

W
A
T
C
H
T
H
E
S
K
I
E
S



v 9.2

WATCH THE SKIES

THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS

By Ursula K. Leguin

The Emissary has come and Gethen will never be the same again. Genly Ai accepted that his mission as first representative of the Ekumen would not be easy to a world so different as the planet known colloquially as Winter. He knew that his own physical makeup being unique in comparison to the natives could not only prove to be difficult to accept but would also serve as proof of his claims. As he finds his mission stalling out after two years, and Winter coming no closer to actual contact with the greater human community— change comes to stolid Karhide. With it comes treachery and deceit. Suddenly whom Genly can trust is the most precious commodity he owns. Spurned by the King of Karhide, Genly decides to take his message to the rival nation of Orgoreyn. Here in the communal state, he finds himself the pawn of power brokers who would use him to forward their own agendas. His eventual incarceration and escape place him in the debt of the one person whom he has vowed not to trust, the exiled former premier of Kharhide. Together Genly and Estraven will forge a bond that will see them through adversity to the final success of the Emissary's mission.

This month's cover is courtesy of artist

Matthew Allyn Chapman

March's book is *Revelation Space* by Alastair Reynolds

Check out the WATCH THE SKIES website at:

<http://mysite.verizon.net/res89guj/>

New Releases

March 2009

Baxter, Stephen • **Starfall**
Beagle, Peter S. • **We Never Talk About My Brother**
Bear, Elizabeth • **Seven for a Secret**
Bishop, Anne • **The Shadow Queen**
Bisson, Terry • **Billy's Book**
Brett, Peter • **The Warded Man**
Brooke, Keith • **The Accord**
Carey, Mike • **Thicker than Water**
Castro, Adam-Troy • **The Third Claw of God**
Cobley, Michael • **The Seeds of Earth**
Dahlquist, Gordon • **The Dark Volume**
de Lint, Charles • **The Mystery of Grace**
Duncan, Dave • **The Alchemist's Pursuit**
Gaiman, Neil, & Charles Vess • **Blueberry**
Graham, Jo • **Hand of Isis**
Harrison, Kim • **White Witch, Black Curse**
Mann, George, ed. • **The Solaris Book Of New
Science Fiction Volume Three**
Meaney, John • **Black Blood**
November, Sharyn, ed. • **Firebirds Soaring**
Paul, Frank R. • **From the Pen of Paul:
The Fantastic Images of Frank R. Paul**
Pratt, T. A. • **Spell Games**
Steele, Allen • **Coyote Horizon**
Sterling, Bruce • **Caryatids**
Strahan, Jonathan, ed. • **The Best Science Fiction and Fantasy of the Year
Volume Three**
Valente, Catherynne M. • **Palimpsest**
Watson, Jules • **The Swan Maiden**
Weber, David • **Storm From the Shadows**
Wexler, Robert Freeman • **The Painting and the City**
Williams, Walter Jon • **This Is Not a Game**
Wolfe, Gene • **The Best of Gene Wolfe**

THE PRINTED WORLD

-**This** year's Aurealis award for best new Science Fiction novel goes to *Time Machines Repaired While You Wait* by K.A. Bedford. The award is presented by Fantastic Queensland in association with Chimera Press to Australian authors.

-**Viz** media, one of the prime importers of Manga, into the US has launched a new imprint Hiakasoru that will bring to press 12 new titles each year by Japanese authors. Playing off of the success of Manga, Viz expects the novels with their shorter length and younger characters to appeal to their other readers

-**You** probably don't think of him as the comic book type, but Michael Chiklis (*The Shield, Fantastic Four*) is partnering with IDW to create *Olympus*. Take present day earth add the Greek Gods and let them slug it out with the Titans while we get stuck in the way.

-**You** can't keep a good comic down, *Farscape #2* sold out just like number *#1* and is on the way to reprints. Here's to the show/comic that wouldn't lie down and die.

-**SFWA** has created a new award, the Solstice Award to be given to the person who has most positively affected the genre. Three honorees are planned: Kate Wilhelm, Algis Budrys, and Martin Greenberg. The presentation will be part of the Nebula Awards celebration April 24-26, in L.A.

-**As** the genre magazine industry attempts to reorganize in these less than favorable business climates, they were dealt yet another blow by distributors Anderson and Source Interlink who have added a 7 cent charge to each piece in an attempt to offset increases in shipping. Many publishers told Anderson out right that they will not be dealing with them and the company suspended operations due to lack of incoming product. Genre magazines are now left with trying to acquire new distribution.

