

WATT'S OUT

SF&F Book Releases

REVENGE by Fiona McIntosh. Voyager pb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2002. 598 pp. A\$17.95. On sale now. Book two of Trinity. The struggle continues, with the Paladin still split over a countryside that is fraught with danger. The young couple, Alyssa and Tor, are still separated and because of the time and manner of their separation, Alyssa believes that Tor is dead. Unfortunately she must work with the king whom she believes killed him. The quest for the stones of Ordolt is continuing, with Yargo going after them. That journey is apt to be perilous, however, even for a spirit. Tor himself finds himself in hot water when he is captured by slavers. His other companion, the falcon Cloot, is also in trouble when it is taken and held. McIntosh has a clear style and readers will find that this series is a good read.

WALK IN HELL by Harry Turtledove. Nel pb, dist in Aust by Hodder Healine. © 1999. 691 pp. A\$18.95. On sale now.

The second volume of The Great War series of alternate history.

The war in North America is intensifying. The US had started off using gas first, now it had introduced barrels first – called tanks in Europe – against the Confederacy and the beleaguered Canadians. The time is 1915, and even though many of the well known characters are there – including Woodrow Wilson and Roosevelt – they are not necessarily on the same side. The war had settled down to a grinding slowness that was not a stalemate – the US had too many troops for that – but it was not what the US had originally envisaged when it had attacked its neighbours. As before Turtledove has continued with the many threads linking all the different people he has chosen as his leads. Some have been killed, and many are civilians in occupied lands.

An excellent look at what might have been.

THE OTHER by Victor Kelleher. HarperCollins pb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2001. 240 pp. A\$17.95. On sale now.

THE OTHER is a novel about a war which rages between men and robots, though it is not the usual such war.

The robots – called Robs – believe they are the way of the future and that they are to supplant Man. The human have different ideas about that, and a savage war had broken out. The novel opens with Shaw arriving by aircraft at a war zone on the outskirts of a forest. When he steps off the craft the soldiers he meets aren't what he expected – they are using old-style weapons and are not as disciplined as he had come to expect. After some few days there, however, he finds that in order to survive, he would have to change or die. It was while there that he first saw the robot children. They were nearly undistinguished from

human children, and much harder to kill. By the time he had grown used to the fighting, he had come up with a method of breaking the deadlock in the fighting. Then he went home...

Kelleher has a clear, concise style that anyone will find easy to read and enjoy.

BREAKTHROUGHS by Harry Turtledove. Nel pb, dist in Aust by Hodder Headline. © 2000. 657 pp. A\$18.95. On sale now.

The Great War: volume two.

This novel continues Turtledove's tale of how World War 1 might have gone if the USA had sided with the Germans (and some other things had happened in Europe). Overall, events were not going well for the Entente – Germany was winning in Europe and the USA, although fighting on two fronts, was slowly winning. They were pushing towards Toronto and trying to cut Canada in half, and their forces were slowly advancing into the Confederacy. It was then that the factories of the USA began to produce tanks in quantity and the soldiers started to use them in ways that brought the tanks to their best use – in columns. Towards the end of the novel it becomes clear to the characters that the South is losing the war...

One of the best alternate history series going.

MISTRESSES OF MISTRESSES by E. R. Eddison. Gollancz pb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 1935. 397 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now. A novel released in the Fantasy Masterworks series. There have been many novels that purport to be tales of a far-off land that is a heritage of the knights of old and of a land that was better and nobler than the present (or what time the novel was actually written in). Eddison has set this novel in a country called Zimiamvia. There were three Kingdoms and the rulers of these had been plotting for years to win the whole for themselves. The new king of the country has many against him, but there is one man – Lessingham – who might be up to keeping the realm, if not at peace at the present, then at least it might end up that way. But Lessingham must win through. Written in a style befitting the age it is set in. This novel needs to be savoured.

TIME AND AGAIN by Jack Finney. Gollancz pb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 1970. 399 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now.

A novel in the Fantasy Masterworks series.

There was a movie that used the idea behind this novel for the time travelling (and used the title, from what I can remember) but the plot was different. Si Morley thought that his life was settled down – he had a job, a girl and everything was quiet. Then he was asked to join a secret government project that, he was assured, would change his life for the better. He joined up, and found that the project centred around sending someone back in time. It could only be done using people with

certain backgrounds and profiles; he was one of these people. The time he was to be sent back to was New York of 1882. He found a puzzle there, and together with his girlfriend, this puzzle would help the project gain momentum. And then came the dilemma.

