

AUSTRALIAN



NEWS

Number 50

January 1993

Edited by

Merv Binns

Alan Stewart

PO Box 491, Elsternwick,
Victoria 3185

PO Box 222, World Trade Centre
Melbourne, Victoria 3005

Dear Readers,

For the last year or more I have been trying to find the time to produce another issue of Australian SF News but working on my book selling activities and my gardening work, plus trying to do a bit around the house has not allowed me the time do anything on the News. So Alan Stewart has come to my rescue and put together a lot of the reviews he and others had done for me and he is organising more reviews to follow. Alan has also taken over the publication of the other Australian SF news magazine Thyme and he has combined this with ASFN reviews. I am not sure how this arrangement will work out in the future but at least we have something moving.

I want to supplement my work on the SF&F Checklist, which is providing book buyers with a guide to what is being published, as well as helping me sell a few books, and I hope to do a news column for Alan which will give a round up of the major publishing events, what the authors are up to and other bits of professional and fan news. I will also make a few comments on books I have read, movies and anything in general I feel like talking about. That's the general idea at any rate, we'll just have to wait and see if I have the time to do it and Alan wants to use it.

It has not been a very happy year for SF fans. We lost some of our major authors in Isaac Asimov and Fritz Leiber, who both passed away recently, and just yesterday I heard that Melbourne fan Roger Weddall had died. Roger has been part of the scene and very active in fandom since the seventies when, as a member of the Melbourne University SF Association, he helped organise Unicon 5. We did not see eye to eye over a few things relating to that convention and it was a running joke with us. Unlike many fans Roger always went out of his way to say hello to me when we met at conventions and such. I reckon everybody liked Roger and we shall all miss him. He was the current Australian Administrator for DUFF and arrangements have been made for Phil Ware to take over. Perhaps this is a good opportunity to show our regard for Roger by all voting or definitely making a

donation to DUFF.

The Melbourne SF Club has been operating for forty years and a party was held recently to celebrate. Forty years! It seems longer. Founding member Bob McCubbin died in the 1980s and other early members have been lost in the mists of time. But Race Mathews and I renewed an old acquaintance, along with Jack Keating and Helena Roberts, both members from the 1950s. Noel Kerr, who produced the famous clubzine Somerset Gazette also attended. It would have been nice to see a few more familiar faces from the past but at least our era was represented. A new publication in the US covers the history of fandom in the 1950s and Australian fans get a mention. The book, A Wealth of Fable, is by Harry Warner Jr whose earlier work All Our Yesterdays, published by Advent in 1969, covered up to the 1950s. The new book is published by SCIFI Press in Van Nuys, California. I can get copies if wanted but I only have a small quantity on the way. Some people have asked me to write my memoirs so to speak, of Melbourne fandom and the MSFC. Quite simply, I have not had the time, but I may be able to do a little bit at a time for Thyme, watch this space...

At one time I must have come close to the greatest number of conventions attended in Australia but many people would beat me now. Since the disaster of 1985 I have not been able to afford the interstate cons in Perth, Queensland and even Sydney, let alone overseas, but I have some great memories of the past and I hope I can share some of them with you. I was recently a Guest at Conjunction 3 which was held in the Sheraton Hotel in Melbourne, where my successful, though it lost a lot of money, Cinecon was held. Not many cons have been at the Sheraton but the *Star Trek* con held in conjunction with Unicon 6, when Joe Haldeman was GoH, was there and my first brush with *Star Trek* fandom which was quite memorable. I was very pleased to be asked to be a Guest of the Convention at Conjunction 3 by today's fandom, so to speak, and I appreciated very much all the committee and attendees did for me. I have not

yet got my old car fixed but a fund is slowly growing in a special bank account and I will get there. I hope to see more of the future cons in Melbourne at any rate, and I am looking forward to the double-header Constantinople in 1994. Details of all Australian conventions will of course be given in Thyme.

