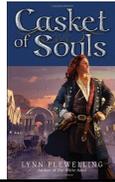
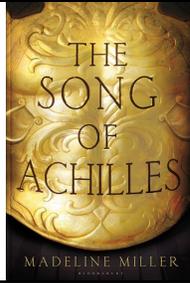


## 2013 Gaylactic Spectrum Awards Best Novel



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### Winner

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#### *The Song of Achilles* by Madeline Miller

Ecco

ISBN13: 978-0062060627

If you've read Homer's *Iliad*, then you probably know how the story of Achilles and Patroclus ends – or at least you think you do – and you probably think you pretty much understand at least the broad outlines of the relationship between them.

But you've probably never had an opportunity to hear the “whole” story, which is what Madeline Miller describes in her novel *The Song of Achilles*, this year's Gaylactic Spectrum Awards Best Novel winner. It's the story of how the love of Achilles and Patroclus develops, from their first meeting as teenagers to the Siege of Troy. Miller has, in fact, turned Homer's story of “the rage of Achilles” on its head; unlike all previous versions, as she doesn't just depict Patroclus as either a nonentity or a mere boy-toy. Indeed, the story is now narrated by the devoted and self-sacrificing Patroclus himself. The novel also provides sensible explanations for such Homeric conundrums as: “How could Achilles successfully disguise himself among the daughters of Lycomedes?” and “Why did Patroclus really substitute himself for Achilles in that climactic battle?”

Miller also does a really fine job of depicting the interaction between human and supernatural beings as they enter the lives of Achilles and Patroclus. Particularly striking are the passages describing the terrifying and otherworldly nature of Thetis, the sea goddess and mother of Achilles. Granted, Thetis is a minor goddess – but she is a GODDESS and far more powerful and vital than anything in the mortal world. Mortals literally pale in her presence. Thetis has grand plans for her son Achilles – think of her as a stage mother on steroids – and Patroclus has no place in those plans. Thus, the love of Achilles and Patroclus must not only overcome politics and war; their love must withstand the power of a goddess. It makes for a fascinating and emotionally gripping story.

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### Short List

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*Casket of Souls* by Lynn Flewelling  
Spectra ISBN13: 978-0345522303

The sixth “Nightrunners” book, continuing the Epic Fantasy adventure begun in two previous Short List titles: *Shadows Return* and *The White Road*. Lovers Alec and Seregil are back home in Rhiminee, where they face two different threats: one political and one magical. As the difficult war with Plenimar drags on, factions of the nobility are secretly lining up to support (and possibly eliminate) either the queen and her heir or the queen's heroic niece Kliia. Alec and Seregil are assigned to uncover the treasonous cabals without getting themselves killed in the process. Meanwhile, dark magic has initiated the mysterious “sleeping death” in Rhiminee; and Alec and Seregil attempt to track down the source before friends and family are killed.

*Point of Knives* by Melissa Scott  
Lethe Press ISBN13: 978-1590213810

A rollicking Fantasy-Mystery blend. *Point of Knives* is a new “Astreiant” story, which tells a story of the developing relationship between Nicolas Rathe the pointsman and Philip Eslingen the mercenary soldier. The events in this story take place between the stories in the novels *Point of Hopes* and *Point of Dreams* (a previous Short List title). When two aging seamen (reputed to be pirates) are killed, Rathe and Eslingen become involved in the investigation and the search for a missing treasure trove that has magical implications.

*Forged In Fire* by J.A. Pitts  
Tor ISBN13: 978-0765332554

Modern urban fantasy in a world secretly ruled by Dragons: the continuing adventures of Sarah Beauhall (lesbian blacksmith and sword-wielding hero). The successor novel to previous Spectrum Award Short List title *Black Blade Blues* and winner *Honeyed Words*. This time Sarah must unravel the deadly intrigues of a necromancer who uses blood-magic and death/pain-magic to menace Sarah and her family, friends, and allies.

*Rapture* by Kameron Hurley  
Night Shade ISBN13: 978-1597804318

The third (and final?) volume in the “Bel Dame Apocrypha”, a sci-fi political thriller set on a world settled centuries ago by conservative Muslim and Christian sects. The previous two volumes in the series, *God's War* and *Infidel*, were Short List titles for the Gaylactic Spectrum Awards in prior years. The war between Nasheen and Chenja is finally ending, and thousands of discontented male veterans are streaming home and fomenting social upheaval. The Queen of Nasheen and the Bel Dames Council continue their uneasy standoff. The authorities in Ras Tieg are stepping up their repression of shifters; and the shifters are fighting back. And an alien spacecraft is stationed above the Nasheen capital. Amid all this, former Bel Dame operative Nixnissa is lured out of retirement and takes a deceptively simple contract from the Council – a contract with the potential for worldwide effects, as well as the potential for getting Nixnissa and her friends killed.