

OUSFG's Desert Planet Books

Mission brief

Every year our space exploration vessel *Serenity* sets off on a journey through the stars. And every year it inevitably crash-lands on a desert planet in the Alpha Carinae system. We originally blamed this on the engineering crew, but at this point we're convinced that the ship is just cursed.

Anyway, since we all know we'll end up stranded on that miserable desolate planet again, we've decided to pack accordingly — provisions, tents, appropriate clothing, medicine, etc. The only thing left to decide on is which books to take with us. The planet already hosts a small collection left by previous missions, and we have enough storage space for ten more books.

Here are the books* we picked at the OUSFG discussion meeting of 11th October 2017.

* loosely defined as we also accept some series of books

Top Ten

- [The Fifth Season](#) (N. K. Jemisin)
- [Kindred](#) (Octavia E Butler)
- [Twig](#) (Wildbow)
- [American Gods](#) (Neil Gaiman)
- [Foundation](#) (Isaac Asimov)
- [Angelmaker](#) (Nick Harkaway)
- [Ready Player One](#) (Ernest Cline)
- [Redshirts](#) (John Scalzi)
- [The House of Shattered Wings](#) (Aliette de Bodard)
- [Ancillary Justice](#) (Ann Leckie)
- [Excession](#) (Iain M. Banks)

which you might notice is 11 books. Since we failed to cut it down to 10 books, we then discussed which of our number should be ejected from the escape capsule. That discussion led to a planned trilogy about our adventures on the desert planet (*Tentacular Vikings* meeting).

The Nominees

- The Anubis Gates (Tim Powers)
- Star Wars (George Lucas et al)
- Star Trek (Gene Roddenberry et al)
- The Power (Naomi Alderman)
- The Traitor (Seth Dickinson)
- The Just City (Jo Walton)
- Lock In (John Scalzi)
- Glasshouse (Charles Stross)
- The Quantum Thief (Hannu Rajaniemi)
- The Making of the Representative for Planet 8 (Doris Lessing)
- The Martian (Andy Weir)
- The Vorkosigan Saga (Lois McMaster Bujold)

2016

Here are the books from the *Desert Planet Books* discussion of 12th October 2016.

Top Ten

1. Stories of Your Life and Others, T Chiang
1. A Fire Upon the Deep + A Deepness in the Sky, V Vinge
3. Worm, wildbow
3. Uprooted, N Novik
3. Good Omens, T Pratchett + N Gaiman
3. A Canticle for Leibowitz, W M Miller Jr
3. Pastwatch: The Redemption of Christopher Columbus, O S Card
3. Silmarilion, J R R Tolkien
3. The Three-Body Problem, L Cixin, transl. by K Liu
10. Saga, B K Vaughan
10. Tomorrow and Tomorrow, C Sheffield
10. Pride and Prejudice and Zombies, S Grahame-Smith

10. The Ophiuchi Hotline, J Varley
10. Discworld: Death, T Pratchett

stretching the definition of "10" beyond most mathematicians' limits.

The Nominees

15. Ciaphas Cain, S Mitchell
15. Monstress, M M Liu
15. Embassytown, C Mieville
15. The City and The City, C Mieville
15. The Boat of a Million Years, P Anderson
20. Bartimaeus Series, J Stroud
20. The Anubis Gates, T Powers
20. Eisenhower (Warhammer 40k), D Abnett
20. The Years of Rice and Salt, K S Robinson
20. Unsounded, A Cope
20. Discworld: The Watch, T Pratchett
20. Discworld: Moist von Lipwig, T Pratchett

2015

Here are the books from the *Desert Planet Books* discussion of 14th October 2015.