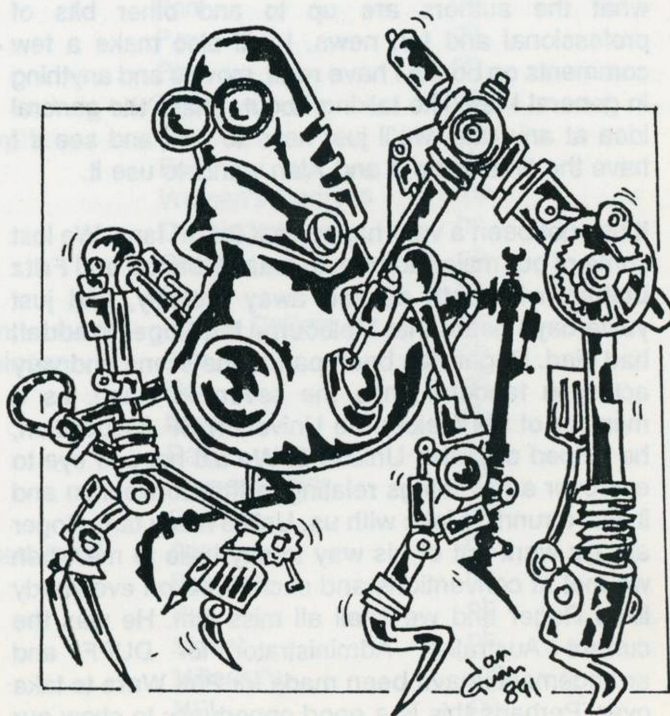
One of Science Fiction's greatest champions in Victoria has been librarian **Colin Watson**. He has been head of the Dandenong Valley Regional Library Service for a number of years. He started a club at the library in Springvale and has built up the major collection of SF books in a library in this state, possibly Australia, which is available to readers. Colin has been a regular attendee of conventions in Melbourne and he is retiring this month. I wish him the best of luck.

It sure is nostalgia time! I just realised that I saw episodes of *Star Trek* on black and white TV, before many current Trek fans were born. They were screened on Saturday nights and I usually went to the movies in the city on that night so I did not see many of them. There are still many I have probably not seen but I caught up with some at the early Trekcons. I saw the latest movie on video last week and one gets the impression that it is the last, but maybe not. I like watching Next Generation but there is something about the people in the original series and the chemistry between them which Next Generation will never have. It is a shame that the originator and producer of the series, **Gene Roddenberry**, died recently but he certainly left a legacy which will be long remembered. I must bitch about Channel 9 screening Next Generation at 11 pm. Okay, most of us have videos now, but it does seem a bit unfair for the younger generation and people who have to get up at normal working hours. I refuse to believe that it has rated that badly. I sometimes think this rating business is a pack of bullshit anyhow. Now the latest copy of my American book supplier's monthly catalog is featuring a novel based on the pilot episode of yet another Trek spin off, *Deep Space Nine - Emissary*. The book is due for release in February next year but God only knows when we will see the telemovie itself.

As for the Australian publishing and writing scene, Aurealis magazine is now up to its ninth issue and still going strong. Rumors of other mags have been heard in the past but nothing has eventuated. Melbourne horror and dark fantasy lover **Chris A Masters** continues to promote the genre with his magazine EOD with seven issues so far. Many of us in the amateur press are publishing reviews of SF&F books, but with Australian SF Review having ceased publication it is good to see a new, well presented publication Sirius having a go at seriously discussing and reviewing SF&F literature. The first issue I have seen, dated September 1992, features contributions by the national Library's **Colin Steele** and well known

Sydney identity **Graham Stone**, plus an article on the work of David Eddings and a Charles L Grant checklist. I hope editor **Gary Wyatt** can keep up the good work. Meanwhile **Peter McNamara** is going good and strong with Aphelion Publications. His schedule is full and although he is still looking at manuscripts it may be a long time before he can publish. Even the authors Aphelion is promoting are producing more than they can handle. Those authors are **George Turner**, **Terry Dowling**, **Sean McMullen**, **Ian McAuley Hails** and **Damien Broderick** who have all had books published by Aphelion, except for Broderick whose The Sea's Furthest End will be published next year. Another title for 1993 is Terry Dowling's Twilight Beach and a fourth book by him will be published much later. His Rynosseros is practically out of print. An anthology of Australian SF will hopefully be available for release at Constantinople in 1994. I know **George Turner** has a couple of books in the pipeline with his Destiny Maker listed for February release from William Morrow in the US. Sean McMullen and **Paul Collins** have been active in the short fiction field and **Greg Egan's** novel Quarantine was published by Legend this year. More on how Australian writers are going next issue.