A journey back to a past that is lovingly described. Most interesting.

THE TELLING by Ursula K. LeGuin. Gollancz tpb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 2000. 264 pp. A\$24.95. On sale now.

A novel of the Ekumenical.

Sutty was an Observer for the Ekumenical, the group of aliens who had arrived on Earth and helped piece humankind together after the troubles that had devastated the humans. After graduating, she had been assigned to a world that was ruled by the Corporation – a government that had its motto: To The Stars. They had tried to wipe out superstition and the old teachings. Sutty and her Hainish superior had tried to do some research to record the old writings, but they were hard to find: the old books from the great libraries had been mostly destroyed. When the government had suddenly offered to let one of the aliens into the back-country, Sutty found herself journeying up-river to a small town. Travelling with her was an official of the government. It would take her some time to befriend the natives there so she could commence her research.

An engrossing novel about persecution and redemption.

THE FOREIGNERS by James Lovegrove. Millennium pb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 2000. 421 pp. A\$17.95. On sale now.

A science fiction detective novel.

The protagonist is a policeman. A policeman who did not have much power to do anything other than solve crimes, and then let the mainland police take over. Foreigners were aliens who had arrived on Earth just as everything was falling apart and they virtually saved the human race. They were golden, enigmatic and silent; communicating via hand gestures. They loved music – and they loved human singing the most. When a Siren (a human singer) was found dead, along with the remains of a Foreigner's clothes, it could have been suicide or murder. When a second corpse turned up, and then a third, murder seemed the more likely. But that was political dynamite. The crimes *had* to be solved...

Excellent hard sf. *Recommended*.

THE CRYSTAL DESERT by Julia Gray. Orbit pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Books. © 2001. 566 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now. Book Three of the Guardian Cycle. Terrel was a wanderer; a forced one, maybe, but a wanderer still. Following the previous two novels, he finds himself in a desert land, which is occupied by nomad tribes, who cross the desert by camel trains. The land is harsh and the tribes exist on the brink of life. With Terrel and his companions – three ghosts - he finds the life hard but liveable. Luckily he has his magical abilities to help him. As he is travelling he must still search out the truth of the Tindaya Code and try to unravel its meaning. Gray has created some interesting fantasy with this Cycle, and readers who like quest stories will find it good to wile away the hours.

BLOOD by Tony Shillitoe. Voyager pb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2002. 670 pp. A\$17.95. On sale now. Book One of the Ashuak Chronicles. Australian author Tony Shillitoe has commenced, with BLOOD, another fantasy series that should bring more readers looking for his future novels. We are back in

the world of the Dragonkin, and their rivals, the Alfwyn. The battle between these two ancient powers is aided by their allies – and the Dragon Priests are the Dragonkin's closest allies. Sukaal Vekesh is linked to the Dragon Priests – his grandfather is one, but Sukaal himself has been put in charge of Sekesu, which had been taken over from the Jaru. He finds that he has many enemies – not the least the former ruler. Intrigues abound. There are other characters – Alwyn, who is a Jaru by upbringing, Shana and Kael, the warrior brother and sister, and the Death Tiger, another worry for those in power. Well-told fantasy.

THE COSMIC LOGOS by Traci Harding. Voyager pb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2002. 650 pp. A\$18.95. On sale now. Book Three of The Celestial Triad. Australian author Traci Harding's last volume of the trilogy, THE COSMIC LOGOS ties up all the loose ends commenced in the first two volumes. The wider problems of the intergalactic alliance are mostly solved, and Tory and Maelgwn decide to go back to Gaia and straighten out that planet's growing troubles. Whether they can get through to the people there, however, is another thing altogether. Back on Kila they have their own problems to face, with the space station that contained time travel apparatus disappearing. This final volume is hefty, but is an easy read.

SPIRIT OF THE STONE by Maggie Furey. Orbit pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Books. © 2001. 426 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now. Book Two of the Shadowleague. The first novel in the series was THE HEART OF MYRIAL Myrial is in trouble as enemies from without are trying to break through the Curtain Wall and gain entrance to its riches. The old Hierarch has, deep within his mind, a tale told ages ago to him which is needed so that an expedition can try to reach Aethon, the Dragon Seer. There is a small party that will try to reach him – Veldan, the Loremaster who must persuade Zavahl to let him probe his mind, then there is the fire-drake Kazairl and several others. They must not tarry, since the council of Myrial, the Shadowleague, is in turmoil and may fall before they return. Well written adventure fantasy.

