

WATT'S OUT

SF&F Book Releases

FIRE AND SWORD by Simon Brown. HarperCollins. © 2000. 552 pp. A\$17.95. On sale now. Book two of the Keys of Power. The story of the kingdom of Granda Lear continues, and the fortunes of the family that rules it. Lynan, the brother who had been deposed when his family believed that he had murdered his older brother, Berayma, had plans to gain what he regarded as his rightful place on the throne. His half-sister, Areava, was then leading the country and had no intentions of letting someone whom she regarded as a murderer back into favour. With Lynan continuing his efforts to raise an army to back him, the attempted insurrection was getting closer and closer. The country was in great danger of falling into civil war, and who knows what outside influences might take advantage of this. Brown is one of Australia's better fantasy authors.

ON by Adam Roberts. Gollancz tpb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 2001. 387 pp. A\$27.95. On sale now.

The second novel by Roberts – the first being SALT.

This novel is about Tighe. He is only a young boy, and his family and village is poor. He is, though, the son of the Prince of that village, and thus has something to look forward to. If he can, that is, make it through to adulthood in one piece. His father is a very quiet person, and his mother is a bit psychotic. Tighe's grandfather is the Priest of the village, and is used to lording it over the other inhabitants, including Tighe's family. Tighe's world is that of a vast wall – the humans live on the ledges of that wall, and do not travel very far over a lifetime. There are heavy winds at dawn and sundown, and every so often someone or one of the animals falls off the ledges and disappears forever into the depths. Then one day, Tighe does...

What he finds is not what the reader expects. Very good hard SF adventure. *Recommended*.

FIRE AND SWORD by Simon Brown. Voyager pb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2001. 552 pp. A\$17.95. On sale now. Book two of the Keys of Power. With what is probably the middle volume of a trilogy, Brown is building towards an ultimate climax, but along the way he is creating background information and action so that the reader can really sink into the world of these books, and can live the lives of those in the country of Granda Lear. The past of the family of those who are ruling it – Lynan, Areava and Olio is builded on, and in this volume the efforts of Lynan and his companions Kumul, Ager and Jenrosa to find and pull together an army to take back Lynan's kingdom is the main theme. So, if you are a reader who likes well-told fantasy that is easy to follow, you will like FIRE AND SWORD.

KRONDOR: TEAR OF THE GODS by Raymond E. Feist. Voyager pb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2000. 372 pp. A\$18.95. On sale now. In the introduction

Feist acknowledges that the core of this book is the game "Return to Kondor". So, when you finish this novel you might like to follow that hint up. The novel centres around the attempts by the main characters, Squire James, William and Jazhara, as they attempt to retrieve the gem Tear of the Gods, which had been lost at sea and which those in the Temples of Midkemia needed as it was their only line to speak to their gods. However, it was not only these who were looking for the jewel – the minions of the dark gods were also looking, and if the latter found it first, it would go ill for the peace of the world. Well-told fantasy fiction.

SOMETHING MORE by Paul Cornell. Gollancz tpb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 2001. 422 pp. A\$27.95. On sale now.

There seems to be a rash of disaster novels coming out of the UK lately. In this novel, Britain has been devastated along with the rest of the world. Not only that, but at the same time aliens had contacted humans, and had picked one of them for their representative. The story is taken up some hundred years or so on. Any government has been destroyed and vast areas of the island have been taken over by powerful families. One such family is that of the ever-young Booth Hawtrey, the man whom the aliens had transformed. The other characters are Jane Bruce of the Reformed Church of England, Rebecca Champhert, Booth's biographer and novelist and Ruth, part of Janes military escort. Probably more fantasy than SF, and a little New Age, but smooth reading all the same.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS Official Movie Guide by Brian Sibley. HarperCollins tpb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2001. 119 pp. 220x280 mm. A\$27.95. On sale now.

Well, the time has come for the release of the movie that has been awaited with baited breath for years: LOTR. This volume is a behind-the-scenes guide to that film; or rather films, as they will be released as a trilogy, over time. The 119 pages are in full colour. The contents of the book is about the Journey on the Road to Middle Earth. There are details of the translation from book to script, and a resume of the cast. Then photos and articles on Sam, Boromir, Galadriel, Legolas, Pippin, Bilbo, Saruman, Galdalf, Merry, Aragorn, Gimli, Arwen, Elrond, Frodo and Celeborn and the actors who play them. Then there are more articles on the sets of the film and on the film's workers – director, etc. A excellently produced volume, and a must to have.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING Visual Companion by Jude Fisher. HarperCollins h/c, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2001. 71 pp. 235x320mm. A\$39.95. On sale now.