I would like to look at the overall SF&F publishing situation for the year. Who has what coming out or published and the trends. When I look back over my forty years involvement in reading and selling SF I still cannot get over the way SF&F has grown. More books are published in one month now than were out in a year in the 1950s. It's good to see that many of the authors then are still with us and doing well and there are many new authors with new ideas and values. I hope you are enjoying it as much as I am.



1993 Author Tours

Terry Pratchett, noted for the hilarious 'Discworld' series, the 'Nome' series and helping out with divertissements such as Good Omens, will be Guest of Honor at Swancon 18 in Perth at Easter.

Dan Simmons, Hugo and World Fantasy Award winning author, will be touring Australia early in the year. A signing has been arranged at Minatour Books, Melbourne, for Thursday 4 March 1993.

Robert Jordan, author of the 'Wheel of Time' series, will be touring Australia at Easter attending Swancon 18. A signing session has been arranged at Minatour Books, Melbourne, for Tuesday 13 April 1993.

Julian May and **Larry Niven** will be Guests of Honor at Defcon '93 in Wellington, New Zealand, early June.

Local Releases

hc = hard cover

tpb = trade paperback (C format)

pb = paperback (mass market, B format)

December 1992

<i>Fractal Mode</i>	Piers Anthony	Harper Collins	tpb	\$19.95
<i>Phaze Doubt</i>	Piers Anthony	NEL	pb	\$11.95
<i>The Edge of Tomorrow</i>	Isaac Asimov	Tor (Pan)	pb	\$10.95
<i>Green Shadows, White Whale</i>	Ray Bradbury	Harper Collins	hc	\$35.00
<i>The Death Guard</i>	Phillip George Chadwick	Penguin	tpb	\$16.95
<i>George Lucas: The Creative Impulse</i>	Charles Champlin	Virgin	hc	\$39.95
<i>Battletech 4: Wolf Pack</i>	Robert N Charrette	Penguin	pb	\$13.95
<i>Triton</i>	Samuel R Delany	Grafton	pb	\$11.95
<i>Valis</i>	Philip K Dick	Grafton	pb	\$11.95
<i>The Penultimate Truth</i>	Philip K Dick	Grafton	pb	\$11.95
<i>Ubik</i>	Philip K Dick	Grafton	pb	\$11.95
<i>Pawn of Prophecy</i>	David Eddings	Bantam Press	hc	\$29.95
<i>Queen of Sorcery</i>	David Eddings	Bantam Press	hc	\$29.95
<i>Zimiamvia: A Trilogy</i>	E R Eddison	Dell	tpb	\$18.95
<i>Quarantine</i>	Greg Egan	Legend	tpb	\$17.95
<i>Shadowrun 4: Secrets of Power</i>	Nigel Findlay	Penguin	pb	\$12.95
<i>Sherwood</i>	Parke Godwin	Avon	pb	\$11.95
<i>The Anubis Murders</i>	Gary Gyax	Roc	pb	\$12.95
<i>The Fetch</i>	Robert Holdstock	Penguin	pb	\$12.95
<i>Doctor Who: The Sixties</i>	D Howe	Virgin	hc	\$34.95
<i>Hidden Echoes</i>	Mike Jeffries	Harper Collins	tpb	\$19.95
<i>The Shadow Rising</i>	Robert Jordan	Orbit	tpb	\$24.95
<i>Strange Days</i>	Patricia Kennealy	Harper Collins	hc	\$39.95
<i>Damia</i>	Anne McCaffrey	Bantam Press	tpb	\$18.95
<i>Jack the Bodiless</i>	Julian May	Pan	pb	\$12.95
<i>Only You Can Save Mankind</i>	Terry Pratchett	Doubleday	hc	\$17.95
<i>Nightmare Child</i>	Daniel Ransom	St Martins (Pan)	pb	\$ 8.95
<i>Red Mars</i>	Kim Stanley Robinson	Harper Collins	hc	\$32.95
<i>Kingdoms of the Wall</i>	Robert Silverberg	Harper Collins	hc	\$32.95
<i>Dark Voices 4</i>	D Sutton & S Jones (eds)	Pan	pb	\$12.95
<i>Illustrated Hobbit</i>	J R R Tolkien	Harper Collins	hc	\$35.00
<i>Blackbird in Amber</i>	Freda Warrington	NEL	pb	\$12.95
<i>Blackbird in Twilight</i>	Freda Warrington	NEL	pb	\$12.95
<i>A Taste of Blood</i>	Freda Warrington	Pan	tpb	\$19.95
<i>Indispensable Calvin & Hobbes</i>	Bill Watterson	Penguin	tpb	\$17.95
<i>V: Path to Conquest</i>	Howard Weinstein	Tor (Pan)	pb	\$ 8.95