CHASM CITY by Alastair Reynolds. Gollancz pb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 2001. A\$19.95. 676 pp. On sale now.

This is Reynolds' second novel, the first being REVELATION SPACE.

Tanner Mirabel was a soldier; at first a simple soldier who made his name as a marksman, then an assassin. He became a soldier of fortune and ended up being the security advisor for a man named Cahuella. Then an incident occurred that would alter all their lives. Some guns that Cahuella had sold to another party were stolen before they were delivered and used to wipe out most of an aristocratic family. The surviving son was determined to gain revenge by killing Cahuella and his clan. The son, Reivich, fled offworld, with Tanner, the surviving member of Cahuella's organization, following to kill him.

If you like well-written hard SF, full of adventure, action and well-plotted to boot, this is for you. This book is *Highly Recommended* - some of the best SF I've read in years.

HOW FEW REMAIN by Harry Turtledove. Nel pb, dist in Aust by Hodder Headline. © 1998. 471 pp. A\$18.95. On sale now.

The novel about the second American Civil War.

For those who have read Turtledove's Great War series and wondered how the South won the second Civil War: this novel tells how. As in others of

Turtledove's alternate histories, he has quite a few characters on both sides telling their own stories, so as to give a more rounded view of the whole. Some of those were told of in the Great War series, some are also well known in our own history: Roosevelt, General Stuart and Stonewall Jackson. Most of the characters that are well known have gone on to some changes, including Abraham Lincoln – with his talk of freeing the masses. The novel is well put together and I would presume well researched – not that I know much US history.

A most interesting novel – the reader will spend many hours thinking about it after it is finished.

CHANGER OF DAYS by Alma A. Hromic. Voyager pb., dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2001. 429 pp incl glossary. Volume One of the Changer of Days series. A first fantasy by a young author. Set in Roisinan, Anghara Kir Hama was growing up in a family that was both powerful and loving. All that ended when she was nine, however, when her parents were killed and she barely escaped the wrath of her half-brother. Fleeing, she managed to find hope in Sanctuary. She was found out even there, later, and had to flee to the arid lands of Kheldrin. Though she had been born to rule, she had also inherited the mental powers that her parents bequeathed to her. These she had to grow into and train. She hoped that later she would return to Roisinan to take back that which was hers. Adventure fantasy.

K-PAX by Gene Brewer. Bloomsbury pb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 1995. 226 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now. This book is a film tie-in. It is in the form of a narrative diary. The narrator, Dr Brewer, is the acting director of the Manhattan Psychiatric Institute, and he had a busy schedule. Still, he did manage to keep his finger on the pulse and see some of the more interesting patients. Thus he was scheduled to see Prot, whom the notes given to him noted though was from another planet: K-PAX, to be exact. The novel follows Dr Brewer's interviews with Prot and the strange things that the patient comes out with. Over time Dr Brewer finds out many things about Prot and his home "planet" and the method he got to earth: on a beam of light. The trouble is that Prot says he has a date he is to depart, so that Dr Brewer is increasingly convinced that he must get his questions answered before that date. Mainstream SF.

A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE by Harry Turtledove. Nel pb, dist in Aust by Hodder Headline. © 1990. 308 pp. A\$18.95. On sale now.

This novel is a bit different from the usual Turtledove offering.

A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE is an alternate world novel – one in which Mars is physically different from the Mars we know. The differences make it habitable. There are intelligent beings there. When the original Viking landed, it transmitted briefly, then fell silent. The pictures it sent showed why it fell silent. An alien approached the lander with a pole-like thing in its hands... When two terran spacecraft approached the planet, one Soviet, the other from the USA, it was hoped that the two teams would work, maybe not together, at least not against each other. Unfortunately, politics reared its head almost straight away: the US team landed near where the Viking had landed, the Soviet team landed where the Viking was supposed to have landed. From that point, things went downhill.

What could have happened...

UTHER by Jack Whyte. Tor pb, dist in Aust by Pan Macmillan. © 2001. 916 pp. A\$16.95. On sale now. The Camulod Chronicles. A "parallel" novel to THE EAGLES' BROOD (read the Introduction to see why it is so). And, yes, it is a novel about Uther of Britain. Whyte adds to the legend with an expansion of the life of Uther Pendragon, filling in all the gaps to create a seamless flow from the beginning of the novel to the end. The adventures of Uther and his success with some of his women, the life of the times and the plans, successes and failures of the characters, are told with verve and finesse. This is a big book and a long novel, and the pace hardly slows as the plot thickens. For those who like stories of old Britain after the Romans, you will find this book fulfilling.

