen lately:

*28 Years Later* (2025) - I really enjoyed the core story in this. However, I found that the editing and the score were from frickin' Mars. I could have very much done with some basic straightforward cinematic storytelling. I'm not against inventive editing and scores but only when they're in service to the film. In this case, it felt like they were fighting. But the story is good, the actors (Jodie Comer, Ralph Fiennes, Aaron Taylor-Johnson, and the shockingly non-annoying child lead Alfie Williams) all turn in great performances and, bonus, it has all the zombie cock you could ask for. Would have been a great book, I think. I was sliiiiightly let down but it's worth a watch if you liked the first two. - currently for rent/purchase at all the usual places. And it's playing on Sunday and Wednesday at The Rio Theater.

*Highest 2 Lowest* (2025) - Was not a fan, unfortunately. Spike Lee takes a swing at remaking the AMAZING 1963 Akira Kurosawa movie *High and Low*. In both versions, a very rich and powerful man is very close friends with his chauffeur. They are so close, in fact, that their young sons are besties. A criminal mistakenly kidnaps the chauffeur's son, thinking it's the businessman's son, and demands a HUGE ransom. So now choices must be made and loyalties/friendships must be tested. The original stands the test of time. It's incredible. This one, starring Denzel (who continues his streak of Denzelling his best Denzel impression) and Jeffrey Wright as the chauffeur, is unfortunately, in my opinion, overwrought, oddly shot, too long, has one of the most intrusive scores I've ever heard, and Jesus, okay, I get it, Spike Lee loves New York. It's bold and has Spike Lee's stylistic fingerprints all over it so it wasn't bland. I'll give it that. And a couple of people applauded when the movie was over so what do I know? You might enjoy it. I did not. But I so highly, highly, recommend the original. - currently playing at The Rio Theater on Tuesday and Thursday.

*Shanghai Express* (1932) - Josef von Steinberg directing Marlene Dietrich. Hot damn. Uh. Mazing. I REALLY connected with this. A group of disparate people are on a train to Shanghai through civil war China. It becomes clear that two of the passengers, world-famous good-time girl "Shanghai Lily" Dietrich and an army officer, are old flames who still have feelings for each other. During the trip, they run afoul of revolutionaries, interrupting their romance. There's a level of attention to detail in terms of direction and cinematography that I've rarely noticed before in ANY movie. Lots of "show, don't tell" happening all over the place PLUS a tight script and great performances, not to mention women (one of them Asian! In 1932! (Anna May Wong)) with agency, intelligence and passion. And a great motley passel of characters keeping the plot populated with interesting bits and pieces. Deeply impressed. And Dietrich's FACE! AAAH! What a great film. I frickin' LOVED this. - Vancouver Public Library DVD. Streaming on the Internet Archive. Maybe streaming on Criterion.

*Imitation of Life* (1959) - An interesting and different production than the 1939 version I recently watched. Very colorful and the soundtrack was almost constant. That Lana Turner is a chameleon to me. I swear I've seen her in six movies and I still don't recognize her. Thankfully Juanita Moore isn't as much of a caricature as Louise Beavers was in the '39 version. A white widowed mother takes a single black mother under her wing as a live-in....servant? I guess? Turner's acting career takes off and the two families continue their living arrangement as they move to bigger and better places. Juanita's daughter, Sarah Jane, can pass for white and hates her black roots

and her mother. An interesting romance drama with a pretty direct commentary on race for the time. I think I preferred the '39 version but it's just a matter of taste and it's a close race. They lost the whole '39 version's 'Aunt Delilah's pancakes' storyline which is good, though, and they add some new wrinkles. It's a classic film so it's worth a watch. - Vancouver Public Library DVD. Available for rent/purchase from all the usual places.

*Gloria* (1980) - Pretty good! John Cassavetes directs his wife Gena Rowlands in this wild, quasi-"what if Leon the Professional was gender swapped?" thriller. A little boy has his whole family massacred by the mob but escapes to the neighbour's house. The neighbour happens to be tough-as-nails, kid-hating, semi-mob-connected Gena Rowlands who now reluctantly has to escape and protect the boy. The boy really presents as if he's on the spectrum. Gena's got zero problem pulling a trigger when she has to which is awesome. This is gritty, gross 1980 New York, too. Unfortunately, the kid actor won the first ever golden raspberry award for worst supporting actor and never worked again BUT it's also one of Akira Kurosawa's favorite films. Roger Ebert liked it, it got an Oscar nom, but a lot of critics panned it because it's a weirdly commercial film from Cassavetes. And the ending is wtf. It really divides a room. Definitely worth a watch to see what side you fall on. - Vancouver Public Library DVD. Available for rent/purchase from all the usual places.

*The Ghost Ship* (1943) - Another Val Lewton joint. A misleading title. Nothing supernatural. Some spooky vibes. A captain goes a little wackadoodle and crew members start having 'accidents.' If you're trying to watch all the available Val Lewton films then fill your boots but I wouldn't seek it out otherwise. Slightly more Ed Wood vibes than top-drawer Val Lewton. - Vancouver Public Library DVD. Streaming on The Internet Archive. Available for rent/purchase from AppleTV and Prime.

*The Leopard Man* (1943) - Another Val Lewton movie. Nice. Unusual subject matter for such an old film. NOT a wereleopard, just to prepare you for that disappointment. But lots of great spooky vibes and a nice script. A performer is on tour in South America and accidentally sets a leopard free in the village. Over the course of the next few nights, it kills several women while the townspeople hunt for it. But are they hunting in the right place? Had a real good time watching this. Val Lewton really knew how to make ten dollars look like a hundred dollars and how to freak out audiences without really showing anything. Well done. - Vancouver Public Library DVD. Streaming on The Internet Archive. Available for rent/purchase from AppleTV and Prime.

*The Four Seasons* (1981) - Recently remade as an entertaining Netflix limited series starring Steve Carrell, Tina Fey, and Will Forte. This 1981 original stars Alan Alda, Carol Burnett, Rita Moreno, Sandy Dennis, Jack Weston, Len Cariou, and Bess Armstrong. Written and directed by Alan Alda. It was a cool idea to remake this and flesh it out a bit. I figure six middle-aged actors du jour should take a swing at this every few decades. I quite liked this talkfest of six longtime friends vacationing together every year or two and going through changes and challenges as they do. It's middle-class people having middle-class problems so not 100% relatable to everyone but it's charming. And everyone gets a moment to shine. It sort of just....ends, though. The credits surprised me. But that was the style at the time sometimes. Well worth a watch and the cast is amazing. - Vancouver Public Library DVD. Bit hard to find.