January 1993

<i>Whispers in the Dark</i>	Jonathan Aycliffe	Harper Collins	hc	\$32.95
<i>Vermilion Sands</i>	J G Ballard	Phoenix	pb	\$14.95
<i>The Voices of Time</i>	J G Ballard	Phoenix	pb	\$14.95
<i>Indigo 8: Aisling</i>	Louise Cooper	Grafton	pb	\$10.95
<i>The Making of Dracula</i>	F F Coppola & J V Hart	Pan	tpb	\$19.95
<i>Name of the Beast</i>	Daniel Easterman	Harper Collins	hc	\$35.00
<i>Castle of Wizardry</i>	David Eddings	Bantam Press	hc	\$29.95
<i>Magician's Gambit</i>	David Eddings	Bantam Press	hc	\$29.95
<i>Born to Exile</i>	Phyllis Eisenstein	Grafton	pb	\$11.95
<i>In the Red Lords Reach</i>	Phyllis Eisenstein	Harper Collins	hc (tpb)	\$35.00 (\$19.95)
<i>Shadows in the Watchgate</i>	Mike Jeffries	Grafton	pb	\$11.95
<i>A Song for Arbonne</i>	Guy Gavriel Kay	Harper Collins	hc	\$35.00
<i>Hawk's Grey Feather</i>	Patricia Kennealy	Grafton	pb	\$12.95
<i>Time of Omens</i>	Katherine Kerr	Grafton	pb	\$11.95
<i>Seven Chronicles of Narnia</i>	C S Lewis	Lion	pb	\$ 7.95 each
<i>Spawn of the Winds</i>	Brian Lumley	Grafton	pb	\$10.95
<i>All the Weyrs of Pern</i>	Anne McCaffrey	Bantam Press	pb	\$11.95
<i>Generation Warriors</i>	A McCaffrey & E Moon	Orbit	pb	\$12.95
<i>Eternal Champion 1: Von Bek</i>	Michael Moorcock	Millenium	hc (tpb)	\$39.95 (\$24.95)
<i>2: The Eternal Champion</i>	Michael Moorcock	Millenium	hc (tpb)	\$39.95 (\$24.95)
<i>Eternal Champion 3: Hawkmoon</i>	Michael Moorcock	Millenium	hc (tpb)	\$39.95 (\$24.95)
<i>Eternal Champion 4: Corum</i>	Michael Moorcock	Millenium	hc (tpb)	\$39.95 (\$24.95)
<i>Flight in Yktor</i>	Andre Norton	Tor (Pan)	pb	\$ 8.95
<i>Truckers</i>	Terry Pratchett	Corgi	pb	\$ 6.95
<i>Kingmaker</i>	Tony Shillitoe	Pan	pb	\$12.95
<i>Road to Middle Earth</i>	Tom Shippey	Grafton	tpb	\$19.95
<i>The Bram Stoker Omnibus</i>	Bram Stoker	Orion	hc (tpb)	\$39.95 (\$24.95)
<i>The Winds of the Wastelands</i>	Antony Swithin	Fontana	pb	\$12.95
<i>Poems and Stories</i>	J R R Tolkien	Harper Collins	hc	\$44.95
<i>Facets</i>	Walter Jon Williams	Grafton	pb	\$11.95
<i>Shadow Maze</i>	Jonathan Wylie	Corgi	pb	\$11.95