HONOURED ENEMY by Raymond E. Feist & William Forstchen. Voyager tpb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2001. 323 pp. A\$27.95. On sale now. A new Riftwar series: Legends of the Riftwar. This novel is the work of the combined talents of two fantasy authors. The novel is about the talents of two bands of warriors – Hartraft's Maurauders, a troop of Kingdom raiders, and a Tsurani patrol of soldiers. They meet by accident when coming up to a fort that at the time had been taken by dark elves. From then on, in enemy territory, they must try to keep from killing each other in order to survive their journey. And it isn't easy. As they advance across country they must overcome foes and circumstances that would try their fragile alliance. Well told fantasy adventure.

EYE AND TALON by H. W. Jeter. Millennium pb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 2000. 236 pp. A\$17.95. On sale now.

A new novel in the Blade Runner series.

Iris was a Blade Runner, and she considered herself the best. That is, until her boss Meyer told her that there was a re-organisation of the LAPD coming up and that he was giving out individual assignments to show the higher-ups how good his people were. Iris had to find and retrieve an owl that had been the property of Eldon Tyrell. She managed to get it back to her flat, but from then on, things started going wrong. Not only was the owl taken from her, but she lost her job as a Blade Runner. From that point, she was being led, rather than being the one doing the chasing. And what was it about the film *Blade Runner* she had been shown?

A bit more talking – especially near the end – but still a welcome addition to the series.

HOW TO DRAW MANGA: BODIES AND ANATOMY. Graphic-sha A4 tpb, dist in Aust by Bookwise Intl. © 1996. 132pp. A\$45. On sale now. The subtitle is "Human Body Drawings for Creating Characters", and teaches basic body structures, positions, and placement of muscles. Following the Introduction there are pages on perspective, posing, the centre of gravity, drawing entwined characters, the human skeleton and male and female proportions. Following these there are four chapters: Head Variations (facial, eyes, noses, mouth, ears, neck and shoulders, frontal view, and head); Upper Body Variations (body muscles – frontal, back, shoulder, arm, shoulder, motion of arm, both arms, and hand variations); Torsos Variations (male and female – leaning forward, bending, twisting, arms thrusting, standing, running, looking up, bending and throwing) and Lower Body Variations (construction of the lower body, the leg, crotch, buttocks, sitting, splits and construction of the feet). All in all an excellent set of basic rules for those into Manga.

How To Draw ANIME & GAME CHARACTERS Vol 1 by Tadashi Ozawa. Graphic-sha A4 tpb, dist in Aust by Bookwise Intl. © 1999. 151 pp. A\$45. On sale now. Volume 1 of this series is subtitled Basics for Beginners and Beyond. As with the other titles by Graphic-sha, this book is set up into Chapters and sub-chapters. There are five chapters in all: Chapter 1 is Lets Get Down To The Basics, and talks about What the beginning artist could be doing wrong, and goes into some basic characters. Chapter 2 is titled Different Ways To Draw Characters' Expressions, and is really basic in that it starts off with polygons, cross-lines and drawing faces from different directions. Then into different types of characters and a long discussion of characters expressions by type/head. Chapter 3 is Drawing Bodies, using cylinders, and girl's and boy's bodies. Then more on Expressions. Chapter 4 is Drawing Detail – height, hairstyle, eyes, feet, hands, character arrangement and 3D. Chapter 3 is Now, It's Time for the Real Test: critiques. All in all a good beginner's guide.

How To Draw ANIME & GAME CHARACTERS Vol 2 by Tadashi Ozawa. Graphic-sha A4 tpb, dist in Aust by Bookwise Intl. © 1999. 156 pp. A\$45. On sale now. The second vol is subtitled Expressing Emotions. This second volume is an important one, in that a character who does not show emotion is necessarily one to which the viewer does not identify with. Chapter 1 again starts off with Let's Start With The Basics and talks about the symbols of expressions, variations of expressions, and then division by types: game characters, comic child, OVA, giant robot pilot, aesthetic, detective story, and student. The chapter ends with advice for young illustrators. Chapter 2 is Expressing With The Full Figure: positions that convey emotion, varying the arms, combinations of hand and upper body, and again type, plus advice (the same types and advice as in Chapter 1). Chapter 3 is titled Directing Different Scenes – what is directing, various scenes and location of the scene: acting & fighting, a detectives day, aesthetic and young, girlfriend and boyfriend at school, giant robot battles, cat girl and dog boy, and ending with the world of adventure fantasies, plus advice.... Chapter 4 Experience On Paper and consists of pages of sketches. A round-out for volume 1. Good value.

