



Issue 62

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British Fantasy Society Open Night – York, August 30th.

Once again York plays host to an Open Night for the British Fantasy Society. The event will almost certainly be held (again) at York Brewery – a hugely popular venue with the regular Open Night crowd, which includes several award-winning authors.

Details will be confirmed by tomorrow at prism.britishfantasysociety.org.

The Hugo Awards 2008 – The Winners

The 2008 Hugo Awards ceremony was held at Denvention 3, the 66th World Science Fiction Convention, in Denver, Colorado on August 9th. The results were as follows:

- **Best Novel:** *The Yiddish Policemen's Union* by Michael Chabon (HarperCollins; Fourth Estate)
- **Best Novella:** "All Seated on the Ground" by Connie Willis (*Asimov's* Dec. 2007; Subterranean Press)
- **Best Novelette:** "The Merchant and the Alchemist's Gate" by Ted Chiang (Subterranean Press; *F&SF* Sept. 2007)
- **Best Short Story:** "Tideline" by Elizabeth Bear (*Asimov's* June 2007)
- **Best Related Book:** *Brave New Words: The Oxford Dictionary of Science Fiction* by Jeff Prucher (Oxford University Press)
- **Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form:** *Stardust* Written by Jane Goldman and Matthew Vaughn, Based on the novel by Neil Gaiman Illustrated by Charles Vess Directed by Matthew Vaughn (Paramount Pictures)
- **Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form:** *Doctor Who* "Blink" Written by Steven Moffat Directed by Hettie Macdonald (BBC)
- **Best Editor, Long Form:** David G. Hartwell
- **Best Editor, Short Form:** Gordon Van Gelder
- **Best Professional Artist:** Stephan Martiniere
- **Best Semiprozine:** *Locus*
- **Best Fanzine:** *File 770*
- **Best Fan Writer:** John Scalzi
- **Best Fan Artist:** Brad Foster



No, it's not a prop from this week's short story – it's the Hugo Award.

The winner of the **John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer**, sponsored by Dell Magazines and administered on their behalf by the World Science Fiction Society, is:

- Mary Robinette Kowal

There were few surprises, but it was nice to see The Dave Langford Award go to John Scalzi. Dave Langford has won the "Best Fan Writer" award every year for the last 20 years, and with good reason. Scalzi narrowly missed out on the award last year, and his win is justified – see his blog at scalzi.com/whatever – it's one of the best author blogs around.

Interestingly, Scalzi missed out on also winning the "Best Novel" award by a mere 9 votes (out of 750), and with his latest book – *Zoe's Tale* – garnering extremely favourable reviews, he could be a serious contender for the award next year. Watch this space...



The Whole Chicken

by Ellen J. Phillips

When it comes to using toys during sex, there are two schools of thought: the chicken and the feather. Using feathers, so the saying goes, is erotic. But using the whole chicken? Well, that's downright kinky.

No-one's yet explained which it is for those species which need the whole chicken just to get in the mood, so to speak.

Jarr was from one of those species.

Over seven feet of rippling jet-black muscle, and with a reptilian unhingeable jaw, he'd found his calling as a gigolo among the decadent rich who wintered along the Mediterranean.

He specialized in fellatio and cunnilingus; his three flickering tongues giving him a decided advantage over the competition.

Like a reptile, though, the whole mammalian sexual process left him cold. I only once saw him aroused, and that was enough to swear me off anything more than vanilla sex for the best part of a year.

Any species which uses prey dismemberment as foreplay doesn't come under my heading of a good fuck.

Fortunately, Jarr wasn't interested in me as either a mate or as prey. I was his handler, nothing more. I drove him to his appointments, waited in the car or in the bars and kitchens of his salons d'affaire, then drove him back to the apartment he kept in Monaco.

On rare occasions he would stay overnight in an hotel, but the cost and difficulty of bribing housekeeping each morning was enough to make him think twice about anything other than the longest of drives home.

Jarr was exotic, alien, alluring - other. The excitement of possessing him, of having him violate them in all possible ways was enough for all but the most jaded of his clients.

There were a very few, though, who, along with Jarr, resorted to 'feathers'.

Only one tried the whole chicken.

Actually, it was a snake. Some sort of constrictor which had been trained to squeeze and hold, rather than crush. A living set of handcuffs and manacles which could hold arms and legs together - or apart - in a steely embrace. It was also a noose.

Partial asphyxiation is a turn-on. I am informed it enhances the pleasure of an erection. It makes things harder, last longer. Nothing, in my admittedly inexperienced opinion, that a good cock-ring won't do, and safer.