February 1993

<i>After the King</i>	M H Greenberg (editor)	Pan	pb	\$14.95
<i>Dracula: Prince of Darkness</i>	M H Greenberg (editor)	Daw (Penguin)	pb	\$ 8.95
<i>The Dragon Reborn</i>	Michael Jordan	Orbit	pb	\$12.95
<i>The Shores of Death</i>	Michael Moorcock	Penguin	pb	\$11.95
<i>A Year Near Proxima Centauri</i>	Michael Martin	Corgi	tpb	\$12.95
<i>The Dragon Token</i>	Melanie Rawn	Pan	pb	\$12.95
<i>Battletech: Natural Selection</i>	Michael Stackpole	Penguin	pb	\$12.95

Reviews

Reviewers: PE = Paul Ewins TF = Terry Frost BH = Beverley Hope
 L = LynC NP = Nick Price AS = Alan Stewart
 JT = Jools Thatcher

Glass Reptile Breakout and Other Australian Speculative Stories Edited by Van Ikin

CSAL (University of Western Australia) trade pb
 1990 161 pages \$14.95

AS This recent anthology of Australian fiction, quirkily arranged in alphabetical order by author, collects eighteen tales. Established names such as George Turner and Jack Wodhams are reached rather late when reading straight through; with rising star Greg Egan about the middle; and Sue Isle and Stephen Dedman, emerging from the ranks of fandom, lost in the centre somewhere. It's probably just coincidence that those last three also live in Western Australia.

With most of the stories previously published after 1982, and offering three originals, this collection delivers a view of what's happening in Australian SF in the late '80s. Strong development in the field is indicated by the fact that eighteen authors are represented, and the diversity of tales shows that the title 'speculative' is appropriate.

What's happening is that virtually anything goes. From Russell Blackford's almost cyberpunkish *Glass Reptile Breakout*, through the whimsical fantasy realism of *The Lipton Village Society* from Lucy Sussex, via the weird land of the Ab'O and *Vanities* by Terry Dowling to Sean McMullen's *The Colours of the Masters* with its hi-tech detective work, all the varieties are here.

The collection has a real home-grown Australian feel, with the awkwardness, and intricate details juxtaposed with plain narrative, of real 'folk art'. It's probably more suited to sampling, rather than read straight through at a sitting, and is worth adding to your shelves. There's too few current Australian SF anthologies like this around at the moment.

BH

Dragon Star 2: The Dragon Token by Melanie Rawn

Daw hc February 1992 560 pages \$US 20.00
ISBN 0-593-02554-7

Where I was not so impressed with *Stronghold*, book 1 in the 'Dragon Star' series, this second book really moves along and recaptures the reader's enthusiasm where it might have waned previously. It is somewhat misleading to see this book as only second in the series, however. To fully understand the twistings of the plot and the full complexity of family relationships (rather like in a Viking saga), one needs to have read the 'Dragon Prince' trilogy as well. This, though, is an action to be encouraged.

Melanie Rawn writes about characters that are easy to love, so when one of the most significant characters is killed, one really does feel the loss. In *The Dragon Token* there are a considerable number of characters who spend time struggling with the absence of this man and their reminiscences make the reader mourn for him as well. In fact the ways people deal with grief and what they are forced to resort to in times of war are the major themes of the novel. They are covered with a keen insight into the variances in human nature.

If you have read and loved the 'Dragon Prince' trilogy and *Stronghold*, then I suggest you will also love *The Dragon Token*. It does, however, end on a cliff hanger so be prepared to get hold of at least one more book after this.

TF

Quarantine by Greg Egan

Legend (Century Hutchinson) tpb December 1992
219 pages \$17.95 ISBN 0-7126-9870-1

Greg Egan in his first science fiction novel (but not his first novel) hasn't gone for an easy option. Blending the science fiction and detective genres is no simple gig. They are two forms that at first glimpse would seem made for each other - being essentially and ostensibly based on logic of some kind. Also, the best of each is partly a commentary on contemporary society and its ills. But too frequently, attempts at a marriage are failures which were better off annulled by the publisher. To an admirable extent, Greg Egan has avoided the pitfalls and produced a solid blending which, while it doesn't embrace the paradigms of the two genres completely, consciously ignores or gainsays them.

Thirty three years before the action starts, the stars went out. The solar system is cut off from the rest of the universe. Of course, the loonies breed like bacteria in the petrie dish that the system has become. In this world where software has become mindware, a Private Eye is hired to find a missing woman, Laura Andrews. (The woman's name is evocative, too. One of the classic films of the noir genre is *Laura* and Dana Andrews played the detective in it. I don't know whether the connection is conscious or not, but it chimes the right note.) The PI takes the job and finds himself rapidly into a situation beyond his abilities and experience.