*The Devil is a Woman* (1935) - Another movie where Josef von Sternberg directs the luminous and iconic force Marlene Dietrich. A LUSH movie. It's more of a romantic

comedy. Light but beautifully shot with amazing sets. A bit silly, though. Dietrich plays the hottest woman in history, apparently, and she toys with the hearts of the men who fall in love with her, which is every man she meets. She takes them all for everything they have and they still can't get enough. That's it. That's the movie. Can any man be enough of a simp or paypig to win her heart? We'll find out. I didn't super duper connect with it but the visuals were amazing. And it has a baby Cesar Romero thirty years before his Batman Joker days! A beautiful piece of history but it didn't sweep me away. - Vancouver Public Library DVD. Streaming on The Internet Archive. Maybe streaming on Criterion?

*Val Lewton: The Man in the Shadows* (2007) - A Martin Scorsese documentary about the rise and fall of horror producer legend Val Lewton. I've seen almost all of his films at this point. *Cat People*, *I Walked With a Zombie*, *The 7th Victim*, etc. I have a couple more to go. I feel a kindred spirit in this guy. Great documentary on his amazing films and, of course, I could listen to Scorsese jaw about movies all dang day. - Vancouver Public Library DVD. Streaming on The Internet Archive.

*Morocco* (1930) - another Sternberg/Dietrich joint. This time with long, tall Gary Cooper as a French foreign legion soldier stationed in Morocco and Dietrich as a lonely, sad chanteuse who arrives to slum it and perform at the local dive venue. Her iconic performance in a men's tuxedo and top hat where she kisses a girl on the lips is in this movie. That must have been like an atomic bomb in 1930. Cooper's wisecracking rom-com bachelor shenanigans and Dietrich's quiet intensity didn't really mix well for me here. Like they were starring in two different movies. And its not as lush as the other Sternberg films I've seen so far. But its an okay film with good performances and a sweet final shot. - Vancouver Public Library DVD. Streaming on The Internet Archive. Maybe streaming on Criterion

Check out all my reviews: <https://letterboxd.com/duncanshields/films/reviews/>



## About Canada

### **“Equalization payments 101”**

by [Nancy McClure](#)

[Canada Strong and Free](#) · on Facebook, August 5, 2025

· [tSeropnosd1ii8d:409ea0a0ty65t77600m4mu6a 011scgr27u8Ye62gi7](#) ·



*UPDATE: It is important to note that I wrote this to explain the structure of the process. There are many aspects of it that should be revisited and one that I often mention in more detailed conversations around the exclusion of Hydro power in the calculation. So take this as a very general explanation as it was intended.*

I'm beginning to believe a lot of citizens skipped grade six. Jason Stephan, MLA for Red Deer and member of Alberta's Treasury Board, posted today about what he viewed is the money Alberta 'sends' to Quebec saying it's "too bad Quebec didn't separate."

Let's just pause on that for a second. A sitting MLA who is responsible for provincial finances is wishing a founding province had left Confederation. Because of taxes? That's not just a cheap political shot. That's a fundamental misunderstanding of how Canada works. And how the equalization system works.

And unfortunately, he's not alone. So let's try this one more time at a grade six civics level, since that seems to be where the understanding stopped. Equalization isn't Alberta sending cheques to Quebec. It's not a personal donation to daycare in the Maritimes.

Here's the truth. Canada is a country, not a profit-sharing corporation. Let's think of it like a big family. Alberta is the high-earning sibling who makes good money, works hard, maybe brags about it a bit too much at Thanksgiving. New Brunswick? That's the older relative. Wise, tough, but not pulling in as much these days. Quebec? Well, Quebec is the family member who insists on doing everything their own way but still shows up for supper.

And like any decent family, we try to make sure everyone has what they need, even if we don't all contribute the same amount.

That's where equalization comes in. Here's how it actually works. The federal government collects taxes from across the country (and yes, Alberta pays a big chunk because we earn more. Please know that's not punishment, it's math). Then, based on a formula, it gives equalization transfers to provinces that don't have the same ability to raise their own revenue. That means more help for places like New Brunswick, PEI, and Manitoba so they can offer public services at reasonably similar levels and tax rates. Provinces like Newfoundland for example have been both the successful family member and the one that needed some help on occasion.

And just to be crystal clear Alberta does not send money directly to other provinces. No one's mailing cheques from Edmonton to Quebec City. Equalization payments come from the federal government to each provinces.

And about that formula? It can be reviewed. And it has been including during the Harper years. So if Jason Stephan thinks it's broken, maybe he should dig into those files before continuing the negative narrative. While he's at it, maybe he can get a memo to Premier Danielle Smith because if there's one thing this Premier loves more than chaos, it's finding someone else to blame for it.

Canada is not a zero-sum game. Every province brings something to the table. Not all bring cash and thank God, because if money were the only measure of worth, we'd be a pretty soulless country.

Right now, we're dealing with global instability, trade tensions, economic insecurity, war, and climate pressure on everything from food to fuel. The job right now is to take care of our own. That means defending each other, not dividing each other.



If we need to revisit how the family handles its finances, then fine we will. But not in the current situation our country (family) is in. And not because one provincial politician needs a distraction from his own lack of solutions.

Maybe Quebec is the kid who's still living at home, expects dinner on the table at six, and reminds you regularly they might move out if the menu ever changes. Alberta is the sibling who just landed a big promotion and can't stop telling everyone else how to run their lives. Annoying? Absolutely. But guess what? They're both still family.

Because in the end these provinces are all part of this amazing country and in my view we are family. And like any real family, we all have a seat at this table. No one gets to kick anyone else out.

We argue. We pass the potatoes. We fight over who has to do the dishes. But we also make sure everyone's plate has something on it. That's not weakness. It's the strength of the system.

So if the way we split the bill needs a second look, we'll do that. Together. Like grown-ups. But let's not confuse family finances with family values. Because from this citizens point of view we make sure everyone gets dinner on their plate. We argue, we grumble, and sometimes we roll our eyes at each other. But we don't cut anyone out just because it's politically convenient.

We show up. We share. We do the work. That's what being Canadian actually means.

## About the United States

### **"Technical State of Civil War"**

By [Robert Hawks](#) on Facebook, August 4, 2025

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Let's dispense with the pleasantries.

We are at war.

Not a shooting war.

Not yet.

But something worse in its own quiet, choking way – a technical state of civil war. The kind of war that makes cowards of rules and turns procedure into shrapnel.

And in Texas, Greg Abbott is lighting the fuse.

On August 4th, Governor Abbott announced – proudly, defiantly – that any Democratic legislator who fails to appear for a surprise session of the Texas state legislature by August 5th will see their seat declared vacant.

