



# WATCH THE SKIES

## SUNSHINE

By Robin McKinley

Get up, bake the bread, get on with life and do your best to ignore your past. It seems to be working for Rae Seddon. She can forget that she's the only daughter of Onyx Blaise famed magic handler. That her boy friend has a dubious past and likely magic imbued tattoos. That the SOF, the police force designed to deal with the dangers of the otherworldly, are keeping a close and personal eye on her. In fact she can be blissfully oblivious to all of that until she's chained to a wall next to a vampire. So what's someone who desperately only wants to be a baker to do? Now Rae, nicknamed Sunshine, finds herself in the thick of it. She needs to draw on those secret classes with her grandmother where she learned to transmute matter; to develop this unexpected skill of vampire destruction; to comprehend how she can find the undead through their email and last but not least to understand how her relationship with the vampire she saved will fit into the life that she so desperately wants to hang on to. Is it over personalized drama and vaguely written or an enthralling tale of vampiric romance—let us know where you stand ...

**-Thanks again to Eric Hardenbrook for yet another original cover.**

**-June's book is *Bone Song* by John Meaney**

# New Releases

June 2009

Abercrombie, Joe - **Best Served Cold**  
Anderson, Poul - **Rise of the Terran Empire**  
Baker, Kage - **The Women of Nell Gwynne's**  
Bell, Alex - **Jasmyn**  
Bernobich, Beth - **Ars Memoriae**  
Block, Francesca Lia - **The Waters and the Wild**  
Brennan, Marie - **In Ashes Lie**  
Brown, Eric - **Xenopath**  
Carey, Jacqueline - **Naamah's Kiss**  
Chizmar, Richard, ed. - **Shivers V**  
Crowley, John - **Four Freedoms**  
Di Filippo, Paul - **Roadside Bodhisattva**  
Foster, Alan Dean - **Flinx Transcendent**  
Gaiman, Neil, & Dave McKean - **Crazy Hair**  
Hamilton, Laurell K. - **Skin Trade**  
Harrison, Kim - **Once Dead, Twice**  
Hartwell, David G., & Kathryn Cramer, eds. -  
**Year's Best SF 14**  
Howard, Jonathan - **Johannes Cabal the Necromancer**  
Huff, Tanya - **The Enchantment Emporium**  
Lake, Jay - **Green**  
Micklem, Sarah - **Wildfire**  
Resnick, Mike - **Hazards**  
Reynolds, Alastair - **House of Suns**  
Rucker, Rudy - **Hylozoic**  
Sanderson, Brandon - **Warbreaker**  
van Eekhout, Greg - **Norse Code**  
Vance, Jack - **Wild Thyme, Green Magic**  
Williams, Tad, & Deborah Beale -  
**The Dragons of Ordinary Farm**  
Wilson, Robert Charles - **Julian Comstock**  
Zafón, Carlos Ruiz - **The Angel's Game**  
Zivkovic, Zoran - **Impossible Stories 2**

# THE PRINTED WORLD

-Say it in Klingon. Simon & Schuster is offering three books of the *Klingon Language Suite* for \$11.99 as an iPhone app. The first book, *Conversational Klingon* is voiced by actor Michael Dorn (Worf). Also included is the *Klingon Dictionary* as well as the *Klingon Phrasebook*. You know someone will have this at Balticon...

-We tend to know Guillermo Del Toro for his films: *Hellboy*, *Pan's Labyrinth* or *From Dusk Till Dawn*—but nothing's stopping him from being a writer as well. Guillermo quickly demonstrates this in *The Strain* a vampire novel where the threat evolves as quickly as the virus in *I am Legend*. With co-author Chuck Hogan, he has created an engrossing story that breathes life into what might be considered a tired genre, according to one bookseller. It's also a no-brainer who'll be directing when the movie goes into production.

-Brandon Sanderson, who is currently writing the three book completion to Robert Jordan's *The Wheel of Time*, has sold a four volume series to Tor books in what is a six figure deal. Sanderson's books comprising a series called *The Way of Kings* will be issued alternating with the remaining books of *The Wheel of Time*.

-Some times reality imitates art too closely. Author Mark Sable suddenly found himself under the harsh glare of scrutiny by TSA guards when traveling to New York. Guards at LAX targeted Sable and then discovered his manuscript, the tension immediately increased. Mark had in his possession the manuscript for episode three of *Unthinkable*, a comic which deals with a character who becomes part of a government think tank formed to imagine worst case scenarios in terrorism. Sable cooperated politely and eventually was allowed to resume his trip. He jokingly refers to the incident as a small price to pay to inform the agents about the reality of comic book scripts. . .