Quarantine's protagonist, Nick Stavrianos, breaks a number of the dicta laid down by Raymond Chandler for the hard boiled detective. He's an alienated, self-deluding character who, due to technological intervention, doesn't stay true to himself in the manner of Chandler's Marlowe. Nor is he the best man in his world. Stavrianos stands uneasily between the crime-fiction protagonist and the amoral leather-jackets of cyberpunk. But that unease is the character's, not the reader's. Stavrianos actually goes further than the crime fiction heroes. In traditional hard-boiled detective novels, society is opened up to show its seamy underbelly and true nature. In *Quarantine*, reality is.

Egan has done his homework, both in theoretical physics and nanotechnology. If he slips anywhere, it doesn't particularly clang tinnily for this reader. I look forward to whatever he does next.

PE

The Thief of Always by Clive Barker

Harper Collins hc November 1992 \$19.95 229 pages ISBN 0-00-224144-7

The Thief of Always is best summed up as a book about children, but not necessarily for children. Although it is readily accessible to young readers, with none of the sex and graphic violence of Barker's other works, I am left with the feeling that its intended audience is adults nostalgic for their childhood. The plot is straight forward and could have almost been penned by Enid Blyton, were it not for the powerful force of Barker's imagination stretching and distorting things subtly to give a book that looks like a children's story but is strangely appealing to the adult reader. In the best children's book tradition there are numerous illustrations, also by Clive Barker, ranging from the mundane to the bizarre. While a definite departure from the complex and detailed worlds of Barker's previous fantasies, the very simplicity of The Thief of Always is perhaps what makes it so enjoyable to read. The combination of a simple narrative and Barker's imagination made this a delight to read and I would recommend this book to anyone.

NP

Born to Exile by Phyllis Eisenstein

Grafton tpb June 1992 172 pages \$19.95 ISBN 0-246-13729-0

A thought proving book. Was it the first or second of January when Jerry Pournelle gave the opinion that it was 'The best fantasy novel I have read this year'?

The book is a pedestrian tale of a poor orphan, Alaric, discovering his true high born heritage after following him through several 'real life' experiences. His experiences as a young boy and a minstrel in the real world are used to contrast the values of the society that he is to become part of. His 'real life' experiences have a detached air about them. There is a feeling of going through the motions of a set of cliched experiences to build up the character.

A major feature of his character is the ability to teleport, this ability of his puts him outside of the normal man. This cross he has to bear allows him to make observations about the use of terms by the common people like witchcraft to explain a real characteristic.

The book comes across like an overdrawn character setting which has been spun out into a

book. The book begs a sequel not just from the ending but in that there is so little real content or value in it. The thinness of ideas and no indication of any deeper issues to be developed in subsequent books prompts for no breath holding on the sequels arrival.

In summary if you like cliched characters and situations, seeing a character obviously built up for a series of books with little promise of any thought provocation then this is for you.

AS

The Gap Into Power: A Dark and Hungry God Arises by Stephen Donaldson

Harper Collins hc November 1992 \$35.00 479 pages ISBN 0-00-223829

In the third, and longest, of his 'Gap:&' series, Stephen Donaldson confines the action to a few days in time and really one location in space. Coupled with no new major characters or technological developments the reader feels sort of at home, given that they've read the first two volumes. This novel works as part of a series, and a transition piece at that, but needs the information supplied in prior novels to work at all.

The background civilisation and culture, even the alien one, remain ill-defined and vague. All the reader really finds out about is the thoughts of the main characters, and sometimes you wish you hadn't. Most of the people Donaldson portrays are not nice, sometimes due to their physical or emotional powerless situations, and some of the actions they undertake or order done are downright ugly. The future doesn't need to be this unpleasant but there's no indication that anywhere in this created future, even far off screen, is there a peaceful pastoral haven.

