

WATT'S OUT

SF&F Book Releases

CHAINFIRE by Terry Goodkind. **Voyager tpb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2005. 667 pp. A\$29.95. On sale now.** Another novel in the Sword of Truth series. When the novel starts Richard has been felled by an arrow, and is in danger of dying. He is rushed to a hut where Nicci treats his wound with magic. When he awakes two days later he asks about Kahlan. That was when he found that all was not at all well with the world. From that time on he went on a search he would not have believed he would be on. Kahlan, on the other hand, had problems of her own... Goodkind has again written a novel that his fans will love reading. I know they eagerly await each new novel from his prolific imagination. His characters are well thought-out and his plots are within the bounds of what those characters and their background would be possible. I think that his readers will enjoy his latest offering and will be looking forward to more from him in the future.

Xtreme Art: DRAW MANGA CHIBI! by Christopher Hart. **Watson-Guptill tpb, dist in Aust by Bookwise Intl. © 2004. 64 pp. 229x305 mm. A\$12.95. On sale now.** This sixty-four page book gives the basics of how to draw Manga Chibi. Each drawing is broken down into four simple steps. The reader begins by tracing or drawing the illustration "step 1". Then they add the red lines in "steps" 2, 3 and 4. When they have finished the four steps, they erase the guidelines (the criss-crosses) and any other lines they don't want to keep, and then go over the other lines to make them darker. The last step is to colour the drawing in. This book is obviously for the very young or beginning artist and this volume would make a great present for someone, a pre-teen maybe, who is interested in reading Manga and says they wished they could draw it also. As is usual with these books, it starts off with a chapter on The Basics, and then goes on to the characters themselves, such as Baby Bunny, Goofy Grin, Bully Boy, and so on. A good young beginners book.

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ROBOTS – *the animated movie* – is backed up by a clutch of books released by HarperCollins. These are reviewed below:

ROBOTS – The Movie Storybook. Adapted by Kate Egan. HarperCollinsEntertainment tpb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. ©

2005. 60 pp. A\$14.95. On sale now. Using stills from the movie on each page to back up the text of the story, this full colour book is an excellent souvenir of the movie, which was released in March. The story opens with Mrs Copperbottom receiving a Build-a-Baby kit. "Don't worry," she says, "Making the baby is half the fun!". A good gift for young readers or as a souvenir of the movie.

ROBOTS – Mix and Match. HarperCollins *Entertainment* h/c, dist in Aus by HarperCollins. © 2005. A5. 16 pp. A\$8.95. On sale now. A small hardcover book for the littlies. Each page is thick cardboard and is split into three horizontally: the head, torso and legs of a robot from the movie Robots. The idea is to mix the bits of individual robots to get funny and different robots matched. On the left hand page is a description of the original robot doing something, and on the right hand page is a picture of the robot. A book that will keep a four-year-old engrossed.

ROBOTS – The Joke Book by Megan and Jedidiah Fretts Howard. HarperCollins *Entertainment* pb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2005. A5. 43 pp. A\$A\$7.95. On sale now. A black and white compilation of various jokes featuring the characters from the movie. The jokes are aimed at the younger watchers of the movie, and are simple and unsophisticated – typical jokes that kids can understand and think funny. Each two-page spread has at least one of the characters, plus numerous jokes. Buy this for a party...

ROBOTS – To The Rescue Painting & Colouring Book. HarperCollins Children's pb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2005. 22x28 CMs. 20 pp. Includes paint and brush. A\$6.95. On sale now. This book also includes a pull-out painting poster four pages wide. The colouring book is set out as an illustrated story, with simple story text on the page top or bottom, with the black-and-white line illustration in the centre of the page. Children will love this, especially as it included the paints and brush. Hours of fun for them – an excellent buy for young ones.

ROBOTS – Rodney and the Rusties written by Kate Egan. HarperCollins *Entertainment* pb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2005. 210x210 mm. 22 pp. A\$8.95. On sale now. A short story in full colour featuring the characters from the movie ROBOTS. Rodney Copperbottom was on a visit to Robot City and he was soon having adventures there. The storyline is simple and the younger readers (or listeners) will be able to understand it easily. The text is clear and concise. A good gift for those who went to see the movie and like a keepsake. They will find it enjoyable.

HOW TO DRAW MANGA: Super-Deformed characters Vol 1 – Humans by Gen Sato. Graphic-Sha pb, dist in Aust by Bookwise Intl. © 2003. 128 pp. A\$27.95. On sale now. There are four

chapters to this volume: Chapter 1 answers the question “What are ‘Super-deformed Characters’”, Chapter two is titled “Super-deformed Building Blocks: The Face and Body”, Chapter three is “Super-deformed Anything and Everything” and Chapter four is “Super-deformed Character Odds and Ends”. Super-deformed characters are also called “Chibi” characters. Each chapter has sub-sections that go into more detail about the subject, for instance chapter two has sections that describe and show the faces as well as eyes, noses, mouths, ears, hairstyles, silhouettes, together with what does *not* constitute a deformed character. There are numerous illustrations to show what the author is describing and help to clarify the text. Another book to add to the Manga artist’s library.