This, in a bald attempt to force a quorum for an unscheduled redistricting effort that would gerrymander at least five new Republican congressional seats into existence.



Five seats.

Bought not with votes, but with ink and knives.

Five seats to hold the U.S. House hostage after a 2026 election that, by all current indicators, will be a biblical catastrophe for the Republican Party.

This is not about state politics.

This is not about Texas.

This is about power.

This is about permanently tipping the balance of national representation using the architecture of a dying republic to rig the new one being born behind its back.

It is a dagger aimed at the heart of the Constitution itself – and it is being sheathed in plain sight.

Governor Gavin Newsom of California has responded in kind.

So have the governors of Illinois, Washington, New York.

They've declared their own intent to redraw maps, to counterbalance Abbott's theft with a theft of their own.

And just like that, the pretense is gone.

The guardrails are being sawed off by both sides.

The game is rigged, the referees have joined the teams, and the field is splitting down the middle.

We are not drifting toward civil war.

We are being carried there – on gurneys, on motorcades, in armored trucks painted red, white, and blue and driven by men with no conscience and nothing left to lose.

Donald Trump – the increasingly frail, increasingly unhinged re-occupant of the Oval Office – has shattered the last illusions of presidential restraint.

His executive orders openly violate the Constitution.

He appoints judges who have lied under oath and dares the courts to stop him.

Senate Republicans, now functionally extinct as an institution of deliberation, confirm them without even pretending to vet.

Trump has begun personally selecting general officers in the U.S. military.

He is choosing his own warlords.

This is no longer political theatre.

This is war prep. This is banana republic shit.

And the punchline?

Half the country still thinks the Democrats are overreacting.

That we're all just melting down because we lost a few court cases or that we're mad we can't get pronouns printed on our napkins.

No.

We're reacting because we're watching the United States be turned inside out by men who believe they should rule forever – or not at all.

Let's be brutally clear.

This is not just about maps.

Not just about Abbott.

This is about a Republican Party that has now publicly declared – yes, publicly, and repeatedly – that if a Democrat wins the presidency in 2028, they will refuse to certify the election.

Full stop.

That's not politics. That's war-by-other-means.

The plan is as clear as it is insane: gerrymander the House, win the majority through rigged maps, then throw the 2028 election to the chamber when no consensus can be reached.

Install a Republican president – possibly Trump, God help us – by congressional fiat, regardless of the Electoral College or the popular vote.

In other words: end elections.

Cement minority rule.

Burn the scaffolding of democracy and salt the earth where the ballots used to grow.

And here's where we land.

If one side openly declares they will never accept a Democrat in power again – and backs that declaration with action – then the only rational, ethical, and self-defensive response is to make the same declaration in return.

That's how we arrive at a technical state of civil war.

Not with cannon fire.

Not with a shot at Fort Sumter.

But with deadlines and district lines, and governors signing paperwork like generals drawing battle maps.

And yes, it leads – eventually, inevitably – to the real thing.

Because what happens when blue states stop sending taxes to a red federal government?

What happens when governors of California, New York, and Illinois say, flat out, “We no longer recognize the authority of a president elected by gerrymandered fiat”?

What happens when National Guard units are federalized and told to act against their own citizens?

We've already seen it.

Federal troops in Portland.

Federal agents in unmarked vans in Minneapolis.

And now, a sitting U.S. president selecting military leadership based not on strategy, but on loyalty.

This is what a soft coup looks like.

This is how republics become dictatorships – one signed order, one packed court, one nullified election at a time.

We are standing on the edge.

And I want to be clear: I'm not even opposed to the collapse in principle.

Because unlike the Abbott crowd, I've thought this through.

If the United States breaks apart – and God knows, we are dangling over that edge like Wile E. Coyote holding a stick of TNT – here is what happens next:

California, Oregon, Washington, Nevada – the spine of the West – will form a new nation.

They will be joined by Illinois, Michigan, New York, Massachusetts, and most of the northeastern corridor.

The population, economy, and military of this new Union will be vastly superior to anything the southern rump states can cobble together.

And yes, you can wave your little Wyoming flags, but the brutal math is this: once the U.S. Constitution is abandoned, so too is the notion that two Dakotas matter more than one California.

In the new post-America, power will come from population, productivity, and force projection.

Which means: the south is screwed.

The GOP's strongholds – Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Texas – are welfare states, net takers, dependent on federal subsidies from blue states they now propose to dominate.

They are a red velvet cake of hypocrisy baked in a kitchen paid for by liberal taxpayers.

And when those subsidies stop?

When Social Security checks don't arrive?

When FEMA aid dries up?

When food assistance vanishes?

These states will burn – not from outside invasion, but from within.

Poor white voters, duped into culture war hysteria, will finally realize that racism doesn't pay the rent.

And when the AC breaks, when the grocery shelves are bare, when the insulin is gone – they will riot.

The next Fort Sumter won't be fired upon by blue coats – it'll be torched from the inside by red ones who realize too late they were cannon fodder for a billionaire death cult.

Meanwhile, the new blue nation – call it Pacifica, call it the North American Republic, call it literally anything else – will control the nukes.

Because those bases are in California.

Those silos are in Montana and the Dakotas.

Those subs are docked in blue harbors, crewed by people with graduate degrees and no patience for neo-Confederate cosplay.

There may be some holdouts – some nukes in Texas, maybe a stray missile in Florida – but the command structure will fracture.

And the moment loyalty is divided in a nuclear state, you no longer have a country.

You have a disaster waiting for a launch code.

And you can bet NATO and the EU are watching.

So is China. So is Russia.

The new blue state will ally with Europe overnight.

The new red state?

It will be isolated.

Economically neutered.

Morally bankrupt. Internationally shunned.

Try running a nation with no money, no allies, and a citizenry trained only in rage. Let's see how that goes.

And yet – and yet – this is where we are headed.

Because for too long, one side has played by the rules while the other sharpens the knives.

We have tried to compromise with arsonists.

We have let the Constitution become a suicide pact.

No more.

Because now, if we do not fight, we die.

If we play fair, we lose.

If we tell ourselves it can't happen here, we will wake up in the ash of what once was.

Greg Abbott is trying to fire on Fort Sumter with a fountain pen and a smirk.

If we don't match him force for force – not violence for violence, but action for action, map for map, court for court, and yes, goddamnit, declaration for declaration – then the next fight won't be about democracy.

It will be about which side gets the tanks.

And you know what?

I say let it come.

Because I promise you: the right has not thought this through.

