



Newsletter 012, 2024Q1

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Hello everyone! I hope 2024 is going well for you. Progress on my novel *The Osect Indiscretion* continues - and sometime it feels like it will never be done. But I try to make progress every week. I've taken small breaks here and there to write some short stories and submit my work to publishers, though I have nothing to report at this time. Efforts leading the Speculative Fiction Writers Association take a lot of time, but it is satisfying to help the development of other authors.

There are so many interesting things going on in the scientific community that each day it seems more things are transitioning from science fiction to science fact. Humanity is again pushing outward to the moon and planets, the James Webb telescope is identifying cosmic history, and scientists are making ground-breaking discoveries at the quantum level. What a time to be alive.

Without further ado, I hope you enjoy this edition of my newsletter.

## Latest News



### **NEW - Editing and Beta Reading Services Launched!**

After learning and honing my editing and critiquing skills for the past few years as part of the Speculative Fiction Writers Association, I've decided to launch Editing and Beta Reading services to the public. This is the beginning of an exciting new chapter as I continue to expand my involvement in the writing and publishing community.

Anyone needing assistance with their writing of any length, from flash fiction to epic saga of multiple novels, can reach out for help with planning, plot development, character arcs, scenes, building tension, or any other area of writing fiction is welcome to reach out.

For further information, please visit my website at:

<https://www.matthewcushing.com/services>



### Hugo Awards Bow to Chinese Censorship

I don't normally write a lot of editorial posts as I prefer the focus of my newsletter and blog on the fun things about writing speculative fiction, including tips and tricks, fun lists, and reviews of books that others might enjoy. However, the recent actions and events surrounding the 2023 Hugo Awards have left me angry and dismayed.

For those who don't know, the Hugo Awards are one of the preeminent speculative fiction awards. They are known as a 'science fiction award', but many of the nominees and winners are clearly in other genres such as fantasy, time travel, or even the supernatural. The Hugos date back to the 1950s and are named after Hugo Gernsback, founder of the pioneering sci-fi magazine *Amazing Stories*.

The Hugos are awarded to works based on the voting of members who sign up for the annual World Science Fiction Convention, or WorldCon--though members don't actually need to attend to vote. Any work published within the past year is eligible, and members can nominate up to five works in each category (novel, series, screenplay, short story, etc.) The top six nominees make up the final ballot with a final vote to choose the winner. Though the underlying process is a bit complicated, the results are normally straightforward.

But not last year. With the 2023 WorldCon held in Chengdu, China, organizing members of that convention, either through direct or indirect pressure from the Chinese government, decided to eliminate any work that the Chinese might consider offensive.

Read the full article on my blog at: <https://www.matthewcushing.com/post/hugo-awards-bow-to-chinese-censorship>

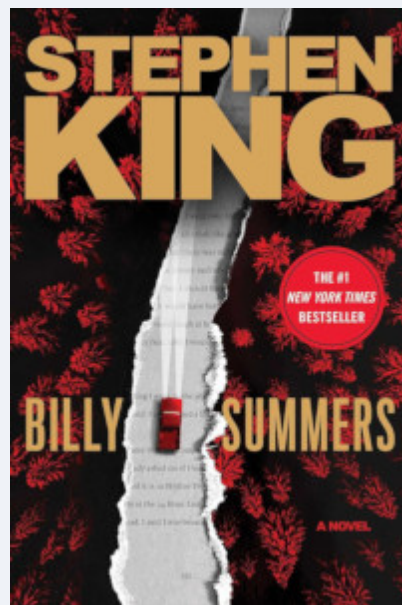
### Book Recommendations

Read reviews for these titles and others on my website at: <https://www.matthewcushing.com/blog/categories/review>



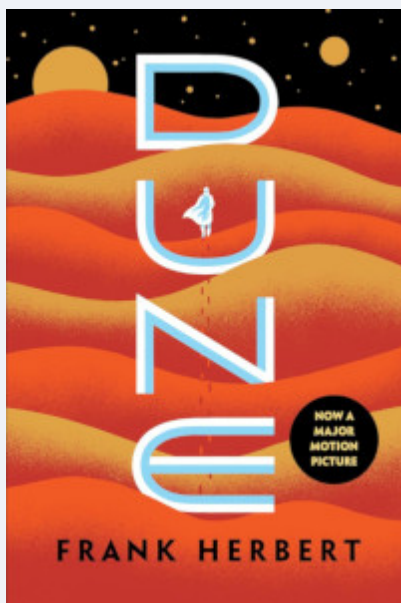
***The Mountain In the Sea***  
by Ray Nayler

In a world of depleted resources and over-fishing, Ray Nayler examines how humans respond to discovering a new sentience.



***Billy Summers***  
by Stephen King

Stephen King at his storytelling finest about the emotional toll of a hitman infiltrating a welcoming community.



***Dune***  
by Frank Herbert

A galactic epic examination of politics and power among corporate families vying for the galaxy's most valuable resource.



***Fourth Wing***  
by Rebecca Yarros

With huge vibes of Eragon and Harry Potter, Rebecca Yarros levels up with a story very much adult-oriented.

## Writing Excerpt - *Luna Cantata*

"DrillOps, this is ShuttleOneOne. I request full shutdown of all beam operations. We've got a 'danger' situation." Jacobsen studied the pulsing drill beam that connected the enormous orbital platform to the moon below.

"ShuttleOneOne, that is a negative. All systems nominal. We are aware of no imminent danger to staff or equipment. Harvest profile is progressing to plan."

"DrillOps, situation is not on the platform but with the Voosla, as I have reported several times. Terminate the drill beam immediately." They hadn't listened before, so why would they now? Yet Jacobsen held out hope.

"ShuttleOneOne, you are entering a restricted sector. Adjust course away from the reactor module and return to main shuttle bay."

“But they’re dying, don’t you see? This is your final warning.” He input coordinates deep within the platform. Collision trajectory locked.

“ShuttleOneOne, we do not have the authority to shut down the beam. Only a direct order from H-Q can cease mining operations.”

“Then you better get them on the line.”

Jacobsen turned in the cramped cockpit of ShuttleOneOne and checked the status of his cargo. The half-dozen antimatter fuel tanks packed into the hold still showed green. Stable for now.

This close to the reactor, the beam’s hum rattled Jacobsen’s auditory implants, shooting stabs of pain through his head and making it difficult to concentrate—and staying focused was critical. He swallowed two green pills from his pocket. The neural anesthetics would dull the pain for a bit, until everything was over, one way or another.

## Thank You

A heartfelt **Thank You** to everyone who has subscribed to this newsletter. Your support of my writing is both invaluable and motivating. If you want more up-to-date information on what I'm doing--from what I'm reading to what I'm working on--please visit my website at [www.matthewcushing.com](http://www.matthewcushing.com). Or, you can follow me on X or Threads at [@mhcushing](https://www.threads.net/@mhcushing)

If you know anyone who loves speculative fiction (science fiction, fantasy, horror, time travel, dystopian, utopian, steampunk, solarpunk, climate fiction, space opera, urban fantasy, supernatural, etc.), please forward them a copy of this newsletter and encourage them to sign up!

Klaatu Barada Nikto, Live Long and Prosper, and Nanoo Nanoo!

**Matthew Cushing**

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