

Selections from a Sci Fi Reading Group

A book talk on selected titles discussed by Lincoln SF club Star Base Andromeda
Presented by Scott Clark, Bennett Martin Public Library

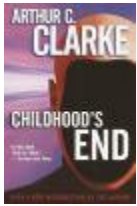
- * **Childhood's End** by Arthur C. Clarke
- * **I, Robot** by Isaac Asimov
- * **Neuromancer** by William Gibson
- The Parafaith War** by L.E. Modesitt ▲
- Citizen of the Galaxy** by Robert A. Heinlein
- * **Marrow** by Robert Reed (Lincoln, NE science fiction author)
- Something Wicked This Way Comes** by Ray Bradbury
- * **Flowers for Algernon** by Daniel Keyes
- * **FlashForward** by Robert J. Sawyer
- * **Mission of Gravity** by Hal Clement ▲
- The Boat of a Million Years** by Poul Anderson
- Newton's Cannon** by J. Gregory Keyes ▲
- Tangled Up in Blue** by Joan D. Vinge
- Interstellar Pig** by William Sleator
- * **At the Mountains of Madness** by H.P. Lovecraft
- * **The Lathe of Heaven** by Ursula K. Leguin
- Darwin's Radio** by Greg Bear
- Lincoln's Dreams** by Connie Willis
- (Tales of) **The Dying Earth** by Jack Vance
- Perdido Street Station** by China Mleeville
- * **The Demolished Man** by Alfred Bester
- Revelation Space** by Alistair Reynolds
- Unicorn Variations** by Roger Zelazny (short stories)
- * **The Vor Game** by Lois McMaster Bujold
- Protector** by Larry Niven ▲
- * **Coraline** by Neil Gaiman
- City** by Clifford Simak ▲
- Rats and Gargoyles** by Mary Gentle
- The Crossroads of Time** by Andre Norton
- The Thief of Always** by Clive Barker
- * **Little Fuzzy** by H. Beam Piper
- * **The Forever War** by Joe Haldeman
- * **Snow Crash** by Neal Stephenson
- * **The Man Who Folded Himself** by David Gerrold ▲
- Sister Emily's Lightship and Other Stories** by Jane Yolen (short stories)
- The Long Tomorrow** by Leigh Brackett ▲
- Beyond Singularity** edited by Jack Dann and Gardner Dozois (anthology) ▲
- The Big Time** by Fritz Leiber
- * **In the Garden of Eden** by Kage Baker
- Eye in the Sky** by Philip K. Dick ▲
- * **The Speed of Dark** by Elizabeth Moon
- The Humanoids** by Jack Williamson ▲
- * **Accelerando** by Charles Stross
- More Than Human** by Theodore Sturgeon
- There Will be Dragons** by John Ringo
- The Worm Ouroboros** by E.R. Eddison ▲
- Farewell to the Master** by Harry Bates (short story) ▲
- * **Brown Girl in the Ring** by Nalo Hopkinson
- * **Her Smoke Rose Up Forever** by James Tiptree Jr. (short stories)
- Fledgling** by Octavia Butler
- Rogue Moon** by Algis Budrys ▲
- * **Watchmen** by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons (graphic novel)
- Who Goes There** by John W. Campbell
- * **Watership Down** by Richard Adams
- Paul of Dune** by Kevin J. Anderson and Brian Herbert
- * **The Sirens of Titan** by Kurt Vonnegut
- * **Hunter's Run** by George R.R. Martin, Gardner Dozois and Daniel Abraham
- Minority Report** by Philip K. Dick (novella)
- * **Dying Inside** by Robert Silverberg ▲
- * **Little Brother** by Cory Doctorow
- * **Voyage of the Space Beagle** by A.E. van Vogt
- Undertow** by Elizabeth Bear ▲
- * **What Mad Universe** by Fredric Brown ▲
- * **Declare** by Tim Powers
- The Best of Cordwainer Smith** by Cordwainer Smith

The list about includes all SF/Fantasy/Horror novels used for discussion by this SciFi club. The following pages feature some highlighted titles of note.