This effort, marketed as 'science fiction', doesn't measure up to either the standards set by Donaldson with his earlier *Thomas Covenant* fantasy series or the current SF scene as typified by Greg Bear or David Brin. Donaldson knows where the series is heading, given his revelation in the Author's Note in volume one that *Der Ring des Nibelungen* served as inspiration, but his characters don't appear to and this reader certainly doesn't. This volume seems to be merely the characters changing physical location and groupings, marking time, and only in the final chapter does a major dislocation in events occur.

Not the best storyline, or prose, not even Donaldson's best writing, The Gap Into Power extends a series probably best left alone.

L

JT

Raising the Stones by Sheri S Tepper

Grafton pb October 1992 620 pages \$12.95
ISBN 0-586-21212-4

"Once on a time was a man Samasnier who told himself there was a secret hidden under a stone .."

This is a story of a people adopted by a God of their own making, and one misfit who has been specially adopted by the God. It is a very human story of the culture clashes which humans create when extremes are allowed to persist. The Gods, although very much alive, are merely the instruments of change which the various groups need to work through their differences.

Raising the Stones is set in the same universe as Grass but is completely independent although Marjorie Westriding does make an appearance in legend as she searched for the Arbai. She became the founder of the Baidee (New Bai) sect and is remembered as Morgori Oestrydingh. It is a far more complex novel than Grass, but very rewarding for the extra effort. Easily the best book I read in 1992.

AS

Red Mars by Kim Stanley Robinson

Harper Collins hc December 1992 504 pages
\$32.95 ISBN 0-24-613881-5

Red Mars tells of the colonisation of Mars and the initial terraforming carried out in the early 21st century. Robinson uses feasible technical developments such as gene spliced micro-organisms and large teleoperated and robotic machines and even the construction of a space elevator from orbit to the surface of Mars. This forms a necessary technical backdrop for the events and times he describes, but it is the people who drive the plot, they're what he necessarily focuses on and ultimately they decide the fate of Mars, even within the forty years covered in this book.

Robinson's technical extrapolation comes across as reasonable and practical. Red Mars contains a lot of the nuts and bolts of how such a colonisation would proceed. The assumptions of Earthly political events which occur in the same time span might not be so accurate, the people factor again. I'd question some of the details, like just how the initial reactionary band of settlers managed to survive, but the technical possibilities explored are entertaining and thought provoking. Recommended as a good hard SF novel of a possible near future.

Damia by Anne McCaffrey

Bantam Press 1992 tpb \$18.95
ISBN 0-593-023-757

The idea of telepathic, teleportive people is not a new one, yet Anne McCaffrey still manages to come up with new and entertaining twists, and if you liked The Rowan you may find Damia has a similar charm. Damia is "feature" rather than "star" in this book and figures by virtue of her influence and effect on Afra, a talent working with The Rowan on Callisto Station.

Damia is daughter to The Rowan and Jeff Raven, both powerful talents. Their daughter's talent is potentially much stronger and manifests itself in astonishing ways. Damia is sent to Deneb and begins her Prime training in a special school started by her grandmother. Afra, who is just a little too good to be true and never one to take advantage of a situation, is emotionally involved with Damia.

I was left with the feeling that the story was contrived to take the focus from The Rowan and begin a new thread and Damia was created to serve as foil for the character of Afra, rather than the other way around. Taken on face value however, which is how I feel all fiction should be judged, Damia is a light likeable story...recommended reading for those with a few hours to spare. The cover by Romas is worth a second look too.

AS

Lord Kelvin's Machine by James P Blaylock

Ace pb August 1992 244 pages \$US 4.50
ISBN 0-441-49972-4

In a tour-de-force through Victorian England and beyond, James P Blaylock spins an entertaining story and one of the better treatments of the consequences of timetravel. His descriptions of the machinations of some members of the Royal Society and mysterious constructions, in particular the effects of their activations, add delight and wonder to a basic pursuit of revenge tale. It's when this pursuit carries into a fantasy world that Blaylock's imagination can rule.

If you like Blaylock's earlier works, or the stories of Tim Powers, you'll certainly enjoy this one. Historical details and personages, exciting chases and conflicts, there's plenty to keep you reading. It even has an interesting cover, relevant to the story, and is recommended.

AS

Only You Can Save Mankind by Terry Pratchett

Doubleday (Transworld) hc December 1992
174 pages \$17.95 ISBN 0-385-40308-9

Terry Pratchett's latest work, it's really a novella, focuses on video games and takes the chance to poke fun at a lot of the foibles and fads of contemporary western society. With a adolescent male protagonist the text necessarily expounds the

expected cliched assumptions of that type and surprises such as the 'ace' video game player turning out to be female are a bit of a disappointment.