That danger, though, is part of the appeal of strangulation, of bestiality, of Jarr.

The client, fourth cousin several times removed of a former European monarch; arrogant businessman and amoral pervert, liked his sex as close to the edge as he could get it. He put time and money into it. He had a sound-proofed apartment solely for his indulgences. His snake had taken years, and bones, to train. Jarr was prohibitively expensive, and extremely selective in his clientele.

Finally, the three intersected late one November evening.

I drove Jarr to his appointment. I had instructions to wait four hours, and I had brought a book and a gun. Just in case.

Jarr went inside the building, having to duck his head to get into the elevator. He had a one-day keycard for his client's floor.

I waited the four hours, then pocketed the gun and went to find him.

Without the keycard, I had to stop on the floor above and use the stairs down. The emergency door required a keycard to access the floor too, but firepower made an adequate substitute.

The apartment was decorated in soft, deep-pile cream carpets, with ebony-panelled wooden walls. Paintings of both an erotic and a pornographic nature hung at intervals, subtly lit by concealed spotlights.

There was a faint smell of snake; that slight musty scent which triggers predator recognition deep within the mammal brain. And overlaying it was the cloying metallic smell of blood.

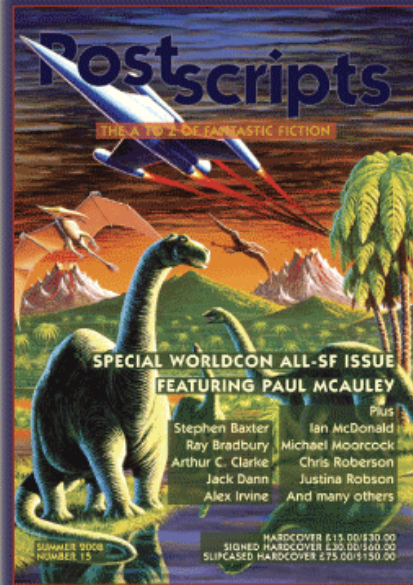
I followed it to the bedroom.

Jarr moved over the pulp which lay on the bed, his tongues flicking at the mess. One long, narrow penis was embedded in the snake's cloaca, the other in what was left of his client's anus.

From the waist down, his client was relatively intact, although his legs were bent at several sickening angles, thanks to Jarr's strong hands and the snake's constrictions.

His upper half, though... I retched in the doorway for long moments before I could speak.

"Jarr... Jarr!"



Postscripts 15

A very special triple-sized issue for Worldcon 2008.

Featuring essays and fiction by Paul McAuley • An introduction by Arthur C. Clarke • And stories by Brian Aldiss • Kelly Barnhill • Stephen Baxter • Beth Bernobich • Terry Bisson • Ray Bradbury • Keith Brooke • Eric Brown • Jack Dann • Paul Di Filippo • Scott Edelman • Matthew Hughes • Alex Irvine • Garry Kilworth • James Lovegrove • Paul McAuley • Ian McDonald • Michael Moorcock • Robert Reed • Chris Roberson • Justina Robson • Brian Stableford • Steven Utley

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Jarr turned his head and stared calmly at me through half-lidded indigo eyes. His jaw was slowly closing back into place around the severed head of the client.

Arms were spread obscenely on either side of what remained of the torso, no longer attached, and where the client's chest had been, the rib cage had been wrenched apart, lungs and organs pulped and partially eaten.

Slowly, Jarr finished rehinging his jaw, swallowing convulsively. I retched again, holding on to the doorframe with trembling hands.

Jarr withdrew from the snake, then from his client. As he pushed himself up and stood, one loose arm fell to the floor with a soft thud. The snake remained coiled around the remains of its owner.

I retreated to the hallway while Jarr showered away the blood and put on his clothes. Then he escorted me back to the elevator and out into the fresh air, and our car.

I couldn't bring myself to look at him. I didn't want to see that bulge moving slowly down towards

his stomach.

That night, I managed to drive us as far as Saint-Raphael before my shaking threatened to take us off the road. From my hotel room, I called the Embassy.

They knew. They had already dealt with it. A tragic accident, always so difficult when a human involves other species in their sexual practices.

I put down the telephone and watched the news through the night.

By dawn, the story had broken. There was no mention of alien involvement, no word of a car parked outside for hours, no photographs of Jarr. His other clientele would not tolerate the exposure.

The newsreaders roused 'sexperts' for the breakfast news bulletins. Asked why people indulged in such things, one explained that some people can only find fulfillment in 'kinky' sex.

They need the whole chicken.

If you enjoyed this week's tale, and the non-fiction that follows, please make a donation at www.hub-mag.co.uk.