* – plot blurb on subsequent pages

▲ – not currently owned by the Lincoln City Libraries. Please consider ordering this book through the Interlibrary Loan service!

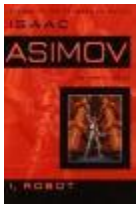
Noteworthy titles to consider from this list:



[Childhood's End](#)

By Arthur C. Clarke

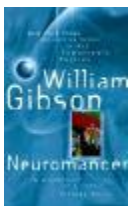
The Overlords appeared suddenly over every city--intellectually, technologically, and militarily superior to humankind. Benevolent, they made few demands: unify earth, eliminate poverty, and end war. With little rebellion, humankind agreed, and a golden age began. But at what cost? With the advent of peace, man ceases to strive for creative greatness, and a malaise settles over the human race. To those who resist, it becomes evident that the Overlords have an agenda of their own. As civilization approaches the crossroads, will the Overlords spell the end for humankind . . . or the beginning?



[I, Robot](#)

By Isaac Asimov

The three laws of Robotics: 1) A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm 2) A robot must obey orders given to it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law. 3) A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law. With these three, simple directives, Isaac Asimov changed our perception of robots forever when he formulated the laws governing their behavior. In *I, Robot*, Asimov chronicles the development of the robot through a series of interlinked stories: from its primitive origins in the present to its ultimate perfection in the not-so-distant future--a future in which humanity itself may be rendered obsolete. Here are stories of robots gone mad, of mind-read robots, and robots with a sense of humor. Of robot politicians, and robots that secretly run the world--all told with the dramatic blend of science fact and science fiction that has become Asimov's trademark.



[Neuromancer](#)

By William Gibson

Here is the novel that started it all, launching the **cyberpunk** generation, and the first novel to win the holy trinity of science fiction: the Hugo Award, the Nebula Award and the Philip K. Dick Award. With *Neuromancer*, William Gibson introduced the world to cyberspace--and science fiction has never been the same. Case was the hottest computer cowboy cruising the information superhighway--jacking his consciousness into cyberspace, soaring through tactile lattices of data and logic, rustling encoded secrets for anyone with the money to buy his skills. Then he double-crossed the wrong people, who caught up with him in a big way--and burned the talent out of his brain, micron by micron. Banished from cyberspace, trapped in the meat of his physical body, Case courted death in the



high-tech underworld. Until a shadowy conspiracy offered him a second chance--and a cure--for a price.

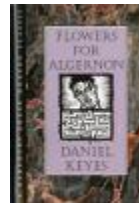


[Marrow](#)

By Robert Reed

(Hugo Award-winning Lincoln author)

The Ship has traveled the universe for longer than any of the near-immortal crew can recall, its true purpose and origins unknown. It is larger than many planets, housing thousands of alien races and just as many secrets. Now one of those secrets has been discovered: at the center of the Ship is . . . a planet. Marrow. But when a team of the Ship's best and brightest are sent down to investigate, will they return with the origins of the Ship -- or will they bring doom to everyone on board? Robert Reed, whose fantastic stories have been filling all the major SF magazines for the past several years, spins a captivating tale of adventure and wonder on an incredible scale in this novel based on his acclaimed novella.



[Flowers for Algernon](#)

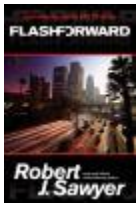
By Daniel Keyes

Charlie Gordon has an IQ of 68 and works a menial job which his uncle had secured for him 17 years previously so that Charlie would not have to be sent to an institution, the Warren State Home. Wanting to improve himself, Charlie attends reading and writing classes at the Beekman College Center for Retarded Adults; his instructor is Alice Kinnian, a young, attractive woman. Professor Nemur and Doctor Strauss, two Beekman researchers, are looking for a human subject on whom they can test an experimental surgical technique for increasing intelligence. They have already performed the surgery on a mouse named Algernon, leading to a dramatic improvement in his mental performance. Based on Alice's recommendation and his own motivation to learn, Charlie is picked to undergo the surgery.