This book has been created, and with photographs from the film, is seen to be an encyclopaedic guide to the characters, places, landscapes and artefacts of the world of the first film in the LOTR trilogy. Thus there are sections about the History, the Free Peoples of Middle-Earth - with a

breakdown into Hobbits (which is broken down into each of the characters, eg Bilbo Baggins, Frodo Baggins, etc.), Men, Elves and Dwarves. The next section deals with the Istari. Then comes that on the Dark Powers – Orcs, Uruk-hai, and finally the Nazgûl. The details are very good, and the photographs are clear and show that these movies will be something to savour. The first page of the History is about the Rings of Power. The rings themselves look to be real. A souvenir of the films that will be of lasting interest.

RECKLESS SLEEP by Roger Levy. Millennium pb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 2000. 426 pp. On sale now.

A first novel by a new English author.

And another disaster novel. The world that Jon lives in has been devastated by tectonic events – there is not much left of buildings, and the events are ongoing. To make matters worse, the first colony on another planet has been abandoned. The beasts that the colonists had found had forced them home; the second expedition of soldiers, who had automations to direct from orbit, had been decimated when feedback from the units had crippled the men. Later Jon came across a software house that seemed to have an ulterior motive when they employed Far Warriors (those who had returned from their interstellar debacle) to help them develop new scenarios. Jon's companion from childhood, and who had also accompanied him on the expedition, had died in mysterious circumstances and Jon was determined to find out what had happened. Along with a woman who was doing a thesis on the Far Warriors, he applied for work at the software house...

The beginning is slow, but stick to it and you will find that the rest of the novel is worthwhile. Thought provoking SF.

VALIS by Philip K. Dick. Millennium pb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 1981. 271 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now.

One of Dick's last novels.

I think it would help if you had read some of Dick's other novels before you read VALIS. It would help to understand where he had been coming from. The novel is about the author – an SF author – and his friend, Horselover Fat. Reading the novel the reader will begin to understand that the two are really one. Most of the events take place in the early 1970s, at a time when drugs were part of the counter culture, and not part of the mainstream. Horselover Fat had been steadily growing more mentally disturbed as time went on – two women in his life had almost succeeded in putting him into a mental asylum. He had visited the Orange County mental hospital, but had been discharged. One of the things that he and the author were trying to figure out was whether God had actually worked through Fat and helped him. And whether Fat's *Tractates Cryptica Scriptura* was the reality behind life.

Dick at the end of his form.

NIGHT OF THE TRIFFIDS by Simon Clark. Nel pb, dist in Aust by Hodder Headline. © 2001. 469 pp. A\$18.95. On sale now.

The sequel to THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS by John Wyndham.

The time is twenty five years since Bill Masen had settled on the Isle of Wight. His son, David Masen was a pilot who had just returned from a quick trip to the mainland. His plane had hit a bird and the young man had just made it back. When he subsequently woke the next day he thought he had gone blind – it was pitched black at 9AM. Further events would prove that his world had changed, for the worse. Later when David was

piloting a high-flying jet fighter to find out what was causing the clouds that covered the sun, he had another crash landing – which would prove more disastrous than the earlier crash. And his world would change forever.

Quite a good addition to the original novel.

HOUSE CORRINO by Brian Herbert & Kevin J. Anderson. Hodder & Stoughton tpb, dist in Aust by Hodder Headline. © 2001. 599 pp. A\$29.95. On sale now.

The concluding volume to the Prelude to Dune trilogy.

This book does a good job of tying up the various plotlines that the previous two volumes started: the machinations of Emperor Shaddam IV as his plans for an artificial Spice appear to be coming to fruition; the plans of Baron Harkonnen to corner the natural Spice market, and to avenge his honour against Duke Leto Atreides and gain revenge. The long-term plans of the Sisterhood may be coming up to disarray with the birth of Jessica's son, and the looked-for liberation of the planet Ix seems to be in the offering.

This trilogy is well up to the standard of some of the original Dune novels. All three are *Recommended*.

SEA AS MIRROR by Tess Williams. HarperCollins pb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2000. 347 pp. A\$14.95. On sale now.

This is the second novel by Williams that I have read – the first being the fantasy MAP OF POWER. Needless to say, this novel is science fiction.

