

WATT'S OUT

SF&F Book Releases

THE WELL OF LOST PLOTS by Jasper Fforde. Hodder&Stoughton tpb, dist in Aust by Hodder Headline. © 2003. 360 pp. A\$32.95. On sale now. The third novel from Fforde, the previous two being THE EYERE AFFAIR and LOST IN A GOOD BOOK. The three are part of a continuing series set in the world of fiction – both physically and mythologically. This time events in the publishing world are nearly running riot with a new book system coming in – BookV9, with its 32-plot story system (as opposed to the 8 bit –plot system). As usual with Fforde's works, there are various animals running around, this time unicorns, with the Minotaur not too far behind. If you like a good chuckle, and enjoy English humour, you will read with novel with a wide grin.

FREEDOM by Tony Shillitoe. Voyager pb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2003. 619 pp. A\$18.95. On sale now. Book three of The Ashuak Chronicles. The story continues of the relationship between the dragons of Ashuak and the human inhabitants. The humans were basically two factions – those who, under Sukaal Vekesh, were fighting against the various countries surrounding it, and the native Jaru people, who had been forced into servitude by Vekesh and his followers. Shana was one of these native Jaru. Helping the people was also Alwyn, who had aligned himself with them. When the dragons did not answer Vekesh's call to help him, the question was whether it was if they chose to, or whether there was another reason. Action adventure fantasy.

THE GOLDEN AGE by John C. Wright. TOR pb, dist in Aust by Pan Macmillan. © 2002. 407 ppp. A\$15.95. On sale now. Subtitled A Romance of the Far Future, THE GOLDEN AGE tells of a far future, ten thousand years hence, when mankind has reached past its transcendence and conquered the solar system. Immortality has been achieved, and things should be complete. This might be so for society as a whole, but there were individuals that were still finding out that what appeared to be so, was not necessarily so. One such was Phaeton, who through a series of mishaps, has an inkling that all is not right with the relationship between him and his society. And he begins to dig deeper. Excellent science fiction.

MURDER IN LAMUT by Raymond E. Feist & Joel Rosenberg. Voyager pb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2002. 324 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now. The second book in the Legends of the Riftwar. For those who like a good sword-adventure novel with lots of action, you will like this tale. The protagonists are three ruffians going by the names of Durine, Kethol and Pirojil. Their usual haunt is the battlefield, and between the battles, the tavern. This time, however, there was a bit of a lull in the fighting, and they decided to take it easy and do a bit of easy work as bodyguards for a man and his wife. The three thought that they would not see Tsurani, Bugs or goblins and that the job would be easy. Little did they know.... And LaMut also wasn't quite what they expected, either. An enjoyable read.

PICTURE MAKER by Penina Spinka. HarperCollins pb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2002. 530 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now. This novel is set in the dim past of the North American Indians. The heroine is Picture Maker, the daughter of the chief of Bear Clan. She started out a young girl whose talent was drawing; later these drawings would draw in those who believed they foretold the future. All too soon, however, her life changed and she found herself separated from her people and having to live with only her own devices. It would take all her will to live to get her through. Spinka has created a credible Mohawk woman whose adventures made interesting reading.

QUICKSILVER RISING by Stan Nicholls. Voyager tpb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2003. 410 pp. A\$29.95. On sale now. Book one of the Quicksilver trilogy. The casual reader finds out from the beginning that this writer is very good at creating a book that bites like a hook into their interest. The action starts immediately with a squad of swordsmen breaking into a house with mayhem and bloodshed. Their leader, Serrah, wins through, but is soon in deeper water. The reader is then introduced to Reeth Caldason and his later companion Kutch, who have a quest to fulfill: Reeth needs magic to get rid of a hex on himself. Quick moving fantasy.