The procedure is a success and, three months later, Charlie's IQ has reached 185. However, as his intelligence, education and understanding of the world around him increases, his relationships with people deteriorate: his coworkers at his job, who used to amuse themselves at his expense, are now scared and resentful of his increased intelligence and he is fired as a result while the doctors who pioneered the operation and have been patting themselves on the back are chagrined when he calls them on their pretensions. Charlie also embarks on a troubled romance with Alice; even though they develop strong feelings for each other, he is prevented from having a physical relationship by the spectre of a younger Charlie whom the older Charlie feels is always watching. Unable to get close to Alice, Charlie starts a purely sexual relationship with Fay Lillman, a vivacious and promiscuous artist.

Charlie discovers a flaw in the theories that led Nemur and Strauss to develop their intelligence-enhancing procedure. Shortly thereafter, Algernon starts behaving erratically, loses his new intelligence, and dies. As Charlie does further research, he determines that he too will inevitably revert to his old condition. He tries to mend the broken relationships with his parents, without success. His mother, who always insisted he could learn normally, now suffers from dementia and does not recognize him. Charlie's father, who had broken off contact with the family many years previously, also does not recognize him and Charlie cannot bring himself to reveal his identity. Charlie is only able to reconnect with his sister, who hated him for his mental disability when they were growing up and is now caring for their mother.

As Charlie regresses intellectually, Fay becomes scared by the change and stops talking to him. However, Charlie finally attains sufficient emotional maturity to have a brief but fulfilling relationship with Alice. Despite regressing to his former self, he still remembers that he was once a genius and wrote something important "for all the dumb people like me." He cannot bear his friends and co-workers feeling sorry for him. Consequently, he decides to go to live at the Warren State Home where nobody knows about the operation. In a final postscript to his writings, he asks that someone put flowers on Algernon's grave.



[FlashForward](#)

By Robert J. Sawyer

In pursuit of an elusive nuclear particle, an experiment goes incredibly awry, and, for a few moments, the consciousness of the entire human race is thrown

ahead by about twenty years. As the implications truly hit home, the pressure to repeat the experiment builds. Everyone wants a glimpse of their future, a chance to flashforward and see their successes or learn how to avoid their failures.



[Mission of Gravity](#) ▲

By Hal Clement

The native protagonist, Barlennan, a captain of a Mesklinite trading vessel, is on an expedition to the equator, where the gravity is a tiny fraction of what

his culture is used to. At the story's opening, he has made contact with human explorers, who are barely able to survive the incredibly light (to the captain) gravity of the equator. The humans request that he recover readings from a scientific probe the humans had sent to one of the poles of the planet. The captain agrees, and the remainder of the story deals with the journey from the equator to the pole, and the recovery of the probe. Along the way, the ship encounters and overcomes a variety of obstacles, some of which the humans (who have provided the captain with radios in order to keep in contact) can help with, and some of which they cannot.



[At the Mountains of Madness](#)

By H.P. Lovecraft

The story is written in first-person perspective by the geologist William Dyer, a professor from Miskatonic University. He writes to disclose hitherto unknown and closely kept secrets in the hope that he can deter a planned and much publicized scientific expedition to Antarctica. On a previous expedition there, a party of scholars from Miskatonic University, led by Dyer, discovered fantastic and horrific ruins and a dangerous secret beyond a range of mountains taller than the Himalayas. The group that discovered and crossed the mountains found the remains of fourteen ancient life forms, completely unknown to science and unidentifiable as either plants or animals, after discovering an underground cave while boring for ice cores. Six of the specimens are badly damaged, the others uncannily pristine. Their highly-evolved features are problematic: their stratum location puts them at a point on the geologic time scale much too early for such features to have naturally evolved yet. Because of their resemblance to creatures of myth mentioned in the *Necronomicon*, they are dubbed the "Elder Things".



[The Lathe of Heaven](#)

By Ursula K. Leguin

The Lathe of Heaven is George Orr's story--a man who dreams things into being, for better or for worse. It is a dark vision and a warning--a fable of power uncontrolled and uncontrollable--a truly prescient and startling view of humanity, and the consequences of God-playing. It is, quite simply, a masterpiece.