SCARED! How to Draw Fantastic Horror Comic Characters by Steve Miller & Bryan Baugh. Watson-Guptill US4to Pb, dist in Aust by Bookwise Intl. © 2004. 143 pp. A\$39.95. On sale now.

The sections in this book are: About the Artists; Introduction; A Brief History of Horror; Exaggeration; The Dead and the Undead; Werewolves; Human Monsters; Science Gone Wrong; It Came from Outer Space; Femmes Fatales; Creature Features; and Index. There are black-and-white and coloured illustrations scattered throughout, each double-page features at least one illustration. The comics mentioned in the History are all American Comics. The chapters from Exaggeration on usually have two or three b&w sketches, and one full page colour illustration. Most of the coloured illustrations are in the modern US comics style of long arms or legs, with solid blocks of colour. The sketches on how to draw the characters start off with a basic figure/skeleton sketch, and a line drawing with more detail, and then the full colour character. A good book for anyone wanting basic background to US comics.

DRAWING CUTTING EDGE ANATOMY by Christopher Hart. Watson-Guptill US4to pb, dist in Aust by Bookwise Intl. © 2004. 144 pp. A\$39.95. On sale now.

It pays to keep an eye on the art books released by this publisher, as there are some excellent examples of comic art being released by them lately. Hart has been creating some How To comic art books, but this latest is one of his best. The subtitle is The Ultimate Reference Guide for Comic Book Artists. After the Introduction there are ten sections: The Foundation, covering the skeleton, muscles, age factors, etc; Muscular Details, The Head and Neck; The Chest and Abs; The Back and Shoulders; The Arms and Hands; The Pelvis, Legs and Feet; Elements to Practice; The Biz; The Interviews (with comic book editors), and the Index. There are plenty of b&w sketches, and many coloured illustrations to clarify the text. Hart goes in-depth in this book, for instance in detailing the face he mentions details of the bridge of the nose... A very good

guide to anatomy as relating to comic book characters. An excellent book.

PRINCIPIA by Isaac Newton, edited, with commentary, by Stephen Hawking. Running Press tpb, dist in Aust by Bookwise Intl. © 2002. 429 pp. A\$24.95. On sale now. PRINCIPIA is the first in a series of five scientific classics in the *On the Shoulders of Giants* (the others are by Copernicus, Galilei, Kepler and Einstein). There is an Introduction by Hawking, and a section on Isaac Newton's Life and Work. The rest of the book is taken up by *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. This work is described by Hawking thus: "*Principia*, the first book on theoretical physics, is roundly regarded as the most important work in the history of science and the scientific foundation of the modern worldview". Early in the first chapter Newton puts forward his three Laws, which the rest of *Principia* then goes on to prove. I was surprised, not having read it before, to find that it is easily readable, the mathematics are concise and clear (of *course*...). If you are a reader who is at all interested in the scientific method and its background then this book is a definite purchase for your library.

THE DREAM MERCHANT by Isabel Hoving, translated by Hester Velmans. Walker Books h/c, dist in Aust by Walker Books. © 2002. 638 pp. A\$39.95. On sale now. A new fantasy novel from Holland, and one which should make quite an impact, even if it turns out to be a "sleeper" novel (that is, one which sells slowly, but over a long period of time). The protagonist is a twelve-year-old boy. He is quite an ordinary boy, and when the phone rings at two thirty one morning one winter, and he answers it, the adventure that he ends up going on is one that will stretch the imagination of the reader. Josh, the boy, is asked some questions by the caller, someone who works for Gippart International, the last, how does one get into, or out of, a dream? proved to be the important one. Josh had four peculiarities – he was a collector, he could fall asleep wherever and whenever he wanted, he could always remember his dreams, and he was a thief. The book itself is beautifully presented, and has four inset red stones in the cover. Very readable, for both young and old.

GENE by Stel Pavlou. Simon & Schuster tpb, dist in Aust by Simon & Schuster. © 2005. 430 pp. A\$29.95. On sale now. When North, a New York cop, entered the Great Hall of the Museum to try to rescue the eleven-year-old boy, he did not realise that the man who had grabbed the three thousand year old Greek sword and murdered a number of Museum staff, was a man he had been fighting, on and off, for millennia. It was in the museum that North found out that the man was named Gene, and when the fugitive escaped and North set out in pursuit, the cop found that the plot thickened. Pavlou has written what he calls a historical fantasy; using history as a backdrop but altering some details to suit his story-line. The writing is

quick and engrossing and the reader will soon find themselves caught up in the action and mayhem. A well written fantasy from a mainstream author.