Top Ten

1. [The Wee Free Men \(+ the rest of the Tiffany Aching series\)](#) by Sir Terry Pratchett
2. [Red Shirts](#) by John Scalzi
3. [A Natural History of Dragons](#) by Marie Brennan
4. [The Name of the Wind](#), Patrick Rothfuss
5. [Lock in](#) by John Scalzi
6. [Ancillary Justice](#) by Ann Leckie
7. [Glasshouse](#) by Charlie Stross
8. [The Sparrow](#) by Mary Doria Russel
8. [The Complete Stories of J. G. Ballard](#)
8. [The Martian](#) by Andy Weir

The Nominees

- The Number of the Beast, Robert A. Heinlein
- The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms, N. K. Jemisin
- Cloud Atlas, David Mitchell
- The Eisenhower Trilogy, Dan Abnett
- Gaunt's Ghosts, Dan Abnett
- Empire State, Adam Christopher
- Tooth and Claw, Jo Walton
- The Glamourist Histories, Mary Robinette Kowal
- Station 11, Emily St. John Mandel
- Discworld, (Guards Series, Death Series, Wizard Series), Sir Terry Pratchett [*These series were eliminated in favour of Tiffany Aching Series*]
- The Lives of Christopher Chant, Diana Wynne Jones
- The Circle, Dave Eggers
- We, Yevgeny Zamyatin
- Red Mars, Kim Stanley Robinson
- Ciaphus Cain Series, Sandy Mitchell
- The Dresden Files, Jim Butcher
- The Broken Empire, Mark Lawrence
- Wheel of Time, Robert Jordan
- Vlad Taltos series, Steven Brust
- Metro 2033, Dimitri Glukhovsky
- Existence, David Brin

2014

Here are the books from the *Desert Planet Books* discussion on 15th October 2014. This year we made a point of choosing relatively new books that aren't all that well-known.

Top Ten

1. Ancillary Justice, Ann Leckie
2. Calculating God, Robert J Sawyer
3. The City and the City, China Mieville
4. A Madness of Angels, Kate Griffin
5. The Martian, Andy Weir
6. Gemsigns, Stephanie Sautler
7. The Cry of the Icemark, Stewart Hill
8. The Inheritance Trilogy, N K Jemisin
9. The Melancholy of Mechagirl, Catherynne Valente
10. Spirits Abroad, Zen Cho
11. Welcome to Nightvale (commonplacebooks.com)

The Nominees

- Daughter of Smoke and Bone, Laini Taylor
- Angelmaker, Nick Harkaway
- Shades of Grey, Jasper Fforde
- The Final Empire, Brandon Sanderson
- Red Mars, Kim Stanley Robinson
- Worm, wildbow (parahumans.wordpress.com)
- The Way of Kings, Brandon Sanderson
- The Diamond Age, Neal Stephenson
- Anathem, Neal Stephenson
- H.I.V.E., Mark Walden
- Redshirts, John Scalzi
- The Wind's Twelve Quarters, Ursula Le Guin
- Callahan's Crosstime Saloon, Spider Robinson
- The Eye of the World, Robert Jordan
- Wool, Hugh Howey
- Anymorphs Chronicles, Katherine Applegate
- Machine of Death, Ryan North (machineofdeath.net)
- Mogworld, Yahtzee Croshaw

These two came up a lot but we didn't want to include them in the actual voting because they've been on the list before.

- The Lies of Locke Lamora, Scott Lynch
- The Vorkosigan Saga, Lois McMaster Bujold

2013

Here are the books from a previous *Desert Planet Books* discussion on 16th October 2013. We tried to account for the likelihood that the wreckage of earlier suttelpods would still be around, so we needn't include our choices from previous years.

Top Ten

1. The City and The City - China Mieville
2. The Sparrow - Mary Doria Russell
2. Wise Man's Fear - Patrick Rothfuss
2. Gentleman Bastard series - Scott Lynch
5. Oryx and Crake - Margaret Atwood
5. The First Born of the Dead - WJ Dickson (aka Whitney Dickson)
7. Vorkosigan Saga - Lois McMaster Bujold
7. Stories of Your Life and Others - Ted Chiang
9. Left Hand of Darkness - Ursula Le Guin
9. Existence - David Brin

The Nominees

- Saturn's Children - Charlie Stross
- Leviathan - Scott Westerfeld
- Monstrumologist - Rick Yancey
- Saga of the 7 Suns - Kevin J. Anderson
- House of Leaves - Mark Z. Danielewski
- Havemercy - Jaida Jones & Danielle Bennett
- Stories of Your Life and Others (short stories) - Ted Chiang
- The Sparrow - Mary Doria Russell
- Empire trilogy (series) - Raymond E. Feist & Janny Wurts
- Existence - David Brin
- Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffmann - Angela Carter
- Vorkosigan Saga (series) - Lois McMaster Bujold