[The Demolished Man](#)

By Alfred Bester

In a world policed by telepaths, Ben Reich plans to commit a crime that hasn't been heard of in 70 years: murder. That's the only option left for Reich, whose company is losing a 10-year death struggle with rival D'Courtney Enterprises. Terrorized in his dreams by The Man With No Face and driven to the edge after D'Courtney refuses a merger offer, Reich murders his rival and bribes a high-ranking telepath to help him cover his tracks. But while police prefect Lincoln Powell knows Reich is guilty, his telepath's knowledge is a far cry from admissible evidence.



HUGO AWARD



[The Vor Game](#)

By Lois McMaster Bujold

Miles Vorkosigan graduates from the Barrayaran Military Academy with high expectations of ship command, but is disappointed with an assignment as meteorologist to Lazkowski Base, an arctic training camp. His tenure in the windy, snow-covered north is cut short when Miles narrowly averts a massacre between the trigger-



HUGO AWARD

happy base commander and mutinous recruits. After a brief stay under 'house arrest', Miles is re-assigned to investigate a suspicious military build-up near a wormhole nexus. Reviving his undercover persona as mercenary Admiral Miles Naismith, his routine information-gathering duty expands to a rescue mission when the Emperor of Barrayar disappears during a political conference on a nearby space station. Miles must use his considerable negotiating skills to avoid a showdown between competing powers for control of the wormhole, find the Emperor ... and watch his back for the arctic base commander seeking bloody vengeance.



[Coraline](#)

By Neil Gaiman

The day after they moved in, Coraline went exploring.... In Coraline's family's new flat are twenty-one windows and fourteen doors. Thirteen of the doors open and close. The fourteenth is locked, and on the other side is only a brick wall, until the day Coraline unlocks the door to find a passage to another flat in another house just like her own. Only it's different. At first, things seem marvelous in the other flat. The food is better. The toy box is filled with wind-up angels that flutter around the bedroom, books whose pictures writhe and crawl and shimmer, little dinosaur skulls that chatter their teeth. But there's another mother, and another father, and they want Coraline to stay with them and be their little girl. They want to change her and never let her go. Other children are trapped there as well, lost souls behind the mirrors. Coraline is their only hope of rescue. She will have to fight with all her wits and all the tools she can find if she is to save the lost children, her ordinary life, and herself.



[Little Fuzzy](#)

By H. Beam Piper

Jack Holloway, a sunstone miner, lives a solitary life in a wilderness area of planet Zarathustra. The planet is basically "owned" by the Chartered Zarathustra Corporation (under Victor Grego), which installed basic services and colonial outposts initially, and now reaps the benefits of new discoveries, such as the valuable sunstones. One day, Holloway returns to his little shack to discover a tiny humanoid, covered in golden fur. The little creature has armed itself with a chisel from his workbench, but is peaceful and mostly unafraid. The miner gives the little fuzzy some Extee-Three, a kind of canned emergency ration cake, and the fuzzy devours it greedily. It is soon apparent that the creature is highly intelligent, and he soon brings his family band to join "Pappy Jack" at the shack. Victor Grego soon tries to intervene, claiming that the Fuzzies are just animals, not sapient. If ruled sapient, the entire planet would be declared a protected aboriginal zone, and the Chartered Zarathustra Company would lose its exclusive rights to the resources there. Leonard Kellogg, one of Grego's staff, kills a fuzzy and this leads to a court case which hinges on whether the fuzzies are animals or sapient. After much discussion of what it means to be "sapient" (speech and fire use being one definition), the matter goes to court. In the midst of the proceedings, the Terran Navy commander

reveals that his people have been studying Fuzzies, and that they can indeed speak. The tiny people use ultrasonic frequencies, which to human ears sound like "yeek." When processed with the proper electronics, the sounds are rendered as a complex language. The Navy experiments prove that Fuzzies have at least the mental capacity of a ten-year-old human, and are therefore protected under Terran law. Judge Pendarvis declares them to be aborigines, and the Charter of the Zarathustra Company is immediately invalidated.