GEODESICA by Sean Williams, with Shane Dix. Voyager pb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 2005. 430 pp. A\$18.95. On sale now. A new novel by the Williams/Dix team, that so far has produced the Evergence trilogy and the Orphans trilogy. This new series (this book is labelled 1 on the cover) seems about to continue the trend as a very readable SF space opera series. With the destruction of the human colony Sublime by the alien artefact that had been discovered here the story follows the surviving ship that had escaped the destruction, spreading news of the find through the colonised worlds. They were awash with speculation about the artefact, and it was not too long before another expedition would be sent. This book continues in the tradition of the previous books from this team, and the reader can be sure that, if they like space opera told with verve and style, they will find this book an enjoyable read.

DIAMOND DOGS, TURQUOISE DAYS by Alastair Reynolds. Gollancz pb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 2003. 231 pp. A\$17.95. On sale now. This book consists of two novellas, those of the title: DIAMOND DOGS and TURQUOISE DAYS. The former follows the adventures of Richard Swift, the captain of the starship Diamond Dogs. When a colleague wants help in going to search Blood Spire, an alien construct, Swift says OK. But what they find is going to change him forever. The latter story is about one of the crew of another ship, Turquoise Days. Naqi is an expert on the Pattern Jugglers, who live on a waterworld and don't seem to die. This research might prove her undoing as her past catches up with her. Reynolds is a new author who has established himself as one of the new breed of British authors to watch. This is a small-size paperback which is just the right size to put into a large pocket to read on a train or plane. An engrossing novel.

CENTURY RAIN by Alastair Reynolds. Gollancz tpb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 2004. 506 pp. A\$32.95. On sale now. This science fiction novel by Reynolds is a bit different to his usual ones. It is set on two Earths – one has been devastated by a nanotechnology gone wild, the other a seeming copy of twentieth century Earth. But it isn't, as there are things going on that were not part of the history of that era. The two people who are the focus of the book are a detective named Floyd, who had been a policeman before leaving and taking up a career as a detective. The other person is Verity Auger, who is exploring the devastated world wrecked by the nanos, but who finds herself, after using an alien gateway, on what at first sight is twentieth century Earth. This novel hooked me from the start – a very readable book.

THE BEST AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION WRITING edited by **Rob Gerrand**. **Black Inc tpb, dist in Aust by Macmillan**. © var. © by the editor 2004. 615 pp. **A\$39.95**. **On sale now**. The subtitle is "A Fifty Year Collection". Rob Gerrand has done a good job in the picking of the stories included. I don't intent to list all the stories here (there are thirty altogether), but will list the authors: Frank Bryning, A Bertram Chandler, Norm Hemming, Wynne Whiteford, David Rome, Martin Loren, Jack Wodhams, Damien Broderick, Lee Harding, Michael Wilding, David Lake, George Turner, Peter Carey, Randall Flynn, Philippa Maddern, Cherry Wilder, Paul Collins, Rosaleen Love, Greg Egan, Lucy Sussex, Sean Williams, Petrina Smith, Russell Blackford, Jaleen Web, Jack Dann, Stephen Dedman, Terry Dowling, Margo Lanagan and Sean McMullen. There is also an introduction by Russell Blackford. Many of the stories here have appeared in other collections, but since they are gathered here in one volume, this is the opportunity to get them all, especially if you haven't read them all before. Great reading and a book I will keep. *Recommended.*

OTHER CURRENT + FUTURE RELEASES:

- Pan Macmillan:* *CRAWL* by Neil Asher
- HarperCollins:* *THE CRYSTAL GORGE* by David & Leigh Eddings
ASCENT by Sean Williams & Shane Dix
EXILE'S RETURN by Raymond f. Feist
- Bookwise Intl:* *STAR WARS Episode – The Phantom Menace* - Dark Horse Comics
STAR WARS Episode II – Attack of the Clones - Dark Horse Comics
STAR WARS Episode III – Revenge of the Sith - Dark Horse Comics
- Allen & Unwin:* *CHANGING PLANES* by Ursula K Leguin
WOKEN FURIES by Richard Morgan
WAS by Geoff Ryman
MOTHERSHIP by John Brosnan
THE PRESTIGE by Christopher Priest
THE COMPANIONS by Sheri S Tepper
TO SAY NOTHING ABOUT THE DOG by Connie Willis
DYING INSIDE by Robert Silverberg
ANIMA by M John Harrison
- Simon & Schuser* *GOING TO MARS* by Muirhead, Brian/Reeves-Stevens, Garfield

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