- Silently and Very Fast (novella) – Catherynne M. Valente
- Tsubasa Reservoir Chronicles (Manga)
- Daughter of Smoke and Bone – Lainie Taylor
- The Left Hand of Darkness – Ursula K. LeGuin (or the entire Hainish cycle)
- The Last Man – Mary Shelley
- Y: The Last Man (comic) – Brian K. Vaughn
- I, Robot (short stories) – Isaac Asimov
- Riverworld (short story & series) – Philip José Farmer
- The City & the City – China Miéville
- Fly By Night; Twilight Robbery – Frances Hardinge
- Consider Phlebas – Iain M. Banks (or the entire Culture series)
- Anathem – Neal Stephenson
- The Gone-Away World – Nick Harkaway
- The Sirens of Titan – Kurt Vonnegut
- The Martian Chronicles (short stories) – Ray Bradbury
- Mogworld – Yahtzee Croshaw
- Emelan universe (series) – Tamora Pierce
- The Wise Man's Fear – Patrick Rothfuss (and sequel(s))
- Tales of Ketty Jay (series) – Chris Wooding
- Oryx and Crake – Margaret Atwood (and entire trilogy)
- The First Born of the Dead – Whitney Dickson
- The Laundry Files (series, incl. online stuff) – Charlie Stross
- Harry Potter and the Methods of Rationality – Eliezer Yudkowsky (fanfic, only exists online)
- Perfect – D. M. Quintano (?)
- His Dark Materials (series) – Philip Pullman
- Coraline – Neil Gaiman
- Howl's Moving Castle (and anime, and sequels) – Diana Wynne Jones
- Gentlemen Bastards series – Scott Lynch
- The Riddle-Master of Hed – Patricia A. McKillip

2012

Here are the books from a previous *Desert Planet Books* discussion on 10th October 2012.

Top Ten

1. Baslag – China Miéville
2. Hainish cycle – Ursula Le Guin
2. The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (first n books, for a given value of n) – Douglas Adams
4. Good Omens – Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman
5. Laundry series – Charles Stross
5. [Harry Potter and the Methods of Rationality](#) – Eliezer Yudkowsky
7. A Song of Ice and Fire – George R R Martin
8. Sandman – Neil Gaiman and various artists
8. Howl's Moving Castle – Diana Wynne Jones
8. Isaac Asimov's short stories

Special mention, taking Desmond's place in the escape capsule: Shatnerquake – Jeff Burk

The Nominees

- Mars trilogy – Kim Stanley Robinson
- Good Omens – Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman
- The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (first n books, for a given value of n) – Douglas Adams
- Anathem – Neal Stephenson
- Midnight's Children – Salman Rushdie
- The Chrysalids – John Wyndham
- Temeraire series – Naomi Novik
- Anno Dracula series – Kim Newman
- Baslag – China Miéville
- Ender's Game series – Orson Scott Card
- Laundry series – Charles Stross
- Callahagn's Place – Spider Robinson
- The Name of the Wind – Patrick Rothfus
- Homestuck – Andrew Hussie
- Zones of Thought series – Vernor Vinge
- Saga of the Seven Suns – Poul Anderson
- A Song of Ice and Fire – George R R Martin
- Sandman – Neil Gaiman and various artists
- Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrel – Susannah Clarke
- The Passage – Justin Cronin