THE YEARS OF RICE AND SALT by Kim Stanley Robinson. HarperCollins tpb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2002. 669 pp. A\$29.95. On sale now.

An alternate history with much changed, yet not all.

Starting out with the premise that the Black Death wiped out all the people in Europe, what would the resulting world be like if the East had flowered and surged ahead, instead of Europe? Robinson has postulated an interesting plot technique to keep the thread of characters through the nearly fifteen hundred years or so of the novel – that reincarnation is real, and that a small group of people keep on coming back together, in different periods. China is the great Power through most of the period, though there are surges when it stagnated. The world that ultimately evolved was acted upon by the various religions of the East, and the world of what is now 2002 roughly equivalent to today's world, though there were no wars in which atomic weapons were used.

There is some philosophising, but overall an engrossing read.

DESTINY by Elizabeth Haydon. Gollancz tpb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 2002. 558 pp. A\$27.95. On sale now. The final novel of the Rhapsody Trilogy. The trio of heroes, Rhapsody the singer who has captivated her audience with both song and beauty; Achmed the assassin, whose work has earned him fame, and Fergol, whose personality helps hold the group together. The three must work together to find the children of the F'dor so that they can rid the world of its influence. Events are accelerating, however, and they must work harder and faster to achieve their aim before all falls apart. Haydon has created an intense novel that is a great tie-up for the adventure.

FLOW MY TEARS THE POLICEMAN SAID by Philip K. Dick. Millennium pb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 1974. 204 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now.

A novel in the SF Masterworks series.

I had not read this novel previously, and I was looking forward to reading it. I was not disappointed. The world of Jason Taverner was that of a successful TV star – he had a show on Tuesday nights with an audience of thirty millions and considered that he had reached the good life. That was shown to be true when he woke up after being attacked by an old girlfriend and found that all records of his existence had been erased. Not only that, no one had heard of him (or his TV show). The world itself was the same – student unrest and forced-labour camps for those who did not have the correct documents. Taverner went to a forger and got some documents, but then his troubles started getting worse, as those he was dealing with were police informers.

A good example of Dick at his best.

DRAWING CUTTING EDGE COMICS by Christopher Hart. Watson Guptill tpb, dist in Aust by Bookwise Intl. 144 pp. A4. Colour and B&W. A\$49.95. On sale now. There are 575 illustrations, 115 in full colour. This volume is about how to draw the new "extreme" cutting edge comics and gives background in the Introduction as to what you can expect. Judging by the examples, it's a matter of the characters showing just that bit more in their art. The Chapters are titled The Basics with an Attitude; Anatomy for Comic Book Artists; The Big Guys; Extreme Allure; Extreme Character Design; Discovering Your Personal Style; The Power of Perspective; Designing the Page; Crossing Over to Television Animation; Getting an Agent to Rep your Work and Riding the Edge: An Interview with Brian Pulido. Each of the chapters is broken into one to two page subchapters. All in all this book looks to be a good grounding in helping the young artists get a more professional look to their comic art.

FUTURE RELEASES:

Bookwise: STEP BY STEP ART SCHOOL: OILS
TESTAMENT: The Life & Art of Frank Fazetta
Allen & Unwin: SCHILD'S LADDER by Greg Egan
ALTERED CARBON by Richard Morgan
Hodder&Stoughton: THE GUTENBERG REVOLUTION by JMan
HOUSE CORRINO by Herbert & Anderson.
HarperCollins: THE COSMIC LOGOS by Traci Hardig
BLOOD by Tony Shillitoe
A SORCERER'S TREASON by Sarah Zettel
THE STONE & THE TIGER by Fletcher Anthony
THE SKY WARRIOR & THE SUN by Sean Williams
Penguin: STAR WARS EPISODE 2: ATTACK OF THE CLONES

WATTS OUT, a supplement to THE MENTOR Magazine. Edited, printed & published by Ron Clarke of PO Box 746, Bankstown, NSW 1885. Also on the Internet at <http://www.efanzines.com> © 2002 by Ron Clarke.