-**Tor**, one of the long time and strong publishing houses in the genre is facing a new threat. Their home, the Flatiron building has been sold to an Italian investor who plans to turn the historic building into a hotel. Since the investor only own 50% interest Tor isn't moving—yet.



-*Supernanny* beats *Dollhouse* in the smackdown. Now it's traditional for Whedon projects to not roll out of the blocks to flying colors and also for Fox to place his shows at a disadvantage. But the Friday 9PM slot seems to not be helping if ABC's *Supernanny* gets a higher share of butts in seats. *Supernanny* had 8.5 million viewers to *Dollhouse's* 4.7. Leading into *Dollhouse* was the midseason restart of the *Sarah Connor Chronicles*, which hit an all new low for the series at 3.7mil. What beat it? Well *SCC* just beat out *Howie Do It* but was rolled by the *Ghost Whisperer* and ... wait for it... *Wife Swap*— sad state of the nation for the genre...

-But enough being superficial, let's talk classics. I mean real solid literature that you can sink your teeth into like... *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*. This brain child (ha, ha brains!) of Seth Grahame-Smith, with a nod to Jane Austen, imagines what might happen when prim an proper meets the unending appetite. While its not out until May 13th, you can just imagine who makes the bigger stir, Mr. Darcy or Mr. Undead. While we're on the topic of Austen, a British miniseries titled *Lost in Austen* is on its way to the big screen. The concept is take one Austen obsessed woman who finds herself catapulted from present day New York into history by swapping places with Elizabeth Bennet.

-Everybody would appreciate a replacement for the high priced oil as a fuel wouldn't they? But you might have to overlook the bad attitude of the plants that produce it as BBC redoes *Day of the Triffids*. Is the third time the charm? Originally produced in 1962 and 1981, *Day* will bow later this year as a two part miniseries on BBC with a well known cast including: Dougray Scott, Jason Priestley, Brian Cox, Eddie Izzard, Joely Richardson and Vanessa Redgrave.

-Blue ray *Star Trek* will be out around the same time as the movie. Paramount will release the first season boxset on April 28th and another set of the original series movies on May 12th bracketing the May 8th release date of the J.J. Abrams movie.

-Are you sure? You can't be too sure. Are your friends human or actually toasters? Cylons in disguise? Well Apple wants to put that social issue to rest with their new Iphone Cylon Detector App. I mean really if the genius Dr. Baltar couldn't come up with a valid test, I'm sure your phone/MP3 player combo-what the frak-ever could take care of that for you as well as finding a new restaurant to eat at and you won't even have to shake it! Speaking of skinjobs, here's a new trick Skiffy has decided to release the 2 hour premier of *Caprica*, the prequel to *BSG* as a DVD available in April. Production for the show is set to begin this summer with an eventual airdate sometime in 2010. Anybody else wondering if the longevity of this series might be based upon reaction to the DVD? A several minute preview of *Caprica* is available on line and showcases the virtuality concept that underlies the series plot.

-Eve Myles, who plays Gwen Cooper in *Torchwood* doesn't want you to think her character callous. After all when *Torchwood* returns with season three—*Children of Earth*, she and the rest of the team will already have dealt with the death of their two team members, by way of an appearance in the finale of Dr. Who season 4 and (here's one to look for) a Radio 4 Audio Drama. Now they'll have to overcome a secret government agreement with aliens that want all of our children for some nefarious purpose and do it in only 5 episodes as the series rearranges its format. Look for it to air in the summer.

-Now that he's dead, Mark Valley who played Olivia's love interest on *Fringe* is moving on to the WB's adaptation of the Vertigo comic *the Human Target*. Valley will play Christopher Chance a freelance security agent who takes the place of potential victims to protect them. Keep your fingers crossed folks, this was a good comic, let's hope it survives the transition. The other interesting part is that in a twist that fits *Fringe*, Mark and his former leading lady, Anna Torv were secretly married over the holidays. Their characters started the series with a love affair kept secret from their fellow agents. Well they must have learned well because they fooled reporters interviewing them before the news leaked.

-*Iron Man Two* could have a different actress as a villain. Scarlet Johansson was approached for the role of Natasha Romanoff/The Black Widow as Emily Blunt deals with scheduling conflicts raised by her participation in the *Gulliver's Travels* movie. While nothing is firm and Blunt's PR folks are spreading the word the actress would like to do both, the exec's for Iron Man are obviously covering their bases— just in case of course.

-Universal, the owner of Skiffy, has apparently decided to develop anything and I do mean anything as a potential movie. If it wasn't enough that they are currently working on a movie based on *Monopoly* and *Candyland* it gets worse and by worse I mean *Stretch Armstrong*. Yes, you did read that correctly, they have tasked Steve Oederkerk, *Bruce Almighty*, with writing a script for this potential disaster...we can only hope he balks. But wait apparently Disney already tried this and failed. Could it be due to their casting choices of first Dan Devito and then Jackie Chan?