They think blue states are weak.  
That liberal means soft.  
That cities can't fight.  
But I've seen New Yorkers when the train's late.  
I've seen Californians during wildfires.  
I've seen drag queens in Texas standing alone against armed mobs and not blinking.  
You want to go to war with those people?  
Be my guest.  
Just don't be surprised when they're still standing and you're neck-deep in the mud,  
wondering why the federal aid convoy never came.  
Let me say it again: this is a technical civil war.  
The only question left is whether it becomes a real one.  
Whether maps give way to bullets.  
Whether executive orders become execution orders.  
And if that day comes, the outcome is not assured.  
But the blame will be.  
It will rest on the heads of men like Trump, like Abbott, like the perjured judges and  
the cowardly Senators and the hollow-eyed billionaires who looked at democracy and  
said, "That's too risky – let's buy it instead."  
But history has long arms.  
And the schoolchildren they're so terrified of?  
The ones they think will be traumatized by learning about slavery?  
Those kids will write the textbooks.  
And they will tell the truth.  
They will say that the Republican Party, faced with the loss of cultural hegemony,  
chose to burn the country down rather than share it.  
That the right feared democracy more than death.  
That in the end, they didn't win.  
They ended.  
Because power isn't loyalty.  
Power is legitimacy. Power is cooperation. Power is earned.  
And no matter how many judges they install, how many maps they redraw, how many  
parades they throw for the flag – they cannot force a country to love them.  
And the United States?  
The United States is not one nation.

Not really.

Hasn't been for a very long time.

Maybe never was.

We've called it "united" because no one had the balls to call it anything else.

But look closer.

Really look.

Not at the myth, not at the hymns or the fireworks or the golden parchment we put under museum glass and pretend still governs us.

Look at the actual nation.

The machine.

The bones under the makeup. You'll see it's already split.

We are a cold war in a hot climate, a long, drunken marriage where both spouses sleep in separate bedrooms, hoarding money and muttering fantasies of murder.

Half of this country prays for rain.

The other half curses God for not sending fire.

You think this is a phase?

A tantrum?

This is the logical end of manifest destiny and the Electoral College.

This is what you get when you marry thirteen slave states to thirteen merchant ones and pretend the vows were ever sincere.

You get a monstrosity: a country stitched together by compromise, half-built on genocide, half-built on commerce, full of contradictions so profound that the entire enterprise was always going to collapse in on itself like a house made of buried lies and termite wood.

And if you don't believe me, ask the Cherokee.

Ask the Sioux.

Ask the Japanese Americans who had their homes stolen while they sat in desert cages.

Ask the Black soldiers who liberated Europe and came home to lynch mobs.

Ask the trans kids being hunted across state lines.

Ask the women whose bodies are now the property of governors.

Ask them if this was ever one country.

Ask a gay couple in Mississippi what flag they're saluting when they're denied medical rights.

Ask a Black teenager in Georgia if the Constitution applies when a cop pulls up behind him.

Ask a nurse in Arizona who makes \$38,000 a year and can't afford insulin because her governor thought tax cuts for landlords were a moral obligation.

Ask the dead. Ask the poor. Ask the workers.

Ask the veterans.

This was never one country.

It was two – or more – pretending not to notice each other, because the lies were easier than the war.

But the lie is collapsing.

There is no social contract anymore – only contractual obligation.

There is no shared dream – only curated delusions, sold like corn dogs at a carnival no one wants to admit is actually a funeral.

The national anthem plays, and we're supposed to rise, even though the flag's draped over a coffin and the smell of decay is coming up through the floorboards.

What do you call a government where one party believes in nothing but power, and the other believes in rules the first party has openly set on fire?

You don't call it a democracy. You don't even call it a republic.

You call it hospice.

And hospice is where the United States now lives – quietly rotting, humming show tunes while the nurse tightens the morphine drip and checks her watch for the next coup attempt.

Because the old country – the one your parents pledged allegiance to, the one your grandfather swore oaths for, the one we were all taught to memorize and mythologize – that country is already gone.

The states don't trust the federal government.

The Supreme Court is functionally a papal tribunal in robes, overturning majority will with smirks and footnotes.

Congress is a roach motel for lobbyists and performative lunatics, many of whom are openly preparing for a post-America America where the flag stays the same, but the Constitution is a ghost story told around campfires by billionaires.

And don't give me the "but the military" argument.

As if the military isn't just as fractured.

The military is not a monolith.

It's a lattice of class tension and cultural divergence, a cross-section of a nation coming apart at every seam.

You think the Joint Chiefs will all salute the same president if both sides claim victory in 2028?

You think a captain from Oregon will obey the same orders as a major from Alabama if they both think they're saving the republic?



We are one disputed election away from seeing Marine units on opposite sides of the Potomac drawing weapons on each other.

And don't think they won't.

We've trained them to kill.

But we didn't train them who to follow once the flag splits in two and each side says it's the real one.

That's the thing no one's ready for: there won't be two Americas.

There will be twenty.

Twenty splintered visions of what the United States "really" is, each one armed and praying for the clarity of righteous bloodshed.

California won't ask permission to secede.

It'll just stop obeying.

Texas already pretends it's its own country – hell, they teach their kids the Alamo was a birthright, not a graveyard.

And Florida?

Florida is the Bosnian wildcard in the whole damn deck.

Armed, enraged, half-drowning in its own hubris and sea level, it will burn and smile as it does.

Once the structure collapses – once the federal government becomes two rival groups of governors and officers and deep-state functionaries playing constitutional Calvinball, it's over.

The nukes don't matter.

The treaties don't matter.

What matters is who controls the ports, who keeps the power grid on, who can move food and fuel and bullets across state lines.

There will be checkpoints.

Roadblocks.

Supply chains redrawn by governors who no longer answer to the Pentagon, because the Pentagon will be two buildings by then – one in D.C., one in Omaha, or maybe Austin, and each one claiming legitimacy over the other.

The South will remember its mythologies and try to rise again.

The North will remember its debts and try to collect.

Cities will become fortresses.

Rural counties will become militias.

Suburbs will become no-man's-land.

And as all this happens, the dollar will collapse.

Don't kid yourself: the global economy does not give a fuck about "We the People."

They care about stability.

Predictability.

Trade routes and energy flows and the enforcement of contracts.

The minute they sense real domestic instability – not the threat of it, but the confirmation of it – the dollar goes down like a narcoleptic in a blackout.

And when that happens, the war isn't theoretical anymore.

It's material.

Because we don't make shit here.

We import. And when the imports stop, the riots start.

You think Americans know how to wait in line for food?

You think anyone in this country has the patience for "rolling blackouts" or "fuel rations" or "shared sacrifice"?