HIDDEN WARRIOR by Lynn Flewelling. Voyager tpb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2003. 491 pp. A\$29.95. On sale now. Book two of The Tamir Triad. Flewelling goes back to Skala with her latest offering. Tobin's body shape was influenced by the magic worked upon her to keep her alive in her father's city. The one whose shape she showed to the world was her dead brothers. That brother's spirit still was manifest, however, as the spell required it. The time came however, when Tobin would have to show to her people who she was and reclaim her heritage. The prophecy said that Skala would be ruled by queens. Her father had ruled as a king but it was time again for a queen. It would be dangerous for Tobin, for there were those who liked the status quo, but she must try. Well-written and conceived.

NAKED EMPIRE by Terry Goodkind. Voyager h/c, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2003. 660 pp. A\$45. On sale now. Goodkind's previous readers have been looking forward to another novel from him set in the Sword of Truth series – well, here it is. NAKED EMPIRE is another novel set in the world of Kahlan and Richard. There is again treachery afoot. Richard is poisoned, and the price for the antidote is that he must perform some tasks that are abhorrent to him. Events are coming to a climax, however, for his empire, which depends on him, is under intense pressure from external and internal forces. The novel is full of action and is an exciting read, as is usual for this author.

A SUNBURNT COUNTRY by Andrew Sullivan. Ginninderra Press pb, dist in Aust by Ginninderra Press, PO Box 53, Charnwood, ACT 2615. © 2003. 299 pp. A\$30; \$35 incl postage & pkg. On sale now. A novel from a new Australian author. Set in the future some forty years from now, the writer extrapolates what would happen if the dry conditions Australia is experiencing now continue, getting steadily worse. The novel is peculiarly Australian. Set in Melbourne and the surrounding countryside, Sullivan shows what happens when a population is put under intense pressure. A SUNBURNT COUNTRY makes an engrossing read. This offering is from a small press, so if you want a copy, send the cheque to the above address.

THE CALLIGRAPHY KIT by George Thomson. Pub. by Cameron House, dist in Aust by Bookwise Intl. © 2003. A\$39.95 incl GST. On sale now in good bookstores. This kit is meant as an introduction to the art of calligraphy with step-

by-step instructions for the beginner. It consists of a ninety-six page booklet in full colour, a sample sheet of calligraphy with guidelines on the back and a box containing a bottle of red and a bottle of black ink, a wooden shaft with three sizes of steel nibs, plus a bamboo quill pen, all set into a folded box. The book is set into four parts: The Basics; Moving On; Projects; and Reference. The book is an extensive work in its pages, and the illustrations are excellent, both in clearness and clarity. A very good introduction to the art of calligraphy.

LEGENDS II, Edited by Robert Silverberg. Voyager tpb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2003. 645 pp. A\$29.95. On sale now. Eleven new stories by some of the best writers in modern fantasy. They are: HOMECOMING by Robin Hobb; THE SWORN SWORD by George R.R. Martin; THE YAZOO QUEEN by Orson Scott Card; LORD JOHN AND THE SUCCUBUS by Diana Gabaldon; THE BOOK OF CHANGES by Robert Silverberg; THE HAPPIEST DEAD BOY IN THE WORLD by Tad Williams; BEYOND BETWEEN by Anne McCaffrey; THE MESSENGER by Raymond E. Feist; THRESHOLD by Elizabeth Haydon; THE MONARCH OF THE GLEN by Neil Gaiman and INDOMITABLE by Terry Brooks. All of the stories are well worth reading, and this anthology will turn out to be as well worth adding to your library as the first volume. An enjoyable read.

HADES' DAUGHTER by Sara Douglass. Voyager tpb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2002. 621 pp. A\$29.95. On sale now. A new trilogy from Sara Douglass. Douglass postulates that ancient cities, including ancient Troy, had labyrinths built inside them that attracted and held uninvited evil. When Theseus defeated the Minotaur in Troy's labyrinth he was only acting out a part. Ariadne, the mistress of the labyrinth had helped him, but later when he betrayed he she turned against him and all humankind, loosening catastrophes against all. Later another hero, Brutus, would come into possession of the Troy Game, and Ariadne would turn her energies against him. Exciting fantasy.