- Howl's Moving Castle (and sequels) – Dianna Wynne Jones
- The Gentlemen Bastards – Scott Lynch
- Shatnerquake series – Jeff Burk
- Vlad Taltos – Stephen Brust
- Perm series – Anne McCaffrey
- Discworld (Vimes sub-series) – Terry Pratchett
- Discworld (Death sub-series) – Terry Pratchett
- Quirk Classics (Pride and Prejudice and Zombies etc.) – various
- Oryx and Crake – Margaret Atwood
- [Harry Potter and the Methods of Rationality](#) – Eliezer Yudkowsky
- The Dresden Files – Jim Butcher
- Stories of Your Life and others – Ted Chiang
- Resurrection Inc. – Kevin J. Anderson
- Cities in Flight – James Blish
- Hainish cycle – Ursula Le Guin
- Changing Planes – Ursula Le Guin
- I, Lucifer – Glenn Duncan
- His Dark Materials – Phillip Pullman
- Mortal Engines quadrilogy – Phillip Reeve
- Watchmen – Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons
- The Moon is a Harsh Mistress – Robert Heinlein
- A Great and Terrible Beauty series – Libba Dray
- Ilium & Olympos – Dan Simmons
- Isaac Asimov's short stories
- Foundation trilogy – Isaac Asimov
- Phillip K. Dick's short stories
- The Old Kingdom series – Garth Nix
- The Hobbit & The Lord of the Rings – JRR Tolkien
- Death Note – Tsugumi Ohba and Takeshi Obata
- Harry Potter – JK Rowling
- First Law series – Joe Abercrombie
- Uglies – Scott Westerfeld
- Tigana – Guy Gabriel Kay
- Someone Comes to Town, Someone Leaves Town – Cory Doctorow
- The Hunger Games – Suzanne Collins
- The Goneaway World – Nick Harkaway
- Dune – Frank Herbert
- World of Watches series (aka Twilight (the Russian ones)) – Sergei Lukyanenko
- 1963 – Stephen King
- The Inheritance Cycle – Christopher Paolini

2011

Here are the books from a previous *Desert Planet Books* discussion on 12th October 2011.

Top Ten

1. The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (The first x books, for a given value of x) (D. Adams)
1. Good Omens (N. Gaiman/T. Pratchett)
1. His Dark Materials (P. Pullman)
4. Song Of Ice And Fire (G. Martin)
5. The Moon is a Harsh Mistress (R. Heinlein)
5. Foundation (I. Asimov)
7. Fahrenheit 451 (R. Bradbury)
8. Perdido St Station (C. Miéville)
9. Lord Of The Rings (J. Tolkien)
10. Saga Of The Eternal Champion (M. Moorcock)

The Nominees

- Dune (F. Herbert)
- Mortal Engines (P. Reeve)
- Hyperion (D. Simmons)
- Magician (R. Feist)
- Canticle For Leibowitz (W. Miller)
- Left Hand Of Darkness (U. Le Guin)
- Good Omens (N. Gaiman/T. Pratchett)
- The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (The first x books, for a given value of x) (D. Adams)
- Perdido St. Station (C. Miéville)
- Roadside Picnic (A. Strugatsky/ B. Strugatsky)
- Gamearth Trilogy (K. Anderson)

- Chronicles Of Thomas Covenant (S. Donaldson)
- Truckers/Diggers/Wings (T. Pratchett)
- Lord Of The Rings (J. Tolkein)
- Lifecycle of Software Objects & Collected Short Stories (T. Chiang)
- Snowcrash (N. Stevenson)
- Neuromancer (W. Gibson)
- Wheel Of Time (R. Jordan)
- Ender's Game (O. Card)
- Foundation (I. Asimov)
- The Collected Short Stories of Arthur C. Clarke
- The Moon is a Harsh Mistress (R. Heinlein)
- Starship Troopers (R. Heinlein)
- Childhood's End (A. Clarke)
- His Dark Materials (P. Pullman)
- Saga Of The Eternal Champion (M. Moorcock)
- Fahrenheit 451 (R. Bradbury)
- The Last Dragon Chronicles (C. De Lacey)
- Fire Upon The Deep/Deepness In The Sky (V. Vinge)
- Song Of Ice And Fire (G. Martin)
- Chrysalids (J. Vindham)
- Gone Away World (N. Harkaway)
- The Malazan Book Of The Fallen (S. Erikson)
- Lies of Locke Lamora (S. Lynch)
- Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell (S. Clarke)
- Mote in God's Eye (L. Niven/J. Pournelle)
- Revelation Space (A. Reynolds)
- Laundry Series (C. Stross)
- The Passage (J. Cronin)
- Permutation City (G. Egan)
- A Scanner Darkly (P. Dick)
- Sunshine (R. MacKinley)
- Declare (T. Powers)
- Edge Chronicles (P. Stewart/C. Riddell)
- The Handmaid's Tale (M. Atwood)

2010

Here are the books from a previous *Desert Planet Books* discussion on 13th October 2010.