-Well the Jane Austen crossover mania continues with *The Immortal Jane Austen* in which Jane joins up with the resistance against a French invasion that just happens to be crewed with vampires.

-*The Song of Time* by Ian MacLeod was recognized with this year's Arthur C. Clarke award for best new novel. The award carried a cash prize of 2009 pounds sterling and was presented at the opening of SciFi London 8: Annual Festival of Science Fiction & Fantastic Film.

-The most recent book by Jack Campbell aka John Hemry, *The Lost Fleet - Relentless* is dedicated to the memory of former group member and friend, Doug Tillyer.



-Considering Dr. Manhattan, appropriately enough, the blu-ray version of the director's cut for *Watchmen* will be released on July 21st just in time for Comicon International. This version of the film will run over three hours and contains an additional 25 minutes of footage. The regular DVD version shares the same release date.

-The flavor of the month is Jekyll and Hyde as director Abel Ferrara announced he wants in on the fun. Universal promoted the idea a month ago with Keanu Reeves picked out for the leading role. Ferrara's movie will star Forest Whitaker and Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson as his alter ego. But the Brits have beat everyone to the punch with the 6 episode series *Jekyll* that images in a current day descendent of Dr. Jekyll with a genetic inheritance from Jekyll's experiments.

-ABC aired a brief clip of the upcoming show *Flash Forward*, based on the novel by Robert Sawyer. In a brief moment all of humanity blacks out for 2 minutes and 17 seconds. All around the world in the missing time, people see glimpses of what will occur six months into the future. ABC plans to air the show in the fall.

-There is more than one of everything and now there will be two of *Fringe* as the show is renewed for 2010. The 12th's final episode covered everything from the reason for events that agent Dunham has investigated to the revelation of William Bell, played by Leonard Nimoy.

-Dig it and the fans will find you . . . Daniel Radcliffe, known for his portrayal of Harry Potter was at work digging away on a beach in Wales when the fans caught up with him. Co-stars Rupert Grint (Ron) and Emma Watson (Hermione) were also present at the filming for the movie *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. This particular scene was of the burial of Dobby, the house elf.

-When your character dies in the first ten minutes of the movie and then you're resurrected as a cylon, it shouldn't be that tough, should it? Alessandra Torresani's part a Zoe Graystone suddenly became a little more complicated when the series was picked up for 20 episodes.

Suddenly a starring role has become a continuing role. *Caprica*, the movie is out now on DVD with the series expected to be shown in 2010

-ThinkGeek site earlier this year made the perfect gift for Jedi parents—the Tauntaun sleeping bag. While it is a spoof, the bag featured fuzzy and soft imitation intestines and to top it all off a light saber zipper. We even hear it doesn't smell bad—inside or out...

(*EVENT HORIZON* cont.)

-It's time for more PKD on the big screen as work begins on *Flow My Tears the Policeman Said*. It's no secret that Hollywood likes to work with Philip K. Dick's novels and short stories. Halcyon Co. acquired the rights to Dick's work in 2007 and selected this novel as the first for conversion. To date movies based upon the writing of PKD have netted over one billion dollars internationally.

-Is Fox perhaps realizing how the Whedon phenomenon works belatedly? The network has given *Dollhouse* a backhanded compliment with its 13 episode request for next year. The run may total out to 22 if there is sufficient interest and there is talk of changing the night. The series will be out on DVD on July 28th containing 12 episodes. Also included will be the stand alone "Epitaph one" as well as the pilot "Echo" which has not been aired. There are also a number of making of segments as well.

-Downloading the pirate versions of *Star Trek* out now might change your shirt color to red. Apparently the new movie, of which several versions are currently on the net illegally, could be one of two extremes— a concoction of .exe files that are liable to be viruses or a high definition version which may have escaped from Paramount.

-Post BSG, Ron Moore's next step *Virtuality* seems to have faltered. The pilot for the series is now set to be shown on July 4th and any further action is liable to be based upon the viewer's response. Fox has cooled on the project since SF writer Joe Haldeman pointed out similarities to his novel *Old Twentieth*. Both stories focus around a ship on an extended voyage whose crews resort to virtual reality to pass the time with unfortunate results.