When I first read the blurb I thought, Oh no, not another novel going on about saving the whales. No, SEA is not about saving the whales – more about saving the humans. And yes, the mirror in the title could be a reflection on how humans really are, as seen by another species. Elizabeth started out life as an abused child. When she was taken away from her mother and sent to an orphanage, she took with her a dilapidated book which had illustrations of those few mermaids that graced some children's books back in the fifties. Elizabeth eventually ended up on a research station in Florida, and she found herself trying to interpret what could be communications from a male orca. Later she found herself actually communicating with his daughter. And that was when things fell apart in the world as terrorists detonated nuclear devices in three cities in several countries.

An excellent novel, worth checking out.

THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS by Lewis Carroll. Bloomsbury h/c, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 1871. 201 pp. A\$24.95. On sale now.

The companion volume to ALICE IN WONDERLAND, again in the coat-pocket or purse-size.

I hadn't read this book before; and was looking forward to reading it. It is as good as I had thought it was. As Zadie Smith says in the Introduction, Humpty Dumpty, Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the Jabberwocky, the Walrus and the Carpenter are all in this book, not in ALICE. One big drawback for this edition is that it is illustrated by Mervyn Peake – as was the previous ALICE edition. The illustrations are in a much more non-serious vein than those by Tenniel. For instance one of the (male) messengers is done up in a tutu, with ballet shoes. The idea of writing a novel set up as a chess game has been done many times since, of course, but still Carroll's clear and dreamlike writing is still enjoyable 130 years later.

A welcome addition to any library.

SECOND CONTACT by Harry Turtledove. Nel pb, dist in Aust by Hodder Headline. © 1999. 694pp A\$18.95. On sale now.

The first novel in the second series continuing the alien invasion of Earth: Colonisation.

It is now twenty years since the WorldWar finished. The alien Race had consolidated its gains, but still there were three large human superpowers on the planet – the Nazis, the Soviets and the USA. Two smaller powers – the Japanese and Britain – did not amount to much. Turtledove takes up the story with mostly the same characters who had been around in the first series. Being twenty years on they had grown that much older. The world itself had not changed that much – that is, until the Race's colonisation ships had arrived in Earth orbit and prepared to ferry down the colonists that the Race had been expecting for those twenty years. From them on, things got more complicated....

Continuing what has been a good speculative series of novel.

TERRY PRATCHETT'S DISCWORLD COLLECTOR'S EDITION 2002 CALENDAR. Illustrated by Josh Kirby. Dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. Full colour. © 2001. A\$ On sale now.

This is the time of year that calendars are released, and the Discworld is one of those events that is celebrated.

As also is usual, there are twelve pages of artwork that are the covers from various Discworld novels. There is also a short biography with colour photos of Pratchett and Kirby. The artwork is titled INTERESTING TIMES (1994); LORDS AND LADIES II (1993); THE BIG BANG (1990); BATTLE ON THE TOWER OF ART [THE LIGHT FANTASTIC] (2001); THE SCIENCE OF DISCWORLD (2000); THE LAST CONTINENT (1998); FEET OF CLAY (1996); BRUTHA, OM AND VORBIS IN THE DESERT (2001); RINCEWORLD AND BINKY (1997); WHEN WILL WE THREE MEET AGAIN (1994); DISCWORLD III (1995) and LORDS AND LADIES I (1992). The titles of the months is in three languages. The artwork has been selected well, and with the size of 31x38 cm, the calendar will look good hanging on any wall.

DOWN TO EARTH by Harry Turtledove. Nel pb, dist in Aust by Hodder Headline. © 2000. 620 pp. A\$18.95. On sale now.

Volume 2 of Colonisation. The story, or actually interwoven stories, continue on the invaded Earth. The lizards are still having a hard time keeping the lands that they have subjugated from actively rebelling. About the only continent they are not having trouble with is Australia – and only because there they a-bombed Sydney and Melbourne and set up their own cities in the dry Centre, because the climate closely resembled Home. The lizards are continuing to have trouble with the spice ginger, which is a potent drug of addiction to them. One of the main human characters, Sam Yeager, is also having trouble with his own people; being in the US military he is finding that there are some things he is not meant to look too closely at. Of course he can't keep his eyes to himself....

A welcome addition to the alien invasion series that is quite captivating.

AFTERSHOCKS by Harry Turtledove. Nel pb, dist in Aust by Hodder Headline. © 2001. 661 pp. A\$18.95. On sale now.

Volume 3 of the Colonisation series.

Things are beginning to hot up again all over the world. The Chinese, supplied with weapons by both the Soviets and the US, are getting bolder in their resurgencies. The Jews in Poland, along with the a-bomb they have been hiding for over twenty years – suddenly have a respite when the Nazis in Germany go too far and bring down the wrath of the lizards – most of

the cities in Germany are a-bombed, with the result that France is again relatively free, as is Poland. Then another group of Jews steals the rogue bomb and heads to Germany with it. Molotov in Soviet Russia is having problems of his own: not nearly as bad as in volume 1 when Beria tried a coup, but still, he holds his own.