Top Ten

1. Good Omens (Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman)
2. Sandman (Neil Gaiman)
3. Mortal Engines Quadrilogy (Philip Reeve)
3. Artemis Fowl (Eoin Colfer)
4. The Lord of the Rings (J.R.R. Tolkien)
4. The Foundation Trilogy (Issac Asimov)
4. The Bas-Lag Series (China Mieville)
5. The Commonwealth Saga (Peter F. Hamilton)
5. His Dark Materials (Philip Pullman)
5. Dune (Frank Herbert)

The Nominees

- Stories of Ibis (Hiroshi Yamamoto)
- Lies of Locke Lamora (Scott Lynch)
- Ash (Mary Gentle)
- Robots of Dawn (Asimov)
- The Fire Upon the Deep/
- A Deepness in the Sky (Vernor Vinge)
- The Chronicles of Isenbard Smith (Toby Frost)
- Guilty Pleasures (Laurell K Hamilton)
- Revelations Space Series (Alistair Reynolds)
- The Forever War (Joe Haldeman)
- The Dark Tower (Stephen King)
- The Amulet of Samarkand (Johnathan Stroud)
- Shades of Grey (Jasper Fforde)
- One Bloody Thing After Another (Joey Comeau)
- The Portable Doors Trilogy (Tom Holt)
- Let the Right One In (John Ajvide Lindqvist)
- Lord of Light (Roger Zelazny)

- Hyperion (Dan Symmons)
- Zombie Survival Guide (Max Brookes)
- Hard Boiled Wonderland and the
- End of the World (Murakami Haiuki)
- Finch (Jeff Vanderpire)
- Fionavar Tapestry Series (Guy Gavriel Kay)
- Ian Cormack Series (Niel Asher)
- Declare (Tim Powers)
- Stories of Your Life and Others (Ted Chiang)
- Use of Weapons (Ian M. Banks)

Lyndsey and others enthused about Ted Chiang's short stories available online, in particular [Seventy Two Letters](#) and [others](#).

2008

Here are the books from a previous *Desert Planet Books* discussion on 15th October 2008.

Top Ten

- Good Omens - Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett
- Dune - Frank Herbert
- The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy - Douglas Adams
- The Earthsea Quartet - Ursula K. Le Guin
- His Dark Materials - Philip Pullman
- The Once And Future King - Terence Hanbury White
- Stories Of Your Life And Others - Ted Chiang
- War Of The Worlds - H.G. Wells
- Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell - Susanna Clarke
- Brave New World - Aldous Huxley

The Nominees

- Lord Of The Rings - J.R.R. Tolkien
- Robots And Empire - Isaac Asimov
- Foundation - Isaac Asimov
- Caves Of Steel - Isaac Asimov
- Expecting Someone Taller - Tom Holt
- Harry Potter - J.K. Rowling
- Day Of The Triffids - John Wyndham
- Revelation Space - Alastair Reynolds
- Across the Nightingale Floor - Lian Hearn
- The Sterkarm Handshake - Susan Price
- The Baker's Boy - J. V. Jones
- Magician - Raymond E. Feist
- Lord Of Light - Roger Zelazny
- Lies Of Locke Lamora - Scott Lynch
- A Sudden Wild Magic - Diana Wynne Jones
- The Last Hero - Terry Pratchett
- The Dark Is Rising - Susan Cooper
- Stardust - Neil Gaiman
- Peter Pan - J. M. Barrie
- The Chronicles of Narnia - C. S. Lewis
- Sabriel - Garth Nix
- Enders Game - Orson Scott Card
- Grimms Fairy Tales - Brothers Grimm
- The Player Of Games - The Player of Games
- The Eyre Affair - Jasper Fforde
- The Martian Chronicles - Ray Bradbury
- The Bartimaeus Trilogy - Jonathan Stroud
- Perdido Street Station - China Mieville
- A Game of Thrones - George R.R. Martin
- The Farseer Trilogy - Robin Hobb
- Watchmen (Graphic Novel) - Alan Moore
- Sandman (Graphic Novel) - Neil Gaiman
- Time - Stephen Baxter
- The Man In The High Castle - Philip K. Dick
- Slaughterhouse Five - Kurt Vonnegut
- Snow Crash - Neal Stephenson

Lists compiled by Lyuba Bozhilova (2017&2016&2014), Rory Evans (2015), Thea Hutchison and Miriam Backens