-HBO's *Game of Thrones* seems more likely than *A Dance With Dragons*. As fans with frayed patience await the next Song of Ice and Fire novel from George R. Martin, the production of the HBO pilot for the series based on the first book begins to take shape. The filming is currently scheduled to begin in October in Belfast. Tom McCarthy has taken on the role of director for the film and actor Peter Dinklage will step into the small but powerful shoes of Tyrion Lannister. Martin is will executive produce and has indicated that each season should encompass the action of one book.

-Dom DeLouise has passed away at the age of 75. While known mostly for his comedy roles, DeLouise also appeared on *SeaQuest DSV* and *Stargate SG1* as well as voicing Pizza the Hut in *Spaceballs*. His sons have been actively involved in both *Stargate* and *SeaQuest* as both actors, writers and directors. Peter DeLouise continues to work with the *Stargate* franchise by directing an upcoming episode of *Stargate : Universe*. Dom perfected his comedic approach as Dominick the Great of *the Dean Martin Show*, where he soon became a regular.

# Tillyer's News from the High Frontier

<this time it's all about looking up...>

-Taking a walk on the outside, astronauts from Atlantis are hard at work on the last mission to refurbish the Hubble Space Telescope. The eleven day mission has a grueling schedule with 5 planned space walks. Each walk is estimated to take at least six to seven and a half hours. Improvements to the telescope are expected to expand its range from 10 to 70 times its current as well as leave the telescope in a condition to continue working until 2014. Systems will be replaced and upgraded including the gyroscopes. The end result comes down to six systems that will work together to increase the telescope's abilities. A repair the astronauts will be working on that stands out as one of the most nerve racking is the removal of 122 screws using three different heads. A piece was designed to be attached to the outside of the instrument package that identifies the screws, color codes them and will capture the screws once they are loosened. One of the last items on the list is a recovering of the telescope in a new thermal insulating blanket. The mission marks the 30th flight for Atlantis and the 126th shuttle flight.

-The Europeans also have their eye on the sky with the launch of two new space telescopes designed to peer into the past closer than ever to the big bang. Herschel and Planck will both take up residency 1 million miles from earth in the L2 Lagrange point after a successful launch on May 14th. Planck is designed to review the microwave spectrum and will concentrate on the background radiation resultant from the birth of the universe and will possibly offer clues to the nature and quantity of both dark matter and dark energy. Herschel will review the infrared spectrum which will enable it to discover more about the early formation of stars and galaxies. Herschel will also be key in the determination of the presence of water on extra-solar worlds. Planck will begin observations in three months and Herschel in six months.

-From the far edge of time and the universe comes a searing burst of gamma rays— 630 million years after the birth of the universe, a star has died and become a black hole. Only now with the information from NASA's Swift satellite can we record such an event. Swift noted the burst and signaled earth where the astronomical community worked quickly to measure the afterglow. Astronomers in the Canary Islands and Chile measured the red shift at 8.2 which corresponds to a distance of 13.035 billion light years. One of the reasons that this is significant is the curious lack of gamma bursts observed from the early days of the universe.

## Support Your Local Hero

Clearly the police and locals of Cincinnati, Ohio are not exactly sure how or if they will as the Shadowhare roams the city streets with his group of crime fighters. In a video from local TV station 5, there is a brief moment when the masked, costumed and caped hero approaches a sheriff's officer, offers him a business card and his help in the fight against crime. The officer has the good grace to wait to smile until after the Shadowhare leaves. But that's how folks seem to treat the advent of a costumed adventurer and his three other cohorts of The Allegiance of Heroes, as they walk the city streets. Is this that different from a neighborhood watch patrol? Merriam Webster's unhelpfully enough defines a 'vigilante' as—a member of a vigilance committee. Above that a 'vigilance committee' is defined as—a volunteer committee of citizens organized to suppress and punish crime summarily (as when the processes of the law appear inadequate). The Shadowhare comments that the tools of his trade are pepper spray, a taser, handcuffs and the right to citizen's arrest. The citizen's arrest is legal in Ohio, but with the caveat that the arrested may obviously pursue legal action against the detainer. So if the heroes are merely stopping the incident and turning over the perpetrator to the police they are still attempting to be a part of the justice system without stepping over the line. The definition of vigilantism implies that the person takes action believing that the system does not work. That's not to miss the point that there obviously is danger involved in intervening and that these folks are not trained professionals at this either nor insured by the city. At one point he and his other three team members (also in costume and masked) hand out sandwiches to the homeless. Shadowhare says of his personal history that he was mistreated as a child and grew up in foster homes. This maybe his method of trying to make things better and dealing with his own personal issues. He's been injured trying to break up a domestic abuse and claims to have collaborated with another hero by the name of The Wall Creeper to try to track down a rapist.

