Kirkus Reviews Best of 2015
Science Fiction and Fantasy

DARK ORBIT. By Carolyn Ives Gilman
SF GIL
"A thoroughly engrossing story with a fast-paced plot, memorable characters, and big ideas, this book is science fiction at its very best."
A gripping story in which travelers to a distant world grapple with new people, new ideas, and ancient obsessions.

THE LIBRARY AT MOUNT CHAR. By Scott Hawkins
SF HAW
"A wholly original, engrossing, disturbing, and beautiful book. You've never read anything quite like this, and you won't soon forget it."
A spellbinding story of world-altering power and revenge from debut novelist Hawkins.

LIGHTLESS. By C.A. Higgins
SF HIG
"A suspenseful, emotional story that asks plenty of big questions about identity and freedom, this is a debut not to be missed."
A tense psychodrama set on a malfunctioning spaceship.

ANCILLARY MERCY. By Ann Leckie
SF LEC
"Wraps up the story arc with plenty of room to tell many more tales in this universe. Let's hope Leckie does."
In the conclusion to Leckie's multiaward-winning trilogy (Ancillary Justice, 2013; Ancillary Sword, 2014), Fleet Captain Breq Mianaai directly confronts Anaander Mianaai, the interstellar ruler who blew up Justice of Toren, the ship that housed Breq's consciousness.

THE DARK FOREST. By Cixin Liu
SF LIU
"Once again, a highly impressive must-read."
Second part of an alien-contact trilogy (The Three-Body Problem, 2014) from China's most celebrated science-fiction author.
THREE MOMENTS OF AN EXPLOSION: STORIES. By China Miéville
SF MIÉ
"Bradbury meets Borges, with Lovecraft gibbering tumultuously just out of hearing."
Horror, noir, fantasy, politics, and poetry swirl into combinations as satisfying intellectually as they are emotionally.

THE WATCHMAKER OF FILIGREE STREET. By Natasha Pulley
SF PUL
"Clever and engaging, this impressive first novel will reward both casual readers looking for a fun period adventure and those fascinated by the tension between free will and fate."
Set mostly in 1880s London, Pulley's debut novel twists typical steampunk elements—telegraphs, gaslight, clockwork automata—into a fresh and surprising philosophical adventure.

AURORA. By Kim Stanley Robinson
SF ROB
"A compelling (if depressing) argument against those who still dream of an interstellar manifest destiny."
Robinson's latest well-researched novel exposes the fundamental flaws in one of science fiction's most beloved tropes: the multigenerational space ark traveling at sub-light speed to colonize a planet around a distant star.

CHASING THE PHOENIX. By Michael Swanwick
SF SWA
"Swanwick's approaching top form, and this one's just too good to miss."
A new entry in Swanwick's picaresque post-apocalyptic series, following Dancing with Bears (2011) and various short stories.

THE AFFINITIES. By Robert Charles Wilson
SF WIL
"An intriguing and seriously innovative attempt to grapple with some of the issues raised by the 21st century's obsession with social media."
Social science fiction from the author of Burning Paradise (2013, etc.).