

# Aliens & Alibis Books

August

## This and That

--- If you know anyone who might like to read our newsletter and hasn't signed up yet, please have them contact us at [aab@sc.rr.com](mailto:aab@sc.rr.com) or at the sign up on our web site [www.aliensandalibis.com](http://www.aliensandalibis.com) .

--- Kim (our web maven) has made more changes to the web site including a marvelous picture of Bertie, store cat extraordinaire.

--- The new issue of MYSTERY SCENE is available at the store. This issue features an interview with Jacqueline Winspear who writes the wonderful and highly popular Maisie Dobbs series. If you haven't read the series yet, you are definitely missing some good books. The books in the series are: MASIE DOBBS (2003), BIRDS OF A FEATHER (2004) and PARDONABLE LIES (2005). They are set in England just after World War I, As MYSTERY SCENE puts it: "Turbulent post-World War I England comes alive in the Maisie Dobbs novels. By the way, MYSTERY SCENE is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with this issue.

--- Speaking of magazines, we have a new mystery magazine – CRIMESPREE. This magazine has not been out as long as MYSTERY SCENE but it's a nice addition. Michael Connelly and William Kent Kruger are the cover stories for this issue. CRIMESPREE has a different 'voice' than MYSTERY SCENE – possibly more informal. It also has a few fiction articles.

--- We have acquired a large selection of used science fiction and fantasy books. Check them out – 'that' book that you've always been looking for just might be on our shelves now. We also have shelved a good number of used mysteries.

--- I know that the Science Fiction and Fantasy fans are feeling left out when we talk about magazines. We are going to be carrying LOCUS MAGAZINE and FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE. We should have copies of both of those by the end of the month. If there are other magazines that you think we might carry, please let us know.

--- If you haven't already found it, there's an interesting web-zine – SCIENCE FICTION WEEKLY at <http://www.scifi.com/sfw/> .

--- The QUILL Awards were presented on October 11. To quote the web site (<http://www.quillsliteracy.org/index.html> ): *The Quill Awards are a consumer-driven celebration of the written word created to inspire reading while promoting literacy.*

HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE was the overall winner.

The mystery award went to ELEVEN ON TOP by Janet Evanovich

The Science Fiction/Fantasy award went to THE STUPIDEST ANGEL by Christopher Moore.

These awards are a result of votes by readers and the presentations are done in a 'black tie, star studded' program similar to the Emmy Awards, etc. The show was taped and will be broadcast on October 22 from 7 to 8 PM on the 14 NBC Universal Owned and Operated Television Stations.

--- We are now open 7 days a week – 10 to 6 Monday thru Saturday and 1 to 5 on Sunday.

### **Science Fiction/Fantasy that you may have missed:**

**Snow Crash**, by Neal Stephenson (Bantam Spectra, \$14)

It's hard to know where to start describing a book like Snow Crash, which is a little cyberpunk, a little comedy, a little communications theory, a little satire, and a lot of original. Stephenson's future America is divided up into gated communities and corporate enclaves, each its own little independent "country". Hiro Protagonist, samurai, pizza deliveryman, and computer hacker, and his companion, the skateboarding Y. T., search through this chaotic environment for the secret to SNOW Crash, a combination drug/computer virus that is threatening to destroy civilization in both the real and virtual worlds.

**Kingdom Come**, by Mark Waid and Alex Ross (DC Comics, \$14.95)

This graphic novel is set in the alternate-universe "Elseworlds" series, and deals with the legacy of the Silver Age superheroes, their offspring and imitators, and the return of the god-like super legends who bring order to a anarchic future. It's an examination of exactly what makes a hero, and what purposes power gets put to. And it's fun for superhero fans to look through and identify the bits in the backgrounds derived from those old comics of the Silver Age.

**Foundation**, by Isaac Asimov (Bantam Spectra, \$7.99)

A classic SF novel, Foundation describes the efforts of Hari Seldon, psychohistorian, to keep Galactic civilization alive through the coming dark ages he has foreseen. Set in a far future where Earth is only a vague memory, Foundation is almost a retelling of the fall of the Roman Empire and the Dark Ages that followed.

### **Mystery that you may have missed:**

**Demon of the Air** by Simon Levack (St. Martin's Minotaur, \$23.95)

From Publishers Weekly: Starred Review. Historical novels, let alone debuts, don't get much better than British author Levack's outstanding effort, set in the heyday of the Aztec empire two years before the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors. Already, rumors of pale, bearded men with strange weapons have reached the emperor, Montezuma. When a human sacrifice to the war-god goes wrong—the intended victim makes an ominous prophecy before jumping to his death off the Great Pyramid—the ensuing uproar threatens the power of the emperor and his chief minister, Black Feathers. Both Montezuma and Black Feathers charge Yaotl, a disgraced priest now the minister's slave, with discovering the reason for the suicide. Yaotl, who narrates this rich tale, doggedly pursues a twisted trail of plots and counterplots toward the truth. Levack makes comprehensible and familiar a society that seems at first glance alien. Sixteenth-century Mexico comes to wonderful life in this gripping, multifaceted mystery, winner of the 2004 CWA Debut Dagger Award.

**Dark Fire** by Christopher Sansom (\$24.95 Viking Adult)

From Publishers Weekly Matthew Shardlake, the marvelous hunchbacked 16th-century attorney who first appeared in Sansom's **Dissolution**, returns in this spellbinding Tudor-era tale of murder, conspiracy

and betrayal. Shardlake normally handles property cases and the occasional dangerous mission for Lord Thomas Cromwell, the king's high counselor. Now he is engaged to defend a young woman accused of a curious murder, and the case seems hopeless. The girl refuses to speak and, under English law, unless she offers a plea in court she will be slowly crushed to death. Cromwell offers Shardlake a two-week stay of execution if he will agree to undertake a secret mission. Desperate to save the girl's life, Shardlake agrees. Rumors abound of a new and terrifying weapon called Greek Fire, and Cromwell orders Shardlake to find it, along with its secret formula and the two alchemists who possess it. Before Shardlake can even speak to the alchemists, they are brutally murdered, the formula and Greek Fire go missing, and horror and death are unleashed. Fortunately, Shardlake is aided by Jack Barak, a capable rogue working for Cromwell, and his old friend, Guy Malton, a peculiar apothecary. Sansom's vivid portrayal of squalid, stinking, bustling London; the city's wealth and poverty; the brutality and righteousness of religious persecution; and the complexities of English law make this a suspenseful, colorful and compelling tale. (Note: Dark Fire is the winner of the 2005 CWA Ellis Peters Historical Dagger. We have signed copies of **Dark Fire** and trade paperbacks of **Dissolution**.)