No.

They will shoot the cashier.

They will torch the supermarket.

They will drag their neighbor into the street because someone has to bleed for the fact that their Amazon package didn't arrive and their WiFi is down and the President is in hiding.

You want a preview?

Look at January 6th. That was the rehearsal dinner.

Look at Kenosha. Look at Minneapolis. Look at Portland.

Now multiply it by fifty.

Add drone strikes.

Add rogue governors.

Add National Guard units defecting based on Facebook memes and AM talk radio.

Add sheriffs with God complexes and militia ties.

Add cyberattacks from Russia, China, and every 20-year-old in Estonia with a grudge and a laptop.

Add nuclear weapons whose command structure is suddenly ambiguous.

Add diseases, real and manufactured, released to sow chaos by regimes eager to carve up the carcass of the American empire before someone else claims it.

Add fear. Add drought. Add fire.

Add lies.

And stir.

This isn't a Tom Clancy novel.

This isn't a prepper fantasy.

This is what happens when a government built on consensus loses its ability to consent.

We've been trained to think of civil war in terms of Gettysburg and Antietam.

But the next one won't look like that.

It'll look like Syria.

Like Yugoslavia.

Like Ukraine.

Like Lebanon in 1975, where Christian militias and Muslim factions and foreign powers turned one of the most beautiful countries on Earth into a graveyard that smelled of smoke and gun oil and the end of things.

The next civil war will be digital and tribal and sudden.

It will be declared not by Lincoln but by TikTok and Fox News.

It will be fought not on battlefields, but on highways and Wi-Fi and gas lines and court dockets and supermarket aisles.

It will not be brother against brother.

It will be neighbor against neighbor, algorithm against algorithm, drone against protest, truth against power, and power against everyone.

And in the chaos, people will scream for order.

They will beg for order.

And some strongman will appear.

He won't be Trump.

He'll be younger.

Sharper.

Hungrier.

A Tom Cotton or a Josh Hawley or some asshole we haven't even met yet, raised in the bowels of corporate-funded think tanks and groomed for the moment America breaks.

He'll offer "unity."

He'll offer "peace."

And he'll take what remains of the Constitution and feed it into a shredder made of applause and fear.

He will come, and we will let him.

Because Americans are not special.

We are not immune to history.

We are not chosen.

We are not different.

We are Rome in the 5th century, decadent and divided, watching the aqueducts crumble while we chant slogans and sharpen knives.

We are the USSR in 1991, holding onto a flag while the ground splits beneath us.

We are whatever comes next, and we are not ready.

And when it comes – when the sirens replace the debates, when the tanks roll down Main Street not as a parade but as a warning – some of us will remember what we lost.

We'll remember the dream. The idea.

We'll remember that once, however flawed and hypocritical and blood-soaked it was, the idea of America meant something.

It meant the possibility of self-government. Of progress. Of dignity.

It meant something more than flags and guns and courts packed with perjurers.

It meant the attempt.

And now we stand at the edge of that attempt.

And we are failing.

The United States was beautiful.

At moments.

In dreams. In songs. In potential.

But it was never unbreakable.

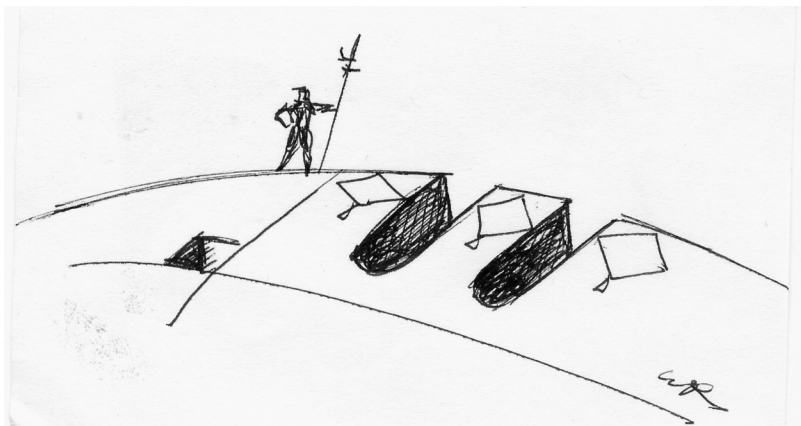
And the people trying to bend it are forcing it to break.

I never thought I'd live to see it.

But now I worry we all will.

So tell me...

Am I lying?



## Fanzines Received

One of these days I *swear* I will do justice to the zines I receive and review them properly!!

*The Stf Amateur* #23

*The WCSFA Newsletter* Aug 2025

*Perryscope* 55

*FANAC Fanhistory Newsflash*

*The Visionary*, ULC newsletter

*SMOF News*

*Ionisphere*

*Impulse* Aug 2025

*Fanactivity Gazette* Aug 2025

*Origins* 71

*Opuntia* #607

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*Impulse* August 2025

*Captain Flashback* #81



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**Abbreviations:** hc = hardcover, tp = trade (oversized) paperback, [UK ed] = British publication, [CDN ed] = Canadian publication. Default is US publication.

**Other Titles:** Please note that this listing is not exhaustive; we have many more (several hundred more) titles coming during this period.

### September 2025 New Mystery and Crime Fiction Releases

Alexander, Ellie. LAYING DOWN THE LATTE. [BAKESHOP #21]. Minotaur, 13.99 pb.

Alexander, Tasha. DEATH BY MISADVENTURE. [LADY EMILY #18]. Minotaur, 25.00 tp.

Archer, Jeffery. END GAME. [WILLIAM WARWICK]. Harpercollins, 37.99 hc.

Arlidge, M. J. & Lisa Hall. THE MISTAKE. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 19.99 tp.

Berney, Lou. CROOKS. Morrow, 37.00 hc.

Billingham, Mark. WHAT THE NIGHT BRINGS. [TOM THORNE]. Sphere, 26.99 tp.

Bishop, D. V. CARNIVAL OF LIES. [CESARE ALDO #5]. Macmillan UK, 42.99 hc

Boyd, William. GABRIEL'S MOON. Atlantic Crime, 27.95 tp.

Brown, Dan. THE SECRET OF SECRETS. [ROBERT LANGDON #6]. Doubleday, 52.00 hc.

Burrows, Steve. A DECEIT OF LAPWINGS. [BIRDER MURDER]. Point Blank, 19.99 tp. [Canadian author].

Casey, Jane. A STRANGER IN THE FAMILY. [MAEVE KERRIGAN #11]. Hemlock, 23.99 tp.

