

2006 Gaylactic Spectrum Awards - Best Novel

Winner

***Cagebird* by Karin Lowachee**

Warner Aspect Books ISBN: 0-446-61508-0

Told in flashbacks and in-the-moment scenes, Lowachee spins the disturbing story of Yuri Kirov – geisha, pirate, protégé, predator, prey. When his home is destroyed by an interstellar enemy, Yuri's family is separated by relief workers and he ends up in a dead end refugee camp. Recruited by pirates pretending to be merchants, Yuri takes up a new life aboard a ship he quickly learns is not what it seems. Hand picked by the captain as his protégé, Yuri is trained to lead, fight, kill, and serve as a sexual escort. Yuri's coming of age under the tutelage of a pederastic pirate captain leaves deep and powerful scars on Yuri's psyche as he grows to become a pirate captain himself.

Years later Yuri is in prison and offered a chance to earn his freedom by working with a shadowy government agency. Plots within plots, hidden agendas, dangerous former rivals, and interstellar politics are nowhere near as difficult for Yuri as coming to terms with his past, overcoming his emotional devastation and learning to love. But anything may be possible if only he and his prison cellmate and potential lover can survive.

Short List

***Bite Club* by Hal Bodner**
Alyson Books ISBN: 1-555-83903-7

In West Hollywood, where the bizarre is commonplace and anything goes, an 800-year-old vampire stalks his prey undetected until Coroner Becky O'Brien sends an SOS to her old med school buddy. Christopher, a 245-yr-old vampire detective, and his hunky and unabashedly gay partner Troy run to the rescue of Becky and WeHo, making a few friends of the night along the way. Author Hal Bodner's first outing is a romp of a mystery with a hilarious bite.

***Smoke and Mirrors* by Tanya Huff**
DAW Books ISBN: 0-756-40348-0

Tony Foster, former hustler and lover of the vampire detective Henry Fitzroy, is a budding wizard and Production Assistant in Vancouver's television industry working on a syndicated low-budget vampire detective show starring the man of his unfulfilled dreams. On a location shoot in a classic haunted house a supernatural evil turns television fantasy into a terror-filled fight to survive until dawn as the house begins playing havoc with the minds of those locked inside. Tony must reveal his growing magical talents to protect his friends and try to figure out just what's starting to happen between himself and his handsome crush, Lee.

***The Summer Isles* by Ian R. Macleod**
Aio Publishing ISBN: 1-933-08300-X

In this poignant alternate history the Allies lost World War I and England suffered a devastating near-collapse in the 1920's and 30's resulting in the rise of a charismatic leader and a fascist government that "relocates" Jews and sends homosexuals to treatment centers. Griffin Brooke, an Oxford Don, negotiates survival by living a public life as a teacher and the dark and hidden life of a gay man. Griff carries the memory of his great love, a man he thought he lost to the Great War but who may have come back from the front with a new identity and a destiny. A lyrical exploration of prejudice and persecution and the endurance of love.

***Dragon's Eye* by James Hetley**
Ace Books ISBN: 0-441-01328-7

The town of Stonefort has secrets...selkies, smugglers, witches, magical houses, and teens with powers they don't understand would be enough to make things interesting for town constable Kate Rowley. Add drug dealers, a rebellious daughter, an evil sorcerer, and her conflicted feelings for Alice Haskell, the witch-keeper of the Haskell House, and things get messy. Kate must learn to embrace her feelings, and magic, if any of them are to survive the showdown.

***The Strange Adventures of Rangergirl*
by Tim Pratt**
Bantam Spectra ISBN: 0-553-38338-8

Marzi manages an odd Santa Cruz coffeehouse at night and draws her cow-punk comic book, *The Strange Adventures of Rangergirl*, by day. When her comic comes to life, she is forced to confront the strange occurrences that led her to drop out of art school and get institutionalized several years ago. Now the superheroine at the heart of her own work, she recruits her best friend Lindsey and Lindsey's girlfriend Alice to help her save the world from an evil monster with a penchant for the dramatic. A wonderfully original story about the power of creativity.

***The Vesuvius Club* by Mark Gatiss**
Scribner ISBN: 0-743-28394-5

This cheeky, clever steampunk-era spy thriller mixes attitude, quirky characters, and manners in a delicious romp. Lucifer Box is an artist, a rogue, and one of His Majesty's most talented secret agents. Dead scientists, secret societies, false murder charges, sex clubs, volcanoes, transsexuals, femmes fatale, and Lucifer's charming and insatiable (for action and sex) new valet Charlie Jackpot will keep Lucifer on his toes...and back...across England and Italy. Irreverent, fresh, witty, and decadent, it's as if Oscar Wilde had scribed a James Bond story.