MISSPENT YOUTH by Peter Hamilton. Macmillan pb. dist in Aust by Pan Macmillan. © 2002. 439 pp. A\$18.95. On sale now. A story about the consequences of rejuvenation on the world. Jeff Baker was a famous person: the creator of the Datasphere, the Internet of the future. Said future was forty years hence, but people were still the same, as Jeff would find out. As a seventy-eight year old Jeff was still mentally active. After the rejuvenation he was still as active, but now physically as well, with a body like a twenty year old. How this situation effects him as he interacts with his wife, son and friends is explored in this novel. Hamilton has again written a book that will surely impact on his readers, both old and new. Excellent SF.

BOOK OF DREAMS by Traci Harding. Voyager pb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2003. 480 pp. A\$18.95. On sale now. Traci Harding is another Australian author who is making inroads into the fantasy market. BOOK OF DREAMS could be considered a novel aimed at the adolescent market. Kylie had a problems with many things – and he was determined not to make his life get better. That is, he was until someone left a strange old book outside his door. It was an old leather-bound volume, illustrated with strange animals. When he started reading it he found that it drew parts of him together that he had forgotten existed, and found other parts that he did not realise he had. A personal exploration of a person's soul. Interesting reading.

THE BRIAR KING by Greg Keyes. TOR tpb, dist in Aust by Pan Macmillan. © 2003. 552 pp. A\$30. On sale now. Book One of The Kingdoms of Thorn and Bone. Opening what promises to be a very readable fantasy series, THE BRIAR KING is tells of the end of an Age, the Age of Everon. There are many threads to

the story: One started off with the discovery by two young girls named Anne and Austra of the crypt of one of their far off ancestors; another of the tale of Aspar White as he defends the king's family; and yet another of a priest fighting against an ancient evil. Something is awakening that will bring the country and its people to it's knees. Vigorous fantasy fiction.

The Lord of the Rings THE RETURN OF THE KING 2004 Calendar. Five Mile Press, dist in Aust by Bookwise Intl. © 2003. 28 pp. A\$24.95. On sale now.

The two films released so far of The Lord of the Rings have made quite an impact, what with reissues of the books and the releases of the DVDs, etc. This calendar is another timely release, featuring as it does the last movie in the trilogy, THE RETURN OF THE KING. The calendar opens up into two pages: one page consists of the usual days of the month; the other is of one of the main characters from the upcoming movie. Frodo is shown on the cover, clutching his sword. January is Aragorn, astride his warhorse. February is Gollum, shifty as always. March is the same photograph of Frodo as on the front cover. April is Arwen, in her deep-red full length gown. May is Gandalf, swinging a sword. June is Merry and Pippin back to back. July is Denethor, clutching a goblet of wine, with his youngest son Faramir in the background. August is Legolas and September is Gimli, the two who become closer friends. October features Uruk-hai, one of the Great Orcs. November is Eowyn. The last month, December, features Sam, as ever the staunch friend of Frodo.

MILLER'S SCI-FI & FANTASY COLLECTIBLES by Phil Ellis. Millers h/c, dist in Aust by Bookwise Intl. © 2003. 128 pp. 24x24.5 cm. A\$39.95. On sale now. The title tells it all. Everyone has seen the action figures that the like of Star Wars have brought onto the market. This book is a fairly comprehensive, illustrated volume showing many of these collectables and giving the going price (in pounds and US dollars) for one in good condition. The contents are broken up into the following: an Introduction; a Timeline (1902 till 2003); Action Figures; Books & Annuals; Comics & Graphic Novels; Toys; Trading Cards; Movie Posters; Licensed Products; Props & Promo; Ephemera; Useful Addresses, and ends with an Index and Acknowledgements. A must for the collector or buyer.

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