Chase, Nolan (=Sam Wiebe). A LONESOME PLACE FOR MURDER. [ETHAN BRAND #2]. Crooked Lane, 25.99 tp.

Child, Lee. REACHER: THE STORIES BEHIND THE STORIES. Penzler, 35.95 hc.

Chouinard, Michelle. A TOUR TO DIE FOR. [SERIAL KILLER GUIDE TO SAN FRANCISCO #2]. Minotaur, 25.00 tp.

Conte, Cate. CLAWS OUT. [CAT CAFE #9]. St. Martin's, 13.99 pb.

Cookman, Leslie. MURDER UNDER THE CLIFF. [LIBBY SARJEANT #27]. Headline Accent, 23.99 tp.

Crouch, Blake. FAMOUS. Ballantine, 25.99 tp.

Dafydd, Fflur. THE LIBRARY SUICIDES. Hodder, 30.00 hc.

Day, Maddie. MURDER AT CAPE COSTUMERS. [COZY CAPERS BOOK GROUP #7]. Cozies, 11.99 pb.

Doherty, Paul. IMMORTAL MURDER. [HUGH CORBETT #25]. Headline, 36.99 hc.

Dowd, Victoria. DEATH IN THE AVIARY. [THE CHARLOTTE BLOOD CHRONICLES]. Datura, 24.99 tp.

Edwards, Martin. THE LIFE OF CRIME: DETECTING THE HISTORY OF MYSTERIES AND THEIR CREATORS. Collins Crime Club, 26.99 tp.

Ellis, Mark. DEATH OF AN OFFICER. [FRANK MERLIN #3]. Accent, 23.99 tp.

Francis, Felix. DARK HORSE. [SID HALLEY]. Crooked Lane, 39.99 hc.

Galbraith, Robert. THE HALLMARKED MAN. [CORMORAN STRIKE #8].

George, Elizabeth. A SLOWLY DYING CAUSE. [LYNLEY]. Viking, 42.00 hc.

Goddard, Robert. THIS IS THE DAY THEY DREAM OF. Bantam UK, 31.99 tp.

Goodman, Dave. A RELUCTANT SPY. Headline, 23.99 tp.

Grisham, John (ed). MYSTERIOUS BOOKSHOP PRESENTS THE BEST MYSTERIES OF THE YEAR 2025. Penzler, 23.95 tp.

Hamdy, Adam. DEADBEAT. Atria, 26.00 tp.

Herron, Mick. CLOWN TOWN. [SLOUGH HOUSE #9]. Soho Crime, 39.95 hc.

Higashino, Keigo. UNDER THE MIDNIGHT SUN. Minotaur, 29.00 tp.

Hillerman, Anne. LOST BIRDS. [LEAPHORN, CHEE & MANUELITO #9]. Harper, 12.99 pb.

Horst, Jorn Lier. THE KATHARINA CODE. [COLD CASE QUARTET #1]. Scribner Canada, 14.99 tp.

Huber, Anna Lee. A MOMENT'S SHADOW. [VERITY KENT #8]. Kensington, 24.95 tp.

Jonasson, Ragnar. THE MYSTERIOUS CASE OF THE MISSING CRIME WRITER. Minotaur, 41.00 hc.

Jonasson, Ragnar. DEATH AT THE SANATORIUM. [HULDA HERMANNSDOTTIR #4]. Minotaur, 26.00 tp.

Kay, Adam. A PARTICULARLY NASTY CASE. Mulholland, 38.00 hc.

Kellerman, Jonathan. OPEN SEASON. [ALEX DELAWARE]. Ballantine, 13.50 pb.

Kernick, Simon. YOU ALL DIE TONIGHT. Headline, 19.99 tp.

Kirk, Shannon. TENKILL. Datura, 24.99 tp.

Leon, Donna. BACKSTAGE: STORIES OF A WRITING LIFE. Atlantic Monthly, 41.95 hc.

Locke, Attica. GUIDE ME HOME. [HIGHWAY 59 #3]. Mulholland, 24.99 tp.

Major, Tim. JEKYLL & HYDE: CONSULTING DETECTIVES. Titan, 24.99 tp.

May, Peter. THE BLACK LOCH. Mobius, 23.99 tp.

Meyer, Nicholas. SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE REAL THING. [SHERLOCK HOLMES MEYER #7]. Penzler Publishers, 35.95 hc.

Mosley, Walter. GRAY DAWN. [EASY RAWLINS]. Mulholland, 38.00 hc.

Mosse, Greg. MURDER AT THE WEDDING. [MAISIE COOPER #6]. Hodder, 23.99 tp.

Munro, T. Orr. LIARS ISLAND. [CSI ALLY DYMOND #3]. Avon, 23.99 tp.

Newman, T. J. DROWNING: THE RESCUE OF FLIGHT 1421. Avid Reader, 14.99 pb.

O'Leary, Joan. A KILLER WEDDING. Morrow, 25.99 tp.

Patterson, James & J. D. Parker. CONFESSIONS OF THE DEAD. Little, Brown, 13.99 pb.

Penny, Louise. THE GREY WOLF. [CHIEF INSPECTOR GAMACHE #19]. Minotaur, 13.99 pb.

Plantinga, Adam. HARD TOWN. [KURT ARGENTO #2]. Grand Central, 25.99 tp.

Pyun, Hye-Young. THE LAW OF LINES. Arcade, 24.99 tp.

Rankin, Ian. MIDNIGHT AND BLUE. [JOHN REBUS]. Orion, 19.99 tp.

Robb, J. D. FRAMED IN DEATH. [EVE DALLAS #61]. St. Martin's, 40.00 hc.

Robbins, Lawrence. THE PRESIDENT'S LAWYER. Atria, 26.00 tp.

Ryan, Hank Phillippi. ALL THIS COULD BE YOURS. Minotaur, 41.00 hc.

Salt, Ronni. GUNNAWAH. Hachette Australia, 28.99 tp.

Shearer, L. T. THE CAT WHO CRACKED A COLD CASE. [CONRAD THE CAT DETECTIVE #3]. Pan, 21.99 tp.

Smirnoff, Karin. THE GIRL WITH ICE IN HER VEINS. [LISBETH SALANDER #8]. Viking, 38.00 hc.

Smith, Alexander McCall. THE GREAT HIPPOPOTAMUS HOTEL. [PRECIOUS RAMOTSWE #25]. Vintage, 24.95 tp.

Smithson, L. D. THE ESCAPE ROOM. Transworld, 19.99 tp.

Stewart, Georgina. DEATH ON THE ADRIATIC. Constable, 36.00 hc.