But beyond the four heroes in the news video lies something more. Online the listing of The World Super Hero Registry contains a lot of folks out doing things in the name of heroism and usually in costume. There are minimum criteria that are necessary for inclusion in the registry: the costume—which is detailed as not only protection of the identity but also a visible statement of intent to fight crime; heroic deeds—the hero must do deeds which above the average and are selfless in nature for the greater good and finally personal motivation—the desire to act must be of a personal nature not expecting payment or as a spokesperson. The site besides listing numerous international heroes also offers a locational map, legal information, support, media coverage and links. The heroes are listed as crime fighters, involved in public service, environmental concerns or social activism. Now with the advent of MySpace even more of these costumed heroes are coming to light. Note that none of them claim to be super heroes. There is even a local hero know as Ecliptico. After a little research it appears that he is from the Harrisburg area. The Shadowhare cites him as a partner in fighting crime. As the heroes become more visible through online social networks, so they are joined by the people who enjoy wearing costumes, the people who think they are imbued with extraordinary powers and finally the true vigilantes. Is the message that the heroes are trying to put forward—if you care, take a stand—being diluted by their new visibility? It's hard to say. It's hard to say what makes a person want to make a difference in the way that the heroes choose to make the attempt. But we cannot fault them for wanting to change things for the better and can only wish them luck.

## There's More Than One of Enterprise . . .

Given the daunting task of taking a legend to its beginning, J.J. Abrams took a note from his other work, *Fringe*, and found away to make *Star Trek* his own without defeating the spirit of the work. With so many of the remakes or the adaptations there appears to be an irresistible desire to modify, to improve or merely make one's mark when there is no good reason for change. Abrams has done something unexpected – he's come up with his own answer to the Kobayashi Maru. How do you make a *Star Trek* film for die hard fans that introduces the characters they know by heart, that covers ground so well trammled that the ruts could mire your action, and that can smoothly go from action to action in a compelling fashion in a series known for its intellectual ponderings and socially active meanings? Abrams stepped outside of the problem and adjusted the over all idea instead of pandering to our expectations. Due to its intellectual nature, *Star Trek* has no problem with the concept of time travel and has used its effects repeatedly. But rarely does the franchise allow the events to stand as the new history. The brave heroes are always seeking the convoluted method necessary to reset the clock, mend the tear and reestablish the linkages of causality. Abrams pulls off not only the audacious feat of not only allowing us a future we did not expect but also in the process gives us the reintroduction to all the characters we've grown to enjoy. The casting is dead on for nearly everyone. Carl Urban is the perfect Dr. McCoy. He starts of complaining in the fashion we expect and never once drops the ball. His accent, timing and phraseology is dead on. Gradually one by one the other crew members step up into the limelight and take on their familiar roles. The little details are there too with Zachary Quinto's tilt of the eyebrow and the occasional toss of Simon Peg's head that follows James Doohan's agreeing nod.

Having said all of this, one important point should not be lost- the action of the film is going on nonstop during all of these reintroductions. It's a fast series of explosions that slam the crewmembers about, the destruction of worlds, or facing down alien creatures. If the film takes any breaks, they are in the beginning with some abrupt transitions that are easily forgivable. Not only that it's a beautiful film. There's truly a fan's love behind the design of the props, the bridge and the ships. The battle sequences are swift and gaudy, but not too excess. There is a point, not well definable, when Christopher Pine stops being the arrogant, wisecracking character and is suddenly the captain. For a backdrop is the latest imagining of the Enterprise. The old girl has never looked better. There is no over done sleekness, bizarre nacelle arrangements or color shifts. The details are minor and subtle and add instead of distract. Most of all this Enterprise, interestingly enough with no alpha subtitle, jumps swiftly to warp in a burst of blinding speed that feels more appropriate for the action. The scene on Titan is akin to the reveal in the original motion picture.

All in all *Star Trek* is a very satisfying experience. It brings the franchise back to the beginning and it challenges the views without ever boring them. From here Abrams has found a point from which things can only boldly go forward.

**Please feel free to submit your own prose as well as artwork for consideration for inclusion in Watch the Skies Newsletter. To submit keep the following guidelines in mind:**

**Fiction/nonfiction should be 5000 words or less any .txt format on disc or email submissions preferred due to my inherently slow typing speed.**

**[ironmind42@gmail.com](mailto: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