[The Forever War](#)

By Joe Haldeman

Private William Mandella is a hero in spite of himself -- a reluctant conscript drafted into an elite military unit, and propelled through space and time to fight in a distant thousand-year conflict. He never wanted to go to war, but the leaders on Earth have drawn a line in the interstellar sand -- despite the fact that their fierce alien enemy is unknowable, unconquerable, and very far away. So Mandella will perform his duties without rancor and even rise up through the military's ranks . . . if he survives. But the true test of his mettle will come when he returns to Earth. Because of the time dilation caused by space travel the loyal soldier is aging months, while his home planet is aging centuries -- and the difference will prove the saying: you never can go home.



[Snow Crash](#)

By Neal Stephenson

First arriving on the scene in 1992 to critical acclaim, this definitive novel of the information age weaves virtual reality, Sumerian myth, and just about everything in between. At the beginning of the novel the main character, Hiro Protagonist, discovers the name of a new pseudo-narcotic, "Snow Crash", being offered at a posh Metaverse nightclub. Hiro's friends and fellow hackers fall victim to Snow Crash's effects, which are apparently unique in that they are experienced in the Metaverse and also in the physical world. Hiro uses his computer hacking, sharp cognitive skills, and sword-fighting skills to uncover the mystery of "Snow Crash"; his pursuit takes the reader on a tour of the Sumerian culture, a fully-instantiated laissez-faire society, and a virtual meta-society patronized by financial, social, and intellectual elites. As the nature of Snow Crash is uncovered, Hiro finds that self-replicating strings of information can affect objects in a uniform manner even though they may be broadcast via diverse media, a realization that reinforces his chosen path in life.



[The Man Who Folded Himself](#) ▲

By David Gerrold

Daniel Eakins inherits a belt from his uncle that allows him to travel in time. This results in a series of time paradoxes, which are only resolved by the existence of multiple universes and multiple histories. Eakins, who

repeatedly encounters alternate versions of himself, finds himself in progressively more bizarre situations. Much of the book deals with the psychological, physical, and personal challenges that manifest when time travel is possible for a single individual at the touch of a button. Eakins repeatedly meets himself; has sex with himself; and ultimately cohabitates with an opposite-sex version of himself. He spends much of his own contorted lifetime at an extended party with dozens of versions of himself at different ages, before understanding the true nature of the gathering, and his true identity.



[In the Garden of Eden](#)

By Kage Baker

In this highly impressive and thoroughly engrossing debut novel of the Company, Mendoza is sent to Elizabethan England to collect samples from the garden of Sir Walter Iden all in an effort to save the Company. But her quest is jeopardized by Nicholas Harpole, who stirs unfamiliar emotions within her about her future-with a man she will long outlive. If you're reading something by Kage Baker, fasten your seat belt-you're in for a wild ride.



[The Speed of Dark](#)

By Elizabeth Moon (a One Book One Lincoln near-finalist)

In the near future, disease will be a condition of the past. Most genetic defects will be removed at birth; the remaining during infancy. Unfortunately, there will be a generation left behind. For members of that missed generation, small advances will be made. Through various programs, they will be taught to get along in the world despite their differences. They will be made active and contributing members of society. But they will never be normal. Lou Arrendale is a member of that lost generation, born at the wrong time to reap the awards of medical science. Part of a small group of high-functioning autistic adults, he has a steady job with a pharmaceutical company, a car, friends, and a passion for fencing. Aside from his annual visits to his counselor, he lives a low-key, independent life. He has learned to shake hands and make eye contact. He has taught himself to use "please" and "thank you" and other conventions of conversation because he knows it makes others comfortable. He does his best to be as normal as possible and not to draw attention to himself. But then his quiet life comes under attack. It starts with an experimental treatment that will reverse the effects of autism in adults. With this treatment Lou would think and act and be just like everyone else. But if he was suddenly free of autism, would he still be himself? Would he still love the same classical music-with its complications and resolutions? Would he still see the same colors and patterns in the world-shades and hues that others cannot see? Most importantly, would he still love Marjory, a woman who may never be able to reciprocate his feelings? Would it be easier for her to return the love of a "normal"? There are intense pressures coming from the world around him-including an angry supervisor who wants to cut costs by sacrificing the supports necessary to employ autistic workers. Perhaps even more disturbing are the barrage of questions within himself. For

Lou must decide if he should submit to a surgery that might completely change the way he views the world . . . and the very essence of who he is. Thoughtful, provocative, poignant, unforgettable, The Speed of Dark is a gripping exploration into the mind of an autistic person as he struggles with profound questions of humanity and matters of the heart.