Again, another novel that is an interesting read.

TECHNIQUES FOR DRAWING FEMALE MANGA CHARACTERS by Hikaru Hayashi. Graphic-sha 4to pb, dist in Aust by Bookwise Intl. © 1998. 128 pp. A\$45. On sale now.

One of the nine How To Draw series from Graphic-sha. There are four chapters, which are split into subchapters. Chapter one is Drawing the Female Figure: the Basic Rules. The rest of the chapter goes into the three rules in detail. Chapter two details the parts of the body and how they are sketched. Chapter three is Using Detail for Effect: the mouth, eyes, hair, etc. Chapter four is Learn from the Pros: and gives examples from Masaru Kaku, Jun Matsubara, Yashuo Matsumoto, Morio Harada, Bancho Hoshino, Ganma Suzuki, Shoko Ando, Yu Marabe and Noriyoshi Inoue. The book goes into great detail and it gives a step-by-step account of how to draw the figures. Undoubtedly an excellent book for those interested in drawing manga.

HOW TO DRAW MANGA: BISHOUJO * Pretty Gals by Hikaru Hayashi. Graphic-sha 4to pb, dist in Aust by Bookwise Intl. © 1999. 128 pp. A\$45. On sale now.

Undoubtedly a companion volume to Female Manga Characters. This volume has six chapters: Bishoujo Character Drawing Theory, which gives the basics – eg drawing faces, jawbones, eyes and irises, ears, noses and mouths, heads and hair and cute characters. Chapter two goes into drawing Bishoujo Bodies – balancing heads and bodies, waists, flowing bodylines, bending bodies, etc. Chapter three deals with Situations and Techniques of expression – Changing clothes, soaking in bathtubs, working with lingerie, etc. Chapter four is Every Day Life Bishoujo – girls with hair in plaits, in school uniform, nurses, etc. Chapter five is Out of this World Bishoujo – cat eared lasses, girls in fur, mermaids, fairies, etc. Lastly, chapter 6 is learning from the Masters. Another excellent volume for those wanting to learn the Bishoujo technique.

FALLEN DRAGON by Peter Hamilton. Macmillan tpb, dist in Aust by Pan Macmillan. © 2001. 634 pp. A\$28. On sale now.

A single volume novel from Peter Hamilton.

After The Night's Dawn trilogy, this long (634 page) novel is almost – but not quite – a quick read. Set several hundred years in the future, when the first wave of colonists have gone out from Earth, first by FTL starship, then by worm-hole, the action centres around the actions of one of the multi-stellar companies that are running what in essence is a degrading (as in number) starship fleet. Economics is starting to bite as the resources being sent (or brought) back from the colonist's planets is falling off, for various reasons. Lawrence Newton was the son of a Board Member of one of the colony planets. His family had a share in the company running the planet, so he did not want for much. Being young, however, he rebelled and, because he wanted to be on an exploring starship, he left home and went to Earth, from whence the starships still left. And then he joined one company's Security forces...

A well written space opera which I enjoyed reading.

THE PILLARS OF CREATION by Terry Goodkind. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 2001. 557 pp. A\$45. On sale now. Another novel in the Sword of Truth series. The young woman, Jennsen, has

been hiding out with her mother in the deep woods for years to keep away from the Rahl family's bloodhounds and soldiers. Till the day that she found the dead soldier and the note in his pocket that upset her world. Just after finding the note, a stranger had come upon them and helped her hide the body. The stranger had befriended her and, because he had a fever, she had invited him to her farm for shelter overnight. After telling her mother, she put the stranger into the manger. While talking to him the mother and daughter received up-to-date news of what was going on in the country – that the barriers were now down to the country to the south, and that another Rahl, Richard, ruled the country. Indeed their life had changed. Goodkind has created another engrossing novel for his fans.

THE COMPLETE RODERICK by John Sladek. Millennium pb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 1980,83. 609 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now.

A combined volume containing the novel RODERICK and RODERICK AT RANDOM.

The first novel tells the tale of how a university team, hired by NASA to build a robot, because of bungling (fraud) at the top, lose the grant and attempt to carry on themselves. There is the usual young genius computer designer/programmer and the older people at the university who are mainly against the team. Throw in a couple of killers from a Futures group and you have some scurrilous goings on. The second novel carries on with the growing little robot Robbie as he flounders through life trying to find out where it's at. He comes across the most weird situations of real life subtly twisted for satire. Whether he is at the Orinoco Institute or attending a service at the Church of Plastic Jesus ("Welcomes you, maybe") the author is poking fun at most aspects of American life – including somewhere, I am sure, Motherhood, which seems to be a dying art.