Swann, Leonie. AGNES SHARP AND THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME. [MISS SHARP INVESTIGATES #2]. Soho Crime, 25.95 tp.

Taylor, Marsali. DEATH AT A SHETLAND FESTIVAL. [THE SHETLAND SAILING MYSTERIES #12]. Accent, 19.99tp.

Welsh, Irvine. RESOLUTION. [RAY LENNOX #3]. Vintage UK, 21.99 tp.



Wilde, Darcie (=SARAH ZETTEL). THE HEIR. Kensington, 37.00 hc.  
Williams, Beatriz. THE AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO MURDER. Morrow, 24.99 tp.  
Wilton, Tracy. MRS. MORRIS AND THE DAY OF THE DEAD. Kensington, 11.99 pb.  
Winslow, Don. THE FINAL SCORE: SIX SHORT NOVELS. Morrow, 37.00 hc.  
Wright, Snowden. THE QUEEN CITY DETECTIVE AGENCY. Morrow, 23.99 tp.  
Yu, Ovidia. THE ROSE APPLE TREE MYSTERY. [CROWN COLONY #9]. Constable,  
24.99 tp.

### **September 2025 New Fantasy and Science Fiction Releases**

Afsharirad, David (ed). SWORDS & LARCENY. Baen, 25.00 tp.  
Alderson, Ben. THE HAUNTING OF WILLIAM THORN. Angry Robot, 24.99 tp.  
Alexander, William. SUNWARD. Saga, 25.00 tp.  
Amor, Gemma (ed). ROOTS OF MY FEARS. Titan, 24.99 tp.  
Annandale, David. THE SLEEP OF EMPIRES. [THE BOOK OF THE NULL #1]. Pyr,  
32.95 tp.  
Asaro, Catherine. THE DOWN DEEP. [SKOLIAN DUST KNIGHTS #1]. Baen, 25.00 tp.  
Asher, Neal. WORLD WALKERS. Tor UK, 24.99 tp.  
Bancroft, Josiah. A TANGLE OF TIME. [THE HEXOLOGISTS #2]. Orbit, 25.99 tp.  
Barnes, J. S. FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER. Titan, 24.99 tp.  
Binge, Nicholas. EXTREMITY. Tor.com, 34.99 hc.  
Birch, Samantha. CAT DRAGON. One More Chapter, 23.99 tp.  
Black, Holly. THIEF OF NIGHT. [BOOK OF NIGHT #2]. Tor, 39.99 hc.  
Blake, Olivie (ed). RETURN OF THE JEDI. [STAR WARS FROM A CERTAIN POINT OF  
VIEW]. Worlds, 28.00 tp.  
Boey, Meihan. THE FORMIDABLE MISS CASSIDY. Perennial, 23.99 tp.  
Bradley, James. LANDFALL. Hodder Studio, 32.99 hc.  
Brooks, Juliet. A FAE IN FINANCE. Orbit, 25.99 tp.  
Cesare, Adam. THE TOXIC AVENGER. Titan, 24.99 tp.  
Chang, Molly X. TO KILL THESE MONSTROUS GODS. [GODS BEYOND THE SKIES  
#2]. Del Rey, 39.99 hc.  
Chidgey, Catherine. THE BOOK OF GUILT. Knopf Canada, 26.95 tp.  
Chu, Wesley. THE ART OF LEGEND. [WAR ARTS SAGA #3]. Del Rey, 42.00 hc.  
Coile, Mason. WILLIAM. Putnam, 24.95 tp.  
Coile, Mason (=Andrew Pyper). EXILES. Putnam, 37.99 hc.

Cornell, Paul. GNOMES OF LYCHFORD. [WITCHES OF LYCHFORD]. Tor.com, 27.99 tp.

Cornell, Paul. THE LYCHFORD COLLECTION BOOK 1. Tor.com, 31.99 tp.

Cutter, Nick. THE QUEEN. Gallery, 26.00 tp.

Daley, Sarah. WINGS OF STEEL & FURY. Angry Robot, 24.99 tp.

Datlow, Ellen (ed). NIGHT & DAY: DREADFUL DARK/MERCILESS SUN. Saga, 28.00 tp.

Dawson, Delilah S. GUILLOTINE. Titan, 23.99 tp.

Dawson, Delilah S. HOUSE OF IDYLL. Titan, 33.99 hc.

De Castell, Sebastien. THE MALEVOLENT EIGHT: THE BAD, THE WORSE AND THE WICKED. [THE MALEVOLENT SEVEN #2]. Mobius, 36.00 hc.

De la Cruz, Melissa. RINGS OF FATE. Entangled: Red Tower, 43.99 hc.

Dedroog, Lauren. A CURSE OF CROWS. Gollancz, 23.99 tp.

Dinniman, Carl THIS INEVITABLE RUIN. [DUNGEON CRAWLER CARL #7]. Ace, 52.00 hc.

Dixon, Ruby. BY THE HORNS. [ROYAL ARTIFACTUAL GUILD #2]. Ace, 39.99 hc.

Evans, Erin M. SHADOWS OF AMASCUT. [RUNESCAPE]. Titan, 24.99 tp.

Fagan, Deva. HOUSE OF DUSK. DAW, 40.00 hc.

Gailey, Sarah. SPREAD ME. Nightfire, 37.99 hc.

Garber, Stephanie. ALCHEMY OF SECRETS. Flatiron, 39.99 hc.

Gong, Chloe. VILEST THINGS. [FLESH & FALSE GODS #2]. Saga, 26.00 tp.

Grimoire, Emily. IMPRACTICAL MAGIC. Avon, 23.99 tp.

Hawley, Sarah. SERVANT OF EARTH. [THE SHARDS OF MAGIC #1]. Ace, 25.99 tp.

Huchu, T. L. THE LEGACY OF ARNISTON HOUSE. [EDINBURGH NIGHTS #4]. Tor, 30.99 tp.

Hutchings, Ren. AN UNBREAKABLE WORLD. Solaris, 24.99 tp.

Jackson, Kosoko. THE MACABRE. Voyager, 37.00 hc.

Jennings, Kathleen. HONEYEATER. Tor, 38.99 hc.

Jordan, Sophie. A FIRE IN THE SKY. Avon, 23.99 tp.

Kadrey, Richard. THE PALE HOUSE DEVIL. [THE DISCREET ELIMINATORS]. Titan, 23.99 tp.

Karella, Bitter. MOONFLOW. Run For It, 24.99 tp.

Kim, Sung-il. BLOOD OF THE OLD KINGS. [BLEEDING EMPIRE #1]. Tor, 36.99 hc.

King, Stephen. YOU LIKE IT DARKER: STORIES. Scribner, 28.00 tp.