[Accelerando](#)

By Charles Stross

Expanding upon his award-winning short story cycle from the pages of Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine, Charles Stross-author of such revolutionary science fiction novels as Singularity Sky and Iron Sunrise-delivers the story fans have been anticipating with Accelerando, a novel destined to change the face of the genre. For three generations, the Macz family has struggled to cope with the rampant technological achievements that have rendered humans near obsolete. And mankind's end encroaches even closer when something starts to dismantle the nine planets of the solar system in an effort to annihilate all biological life forms.



[Brown Girl in the Ring](#)

By Nalo Hopkinson

The rich and the privileged have fled the city, barricaded it behind roadblocks, and left it to crumble. The inner city has had to rediscover old ways -- farming, barter, herb lore. But now the monied need a harvest of bodies, and so they prey upon the helpless of the streets. With nowhere to turn, a young woman must open herself to ancient truths, eternal powers, the tragic mystery surrounding her mother and grandmother. She must bargain with gods, and give birth to new legends.



[Her Smoke Rose Up Forever](#)

By James Tiptree Jr. (Alice Sheldon)

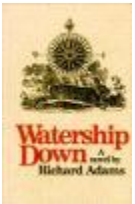
These 18 darkly complex short stories and novellas touch upon human nature and perception, metaphysics and epistemology, and gender and sexuality, foreshadowing a world in which biological tendencies bring about the downfall of humankind. Revisions from the author's notes are included, allowing a deeper view into her world and a better understanding of her work. The Nebula Award-winning short story Love Is the Plan, the Plan Is Death, the Hugo Award-winning novella The Girl Who Was Plugged In, and the Hugo and Nebula Award-winning novella Houston, Houston, Do You Read? are included.



[Watchmen](#)

By Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons

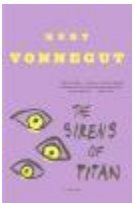
This stunning graphic novel chronicles the fall from grace of a group of superheroes plagued by all too human failings. The concept of the super hero is dissected and inverted as strangely realistic characters are stalked by an unknown assassin. Originally published 12 issues in magazine form as Watchmen 1-12, 1986-1987.



[Watership Down](#)

By Richard Adams

First published in 1972, Richard Adams's extraordinary bestseller Watership Down takes us to a world we have never truly seen: to the remarkable life that teems in the fields, forests, and riverbanks, far beyond our cities and towns. It is a powerful saga of courage, leadership, and survival; and epic tale of a hardy band of Berkshire rabbits forced to flee the destruction of their fragile community and their trials and triumphs in the face of extraordinary adversity as they pursue a glorious dream called "home".



[The Sirens of Titan](#)

By Kurt Vonnegut

The Sirens of Titan is an outrageous romp through space, time, and morality. The richest, most depraved man on Earth, Malachi Constant, is offered a chance to take a space journey to distant worlds with a beautiful woman at his side. Of course there's a catch to the invitation—and a prophetic vision about the purpose of human life that only Vonnegut has the courage to tell.



[Hunter's Run](#)

By George R.R. Martin, Gardner Dozois and Daniel Abraham

Police, fugitive aliens, and a human murderer weave a web of shifting alliances as Ramón, a luckless prospector, enters the greatest manhunt the alien world of São Paulo has ever known. If he is to survive, Ramón must overcome inscrutable aliens and deadly predators, but his greatest enemy is himself. With every move in the desperate game, he struggles to outwit his enemies and solve the mystery of a murder he himself committed.