-The future of SF/F TV in pilots:

FOX—*Human Target* (see prior page); *Masterwork* (*National Treasure/Da Vinci Code/Indiana Jones*)-race to recover lost artifacts; *Virtuality* (*BSG's* Ron Moore's brainchild)-two worlds cyber and space; *Eva Adams*-guy wakes up in girl's body(yawn)

ABC—*Eastwick* (based on John Updike's book)-trio of urban housewives discover magical abilities; *Flash Forward* (David Goyer & Brannon Braga from *Threshold*)-everybody wakes up from 2 minute global snooze with visions of the future; and how could we forget *V* (80's favorite)—they're not just here for the rats, they're here to oppress us.

NBC—*Day One* (*Day After* + *Flash Forward*) - survivors of an "event" which destroys civilization rebuild and try to understand WTF happened... <yes that is it for the same network associated with *Heroes* and the SF Channel...>

CBS—nada, nothing in the works <good job guys>

Tillyer's News from the High Frontier

If it flies through the skies, is green and has two tails, it doesn't have to be Godzilla's sister– Comet Lulin, named for the Taiwanese observatory which made the discovery which make its closest approach on February 24. Astronomers expect the comet to be about 4th or 5th magnitude at its brightest which means that it would be visible to the naked eye in dark country areas with minimal stray light or visible through binoculars or telescopes near the planet Saturn's position in the night sky. But you'll have to get up early to see the green beauty as the comet rises in the southern sky before dawn. 3AM is a recommended viewing time. The green glow comes from cyanogen and diatomic carbon in the comet's atmosphere. When it was revealed that the earth would pass through the tail of Hailey's comet in 1910 the thought of cyanogen in the atmosphere caused a panic.

If you see our missing Gamma ray bursts, please let us know– Astronomers are not only perplexed by what causes these massive energetic explosions but also over what happened to the bursts that occurred in the early stages of the universe's life. Gamma ray bursts can outshine an entire galaxy and so are difficult to hide. Since light travels at a constant speed, the further we look out into the universe the further we look back into time. So where are all of the early bursts? Well there are a couple of ideas, one, they are facing the wrong way. Some astronomers theorize that Gamma ray bursts are the result of the collapse of super massive young stars with high metal contents. The resulting energy of the collapse and the rotation of the stars makes a funneled jet of tightly focused energy. So perhaps we are only seeing the ones pointed towards us. But there were plenty of stars like this in the young galaxy and this model can explain away the long bursts (up to 2 seconds) but doesn't answer questions about

(cont.) the shorter ones. Other astronomers have a simpler explanation— they're there, we just can't see them because they've been red-shifted so much by distance our current telescopes can't see them. So proof of this theory requires telescopes with greater sensitivity into the infrared.

Naked Singularities have nothing to hide - or do they?- When we were talking about the collapse of super massive stars above, the end result above a certain weight class is a black hole. But recently astronomers and physicists are beginning to believe that we've made some assumptions about the idea of every black hole having an event horizon. The event horizon is the last point at which an outside observer can see something before it interacts with a black hole. Past that point even the light which allows the observation cannot escape the massive gravity of the collapsar and it effectively hides from the universe. What it's hiding is the point at which all of the equations and laws of physics break down—known as a singularity. The law of cause and effect is firmly on the side of the event horizon—but what if a hole could form where the singularity is visible? Standard theories of formation are based on a static or stars with very simple rotations, however reality shows that this is rarely the case. In fact astronomers now believe if there were a spindle shaped star that rotated very swiftly, the collapse would not be equal and singularities without event horizons could form at either end of the spindle. These could give us glimpses into the nature of high energy physics and reality itself.

<Please feel free to submit your own prose as well as artwork to WATCH THE SKIES. To submit keep the following guidelines in mind: Fiction/nonfiction should be 5000 words or less in any .txt, .rtf or .doc format. Art in jpg, .tiff or .psd format under 1mb. Email all

**submissions to :
ironmind42@gmail.com>**

BOOKGROUPS

1st Tuesday of the month
Wordwrights Writing group 7:00PM
1st Wednesday of the month
Kingswood Fiction Group 7:30PM
2nd Wednesday of the month
Whodunnit? Mystery Group 7:00PM
3rd Thursday of the month
Young Readers Group 7:00PM
4th Wednesday of the month
Pennwriters 6:00PM



3rd Wednesday 7:00PM

BARNES & NOBLE
BOOKSELLERS