King, Thomas. ALIENS ON THE MOON. HarperCollins, 34.99 hc.

Klune, TJ. SOMEWHERE BEYOND THE SEA. [CERULEAN CHRONICLES #2] Tor, 27.99 tp.

Koontz, Dean. GOING HOME IN THE DARK. Thomas & Mercer, 24.99 tp.

Kress, Nancy. NOT WHAT I INTENDED. PM Press, 24.95 tp.

Kuang, R. F. KATABASIS. Voyager, 39.50 hc.

Lanza, Robert & Nancy Kress. OBSERVER. Tor, 27.99 tp.

Laurenston, Shelly. TO KILL A BADGER. [THE HONEY BADGER CHRONICLES #6]. Kensington, 21.95 tp.

Lebbon, Tim. SECRET LIVES OF THE DEAD. Titan, 24.99 tp.

Leede, CJ. AMERICAN RAPTURE. Nightfire, 25.99 tp.

Levenseller, Tricia. WHAT FURY BRINGS. FEIWEL, 41.99 hc.

Long, Ruth Frances. THE BOOK OF GOLD. [THE FERAL GODS #1]. Hodderscape, 28.99 tp.

Mains, Johnny (ed). BOUND IN BLOOD: STORIES OF CURSED BOOKS, DAMNED LIBRARIES AND UNEARTHLY AUTHORS. Titan, 24.99 tp.

Marske, Freya. SWORDCROSSED. Bramble, 27.99 tp.

Martinez, Maddie. THE MAIDEN AND HER MONSTER. Tor, 40.99 hc.

May, Francesca. THIS VICIOUS HUNGER. Redhook, 40.00 hc.

McNeil, Gretchen. THEY FEAR NOT MEN IN THE WOODS. DAW, 39.00 hc.

Modesitt, L. E. Jr. SUB-MAJER'S CHALLENGE. [SAGA OF RECLUCE #25]. Tor, 42.99 hc.

Morgan, Louisa. THE FAERIE MORGANA. Orbit, 25.99 tp.

Morstabilini, Andrea. A BLOOD AS BRIGHT AS THE MOON. Titan, 24.99 tp.

Murakami, Haruki. THE CITY AND ITS UNCERTAIN WALLS. Anchor Canada, 28.00 tp.

Nayler, Ray. THE TUSKS OF EXTINCTION. Tor.com, 24.99 tp.

Novik, Naomi. THE SUMMER WAR. Del Rey, 32.00 hc.

O'Regan, Marie (ed). THESE DREAMING SPIRES: A DARK ACADEMIA ANTHOLOGY. Titan, 38.99 hc.

Parker, K. J.. MAKING HISTORY. Tor.com, 25.99 tp.

Passarella, John. RETURN TO SILENT HILL. Titan, 23.99 tp.

Penaranda, Chloe C. THE STARS ARE DYING. [NYTEFALL TRILOGY #1]. Bramble, 27.99 tp.

Piper, Hailey. TEENAGE GIRLS CAN BE DEMONS. Titan, 24.99 tp.

Powell, Gareth L. WHO WILL YOU SAVE?. Titan, 24.99 tp.

Qureshi, A. THE BABY DRAGON BAKERY. [THE BABY DRAGON #2]. Avon, 23.99 tp.

Raasch, Sara. THE ENTANGLEMENT OF RIVAL WIZARDS. [MAGIC AND ROMANCE]. Bramble, 27.99 tp.

Rao, Kritika H. THE ENDURING UNIVERSE. [THE RAGES TRILOGY #3]. Titan, 24.99 tp.

Reynolds, Alastair. THE REVELATION SPACE COLLECTION VOLUME 1. Gollancz, 29.99 tp.

Reynolds, Alastair. THE REVELATION SPACE COLLECTION VOLUME 2. Gollancz, 29.99 tp.

Robyn, Lezli. IN HER WAKE. [THE HEIRS OF POSEIDON #1]. CAEZIK, 23.99.

Ross, Rebecca. WILD REVERENCE. Saturday, 42.00 hc.

Roth, Veronica. TO CLUTCH A RAZOR. Tor, 30.99 hc.

Rothfuss, Patrick. THE NARROW ROAD BETWEEN DESIRES. [KINGKILLER CHRONICLES]. DAW, 24.95 tp.

Ryan, Anthony. BORN OF AN IRON STORM. [AGE OF WRATH #2]. Orbit, 25.99 tp.

Scalzi, John. THE SHATTERING PEACE. [OLD MAN'S WAR #7]. Tor, 41.99 hc.

SenLinYu. ALCHEMISED. Del Rey, 48.00 hc.

Simone, Gail. CONSUMED. [RED SONJA #1]. Orbit, 25.99 tp.

Smyth, Courtney. THE UNFATHOMABLE CURSE. [THE UNDETECTABLES #3]. Titan, 23.99 tp.

Spark, Anna Smith. ANDERSON VERSUS DEATH. [JUDGE ANDERSON: THE EARLY YEARS]. Rebellion, 22.99 tp.

Spencer, Wen. BLACK TIE AND TAILS. [BLACK WOLVES OF BOSTON #2]. Baen, 37.00 hc.

St. Aubin, Cynthia. LOVE BITES. [AILS FROM THE ALPHA ART GALLERY #1]. Tor, 25.99 tp.

Talabi, Wole. SHIGIDI AND THE BRASS HEAD OF OBALUFON. DAW, 24.95 tp.

Tan, Sue Lynn. NEVER EVER AFTER. [NEVER EVER AFTER #1]. Little, Brown, 25.99 hc.

Tolkien, Christopher. THE SAGA OF KING HEIDREK THE WISE. HarperCollins, 22.99 tp.

Various. WEIRD FICTION: AN ANTHOLOGY. Penguin UK, 21.99 tp.

Watson, Honey. THE EMPEROR'S TWIN. Talos, 36.99 hc.

White, Andrew Joseph. YOU WEREN'T MEANT TO BE HUMAN. Saga, 41.00 hc.

White, Sophie. WHERE I END. Erewhon, 24.95 tp.

Winton, Tim. JUICE. Picador, 21.99 tp.

Wise, A. C. OUT OF THE DROWNING DEEP. Titan, 22.99 tp.

Wolf, Marisa. A PLAGUE OF MAGIC. [ARCANE HOARD #1]. Baen, 25.00 tp.

Wood, Lucy Jane. UNCHARMED. Ace, 25.99 tp.

Wragg, David. THE COMPANY OF THE WOLF. [TALES OF THE PLAINS #2]. Voyager,  
23.99 tp.