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REVIEWS

Spooks: Code 9 reviewed by Lee Harris

Shadow Gate reviewed by Ellen J Allen

***Spooks: Code 9* – Episodes 1 and 2**

First broadcast on BBC1 (UK), 10th August 2008.

Starring: Joanne Froggatt, Liam Boyle, Ruta Gedmintas, Georgia Moffett

Spooks: Code 9 is a spin-off from the popular BBC MI5 series, *Spooks*. Set in 2013, the series follows the events that follow a nuclear terrorist attack on London. MI5 has been effectively wiped out, and the powers-that-be decide to relocate to the north, and replace all their highly-trained, experienced officers with Hollyoaks wannabes. You get some idea of the demographic the producers are chasing when you read the tagline: For Queen, For Country, For Kicks.

The experience of watching *Spooks: Code 9* goes something like this:

AAAARRGGGHHH!!! Pleeeeeease,

noooooooooo! Make it stooooop! Make it sto-ho-ho-hooop! I can't take any more! Untie me, pleeeeeease! Or shoot me! Shoot me! Please, just let the pain stop! I have money! Take my house! Please, no more of this!

We're not huge fans.

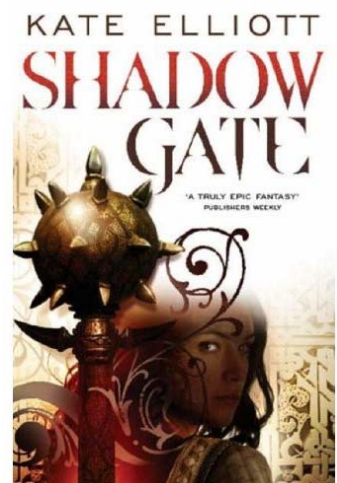


Shadow Gate (Crossroads), by Kate Elliott

£12.99

Orbit Books

Once again Kate Elliott returns to The Hundred to follow the fortunes of the disparate characters and groups introduced in Spirit Gate, Book One of



her Crossroads series. Mai and her handsome Captain, Anji; Joss and the other Reeves; Shai's quest to find Hari's remains; Keshad and his Devourer sister, Zubaidit; the Silvers: their lives intertwine in the most unexpected of ways in this second novel of the series. New characters include Nallo - a refugee-turned-unwilling reeve, and Avisha - another refugee struggling to care for her family and deal with life among the outlanders.

By far the most intriguing stories focus around the Guardians, though, as their origins and the causes of their sudden disappearance from *The Hundred* are explored. It isn't much of a spoiler to reveal the return of Marit, the Reeve murdered at the start of *Spirit Gate*, nor the return of Cornflower, the 'demon' who so captivated and repulsed the men around her. Their struggles to find themselves and their purpose within their Guardians' mantles form the core of this second book. It's both satisfying and horrific to discover Cornflower's history, how she came to be in the Empire in the first place, and her part in Mai's family history.

But while the outlanders are building their new home within *The Hundred* and Marit and Cornflower face their destiny, the rest of the Guardians have their own agendas. Is it possible to murder those who have already died once? Marit, for one, comes very close to finding out the answer when she confronts Lord Radamas.

Setting up for Book 3, *Traitor's Gate* (due 2009), Mai and Anji's child - born in rather unusual settings - presents another mystery to explore.

The outlaws and brigands who almost destroyed Olossi at the end of *Spirit Gate* have not given up: far from it. The menace is gathering, corruption is still spreading throughout *The Hundred*, and now it seems as though a spiritual malaise threatens everything that underpins life here. There is an effective counterpoint with the Empire; controlled by the Qin, it is strong militarily, socially repressive, and it would seem it is increasingly paranoid. The Red Hounds are still tracking Anji, and despite the chaos around them, they aren't about to give up.

The Reeves are rallying, now Reeve Joss has taken charge of Argent Hall, but he still has his own demons to battle, and his own agenda to pursue. The mystery of the Guardian altars still pulls at him, only now he has responsibilities other than drinking and sleeping with any woman who will have him.

There's far too much to describe in one small book review, and I wouldn't want to attempt it for fear of inadvertent spoilers. Suffice it to say that *Shadow Gate* is a very polished sequel to *Spirit Gate*, and is one of the most complex and satisfying fantasy epics I've read in a long time. Kate Elliott answers some questions raised in *Book One*, and sets up some more for *Book Three*: I'm eagerly awaiting its release.

If you have enjoyed this week's issue, please consider making a small donation at www.hub-mag.co.uk. We pay our writers, and your support is appreciated.