I used to think Sladek was an author steeped in the (then) New Wave. These novels show he has progressed past it.

THE COLLECTED STORIES by Arthur C. Clarke. Millennium pb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 2000. 966pp. A\$27.95. On sale now. This collection of Clarke's published works ranges in publishing date from 1937 through to 1999. That is quite some time period. The earliest story, TRAVEL BY WIRE, was published in *Amateur Science Fiction Stories*, as were the next few. These stories are much the same as those still being published in fanzines these days, and no doubt some of these latterday authors will be future world-renown sf writers. The volume includes the complete contents of Clarke's seven published collections, plus all the stories he has written in the last two decades, and all his previously uncollected fiction. The only fiction not included are his novels. The definitive collection. *Recommended* for those without copies of all Clarke's short fiction.

HARPY'S FLIGHT by Megan Lindholm. Voyager pb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 1983. 312 pp. A\$17.95. On sale now. Megan Lindholm is also known as Robin Hobb. A fantasy adventure novel. Ki had made a bad career move when a blood debt was created against the Harpies. They had vowed vengeance and were after her. She fled into the mountains, leaving her husband's tribe far behind. Unfortunately there were not just the Harpies seeking her – men also were, and they could be just as deadly as their feathered masters. The mountains she fled into were treacherous, but she moved deeper and deeper into their fastness. Also following her was a stranger – a swarthy man whom she was finding hard to shake off.

But the adventure was only beginning... Fast paced action fantasy.

AMERICAN FRONT by Harry Turtledove. Nel pb, dist in Aust by Hodder Headline. © 1999. 660 pp. A\$18.95. On sale now.

I seem to have missed this other series of Turtledove's about the alternative history of the Great War than he has had published. However, this is the first volume. Back in 1862 the American South won the American Civil War, which changed quite a lot of things in North America. The two sides lived with militarised borders up till 1914. When Germany went to war with France and England, the South sided with Britain. Canada did also. The USA sided with Germany. And thus the Great War came to the soil of North America itself. The US took on both Canada and the Confederacy, and succeeded in invading their territory. Then it got bogged down. This first novel takes us from 1862 on into 1914. As with Turtledove's other novels, he has many viewpoints presented, from Canada, the Confederacy and the USA, and from all classes and both men and women.

Engrossing – what promises to be a very interesting series.

FIRST HUNTER by Dale Elvy. Voyager pb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2002. 346 pp. A\$17.95. On sale now. The first volume of a trilogy. This is more like an American fantasy, which has in the background Japanese Shinto elements, rather than a totally new culture. Tane was First Hunter of the Gerhan tribe, who lived in the deep forest. When their lands were invaded, it was he who had to work to get the invaders stopped. Those who invaded were from a group of great Houses, who had magicians working for them who wielded magic that mere mortals could not match. Thus Tane had to team up with others – one was Sajha, the wayward daughter of one of the Shinto mages. The third in the trio was Masio, a cunning planner who had a criminal organization backing him. Fast, furious adventure.

OTHER BOOKS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW:

HodderHeadline: WALK IN HELL by Harry Turtledove
BREAKTHROUGH by Harry Turtledove

HarperCollins: THE OTHER by Victor Kelleher

Allen&Unwin: TIME AND AGAIN by Jack Finney
MISTRESS OF MISTRESSES by E. R. Eddison
THE FOREIGNERS by James Lovegrove
THE TELLING by Ursula Le Guin.

FUTURE RELEASES:

HarperCollins: LORD OF THE RINGS ILLUSTRATED - JRR Tolkien.
THE CURSE OF CHALION by L McMaster Bujold
THE MYSTIC ROSE by Stephen Lawhead
THE RING OF FIVE DRAONS by E Van Lusbader
REVENGE by Fiona McIntosh
MAGICIAN by Raymond E. Feist

Pan Macmillan: CONFEDERATION HANDBOOK by Peter Hamilton.
CHRONICLES TRILOGY set by Weis & Hickman.
SEARCH FOR MAGIC by Weis & Hickman.
DARK ELF gift set by R. A. Salvatore
THE RUINS OF MYTH DRANNOR by Carrie Bebris
ODYSSEY by Vance Moore
BROTHER OF THE DRAGON by Thompson & Cook
QUEEN OF THE DEMONWEB PITS by Paul Kidd

HodderHeadline: THE GUTENBERG REVOLUTION by John Man

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