

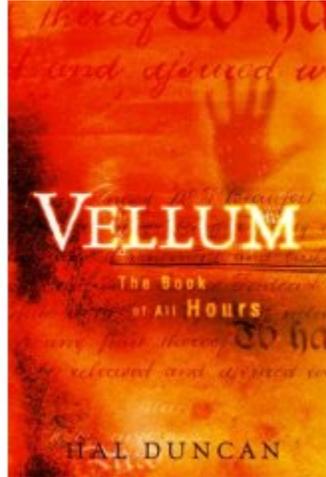
2007 Gaylactic Spectrum Awards
Best Novel

Winner

Vellum, The Book of All Hours

by **Hal Duncan**

Del Rey Books ISBN: 0-345-48731-1



Many books are called mind-blowing, few are truly so. Duncan's debut novel integrates ancient Sumerian mythology, Jungian archetypes, genre and pop culture references, nanotechnology, parallel worlds, the war of the angels, linguistics, and modern pop-culture in an intensely complex story of love, interconnectedness and the search for meaning. Incorporating stunning imagery, a gift for language, and an intensely engaging story, *Vellum* is a challenging *and* rewarding read. Characters appear and reappear in different guises, in different times, in different worlds – yet everything moves toward a single unified endpoint.

When a university student discovers that a mysterious artifact – The Book of All Hours - with a connection to his family is real, his world and the universe both turn upside down. Within the pages of the Book is a map of reality and unreality that will take him and his friends in myriad directions. Their choices could rewrite the fabric of the universe.

Many of Duncan's characters are gay, and it is in fact a gay love story at the heart of *Vellum's* plot. While *Vellum* is not a book to be read casually, this expectation defying novel is well worth the investment of reading time.

(A sequel, *Ink*, was published in 2007)

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Short List

Carnival by Elizabeth Bear

Bantam Spectra Books ISBN: 0-553-58904-0

Interstellar intrigue and betrayals, as Old Earth ambassador-spies (Michelangelo Osiris Leary Kusanagi-Jones and Vincent Katharinessen) play a dangerous game of double-dealing between their ostensible employers and the independent world of New Amazonia. Kusanagi-Jones and Vincent have been lovers for 40 years (despite the harsh restrictions against same-sex relationships on the worlds ruled by Old Earth), but have been separated for many years, following a previous less-than-successful assignment. Now they have been reunited to subvert New Amazonia, a fiercely independent world where women are the dominant gender and “gentle” men are an accepted part of the social scene.

The Growing by Susanne Beck & Okasha Skat’si

P.D. Publishing ISBN: 0-975-43669-4

In the not too distant future, humanity’s reliance on service androids will turn to catastrophe when the androids revolt and humanity comes under devastating attack. If humanity is to survive, it will take the courage of a ragtag group of military and civilian people – many of whom happen to be GLBT – and the help of the spirits of the land. With elements reminiscent of *Battlestar Galactica*, this novel is a classic science fiction story with major GLBT elements.

Smoke and Ashes by Tanya Huff

DAW Books ISBN: 0-756-40415-0

The latest exploits of Tony Foster, wizard-in-training, in the third novel of Huff’s contemporary fantasy series (following *Smoke and Mirrors*). Sexy stuntwoman Leah Burnett is the means whereby the demon Ryne Cyratane can return to rule the world, specifically when she dies! All of Tony’s blossoming wizardly powers are put to the test as he tries to save the world from demonic domination. Supernatural adventure with plenty of sex, violence, and sarcastic humor.

Spin Control by Chris Moriarty

Bantam Spectra Books ISBN: 0-553-58625-4

A near-future thriller set in the same universe as Moriarty’s previous novel, *Spin State*. Arkady, a RostovSyndicate clone, has defected to Israel and would do anything to save fellow clone Arkasha, who is considered a deviant (under the rigid standards of Syndicate society) and has been confined to a “re-norming” center. Arkady and Arkasha were partners on an ill-fated survey mission to the planet Novalis, where Arkady came into possession of two pieces of information: one very valuable, the other damaging. The pair also fell in love. When Arkasha is kidnapped, Arkady must travel to Earth and sell his knowledge to the highest bidder to rescue Arkasha. Instead of buying the weapon, however, Israel sets off a bidding war for Arkady’s secrets. Conspiracies abound.

Dragon’s Teeth by James Hetley

Ace Books ISBN: 0-441-01431-3

Continuation of the story of the shape-shifting Morgans and the Haskell witches, as begun in the previous novel *Dragon’s Eye*. The Morgans and Haskells emerged battered but triumphant from their final showdown against a the powerful shaman-sorcerer Tupash; but something dark and evil survived that battle and is back for revenge — and more blood — and it’s using another longtime Stonefort smuggler family, “crosstown rivals” of the Morgans, as its pawns.

Privilege of the Sword by Ellen Kushner

Bantam Spectra Books ISBN: 0-553-58696-3

Another fascinating “fantasy of manners” from Ellen Kushner. The story takes place about 20 years or so after the events in *Swordspoint*. Alec Champion is now the “Mad Duke” Tremontaine, and Richard St. Vier has long disappeared from Riverside for unknown reasons. Political intrigues bring them back together. The love and relationship between the two men is more deeply explored, as is how it has affected them over the years.

Snow by Wheeler Scott

Torquere Press (PDF) torquerepress.com

A sexy fairy tale containing elements of “Snow White and The Seven Dwarves” and a touch of “Beauty and the Beast.” David, an unloved young prince who suffers from a unique curse, is rescued by Alec, a cynical, enigmatic wanderer with a murky past of his own. They wander about their world, attempting to forge a loving relationship despite external threats and their own prickly personalities. The magic – particularly ice-and-snow magic – is quite well done.

The Virtu by Sarah Monette

Ace Books ISBN: 0-441-01516-6

Continues the story begun in Monette’s first novel, *Mélusine* (2005). Wizard Felix Harrowgate has finally recovered his health and his sanity. Now he stubbornly wants to return to the city of Mélusine to repair the magic crystal he destroyed (as the unwilling pawn of his sadistic former lover, the evil Walker Gennadion). Accompanied by his practical, streetwise brother Mildmay the Fox (an assassin and cat burgler) and a woman named Mehitabel Parr (who is more than she appears to be), Felix slowly makes his way across an ocean and a continent full of perils — only to face even greater dangers within the walls of Mélusine itself.