[Dying Inside](#) ▲

By Robert Silverberg

David Selig, is an undistinguished man living in New York City. David was born with a telepathic gift allowing him to read minds. Rather than use his ability for any greater good, however, Selig squanders his power, using

it only for his own convenience. At the beginning of the novel, David earns a living by reading the minds of college students so that he can better plagiarize reports and essays on their behalf. As the novel progresses, Selig's power grows more and more weak, working sporadically and sometimes not at all, and Selig struggles to maintain his grip on reality as he begins to lose an ability on which he has long since grown dependent.



[Little Brother](#)

By Cory Doctorow

Marcus, a.k.a "w1n5t0n," is only seventeen years old, but he figures he already knows how the system works and how to work the system. Smart, fast, and wise to the ways of the networked world, he has no trouble outwitting his high school's intrusive but clumsy surveillance systems. After being interrogated for days by the Department of Homeland Security in the aftermath of a major terrorist attack on San Francisco, California, seventeen-year-old Marcus, released into what is now a police state, decides to use his expertise in computer hacking to set things right.



[Voyage of the Space Beagle](#)

By A.E. van Vogt

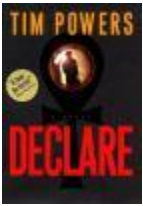
The novel is a "fix-up" compilation of four previously published SF stories, chronicling the deep-space explorations of the Space Beagle, a spacecraft crewed by a joint scientific/military task force. Told primarily from the point of view of Dr. Eliot Grosvenor, a scientist in the field of Nexialism (an interdisciplinary field), each story is self-contained but ties into the others. In addition to encountering several, largely hostile, alien or alien races, the Space Beagle also suffers from several political and/or scientific revolutions amongst its crew, which Grosvenor finds himself in the thick of. The book was republished in 1952 under the title *Mission: Interplanetary*.



[What Mad Universe](#) ▲

By Fredric Brown

Keith Winton is a journalist for a science-fiction review. With his glamorous co-worker girlfriend, Betty, he visits his friends one day in their elegant estate in the Catskills, unfortunately on the same day as an experimental rocket is to be launched. Betty has to go back to New York. Keith is alone in his friends' garden, deep in thought, when, suddenly, the engine of the rocket (whose launch has been a failure) crashes and explodes on his friends' residence, taking him to a strange but deceptively similar parallel universe. Wild-eyed, Keith is astonished to see how credits have replaced dollars; is amazed when he encounters some scantily-clad pin-up girls who are, at the same time, astronauts; is driven to stupor when he encounters his first Arcturian. But it is when he tries to get back to his usual world when he finally understands his problem, if not the solution.



[Declare](#)

By Tim Powers

There are histories beneath history. Tim Powers, one of the most brilliant and audacious talents in contemporary fiction, casts an eerie light on the terrible events that made the twentieth century and reveals what the Cold War was "really" about, *Declare*. After a ten-year hiatus, British academic Andrew Hale is abruptly called back into the Great Game by a terse, cryptic telephone message. Born to "the trade" and recruited at the age of seven by a most secret Secret Service, Hale, in 1963, is forced to confront again the nightmare that has haunted his adult life: a lethal unfinished operation code-named *Declare*. Two decades earlier, as a young double agent infiltrating the Soviet spy network in

Nazi-occupied Paris, Hale first encountered the incomprehensible rhythms of an invisible world. And from that moment on nothing was ever safe and knowable again. There also, his life became eternally linked with two others' lives that would recurrently intersect his at its most dangerous junctures: his "comrade operative," the fiery and beautiful Communist agent Elena Teresa Ceniza-Bendiga, the object of Hale's undying love, and Kim Philby, the mysterious traitor to the British cause...and perhaps to all humanity. Together they form an unlikely triumvirate with one shared destiny: *Declare*. But the Great Game is greater and far more terrible than Andrew Hale ever imagined. There is another, larger war raging unseen all around him, a cataclysmic secret conflict masked by a cold war of national ideologies. And it is drawing Hale, Elena and Philby inexorably toward world-shattering consequences on a Biblical mountain in the Middle East...and to a hideous feast of broken minds, destroyed lives and devoured souls.