"A bit of a disappointment" sums up the book if you're expecting more Discworld type adventures and humor. The large print 174 page canvas of this novel allows only a basic straight plotline with no room for the cute background description and endearing embellishments that surround Rincewind and company. A reasonable generic book, but not a reasonable 'Terry Pratchett book' for his fans.

Books Received

<i>Fractal Mode</i>	Piers Anthony	Harper Collins	tpb
<i>Mercycle</i>	Piers Anthony	Ace	pb
<i>Duel of Dragons</i>	Gael Baudino	Roc	pb
<i>Lord Kelvin's Machine</i>	James P Blaylock	Ace	pb
<i>Chanur's Legacy</i>	C J Cherryh	Daw	hc
<i>Zimiamvia: A Trilogy</i>	E R Eddison	Dell	tpb
<i>Guilt Edged Ivory</i>	Doris Egan	Daw	pb
<i>Quarantine</i>	Greg Egan	Legend	tpb
<i>Born to Exile</i>	Phyllis Eisenstein	Grafton	pb
<i>Christmas Bestiary</i>	R M & M H Greenberg (eds)	Daw	pb
<i>The Anubis Murders</i>	Gary Gygas	Roc	pb
<i>Deep Freeze</i>	Zach Hughes	Daw	pb
<i>Shadows in the Watchgate</i>	Mike Jeffries	Grafton	pb
<i>A Song for Arbonne</i>	Guy Gavriel Kay	Harper Collins	hc
<i>Hawk's Grey Feather</i>	Patricia Kennealy	Grafton	pb
<i>Winds of Change</i>	Mercedes Lackey	Daw	hc
<i>All the Weyrs of Pern</i>	Anne McCaffrey	Corgi	pb
<i>Crystal Line</i>	Anne McCaffrey	Bantam Press	hc
<i>Damia</i>	Anne McCaffrey	Bantam Press	tpb
<i>The Eye of the Hunter</i>	Dennis L McKierman	Roc	tpb
<i>A Year Near Proxima Centauri</i>	Michael Martin	Corgi	tpb
<i>Circle of Light</i>	Martin Middleton	Pan	pb
<i>Sphere of Influence</i>	Martin Middleton	Pan	pb
<i>Triad of Darkness</i>	Martin Middleton	Pan	pb
<i>Trust Territory</i>	Janet & Chris Morris	Roc	hc
<i>The Catswold Portal</i>	Shirley Rousseau Murphy	Roc	hc
<i>Red Dwarf</i>	Grant Naylor	Roc	pb
<i>Illicit Passage</i>	Alice Nunn	Women's Redress	tpb
<i>Only You Can Save Mankind</i>	Terry Pratchett	Doubleday	hc
<i>The Brentford Triangle</i>	Robert Rankin	Corgi	pb
<i>The Dragon Token</i>	Melanie Rawn	Daw	hc
<i>Red Mars</i>	Kim Stanley Robinson	Harper Collins	hc
<i>Starseed</i>	Spider & Jeanne Robinson	Ace	pb
<i>Bazil Broketail</i>	Christopher Rowley	Roc	pb
<i>Gatherer of Clouds</i>	Sean Russell	Daw	pb
<i>The Initiate Brother</i>	Sean Russell	Daw	pb
<i>Kingdoms of the Wall</i>	Robert Silverberg	Harper Collins	hc
<i>Pluto in the Morning Light</i>	Robert Silverberg	Grafton	tpb
<i>The Crafters 2</i>	C Stasheff & B Fawcett (eds)	Ace	pb
<i>The Winds of the Wasteland</i>	Antony Swinton	Fontana	pb
<i>Chains of Light</i>	Quentin Thomas	Roc	pb
<i>Universal Soldier</i>	Robert Tine	Signet	pb
<i>A Fire Upon the Deep</i>	Vernor Vinge	Millenium	tpb
<i>A Blackbird in Darkness</i>	Freda Warrington	NEL	pb
<i>Shadow Maze</i>	Jonathan Wylie	Corgi	pb