

# **2025 Hugo Administrators' Report**



## **Seattle Worldcon 2025**

## **Membership of the subcommittee**

The initial Seattle Worldcon Hugo Sub-committee consisted of Nicholas Whyte (Hugo Administrator and WSFS Deputy Division Head), Esther MacCallum-Stewart (Deputy Administrator), Cassidy (WSFS Division Head), Kathryn Duval (Deputy Division Head) and Rosemary Parks (Deputy Division Head).

The Seattle Worldcon Committee irrevocably delegated all decisions regarding the Hugos to the subcommittee on September 22, 2024.

Nicholas Whyte, Esther MacCallum-Stewart, and Cassidy resigned on May 5, 2025. Kathryn Duval took on the role of WSFS Division Head and Hugo Administrator. Rosemary Parks became WSFS Deputy Division Head and Deputy Hugo Administrator.

## **Large language models**

Large language models (LLMs) were not used at any stage of the Hugo process in 2025.

## **Software**

The Nomnom system developed by Chris Rose performed admirably in processing the nominations and final ballots, as it did in 2024. This system interfaced with the ConTroll registration system used by the convention.

## **Nomination Votes cast**

1334 nominating votes were cast using the electronic interface developed by ConTroll and Chris Rose.

4 nominating votes were input into the system by the Administrators from emailed submissions.

2 nominating votes, sent by surface mail, arrived two and a half weeks after the deadline, and were not counted.

All nominating votes were deemed to have been cast by eligible, natural persons; no nominating votes were disqualified.

At the request of the voter in question, one satirical vote, input during the test stage, was discounted.

## **Votes moved between categories**

Under Subsection 3.2:

**3.8.7:** The Committee shall move a nomination from another category to the work's default category only if the member has made fewer than five (5) nominations in the default category.

**3.8.8:** If a work is eligible in more than one category, and if the work receives sufficient nominations to appear in more than one category, the Worldcon Committee shall determine in which category the work shall appear, based on the category in which it receives the most nominations.

**3.8.9:** If a work receives a nomination in its default category, and if the Committee relocates the work under its authority under Subsection 3.2.8 or 3.2.10, the Committee shall count the nomination even if the member already has made five (5) nominations in the more-appropriate category.

The cited subsections are:

**3.2.8:** The Worldcon Committee may relocate a story into a more appropriate category if it feels that it is necessary, provided that the length of the story is within twenty percent (20%) of the new category limits.

**3.2.10:** The Worldcon Committee may relocate a dramatic presentation work into a more appropriate category if it feels that it is necessary, provided that the length of the work is within twenty percent (20%) of the new category boundary.

These do not perfectly reflect the process by which votes are tallied and counted. Subsection 3.8.9 in particular places an unnecessary burden on administrators, and is unfair on nominees, and should be rescinded. It might also be helpful to move the relevant subsections to all be in the same part of the Constitution.

It is also not clear to what extent votes **can** be moved into the print fiction and dramatic presentation categories, other than from other print fiction and dramatic presentation categories.

We note below the movement of votes along with other notes for each category.

## Best Novel

Votes moved:

Title	a	b	c	d	e	f
Someone You Can Build a Nest In	125	Best Novella	1	1	0	126
City in Glass	55	Best Novella	10	1	9	56
Dead Cat Tail Assassins	49	Best Novella	35	9	26	58
The Familiar	18	Best Novella	1	1	0	19

a - original votes in main category; b - second category with votes for nominee; c - votes in second category; d - votes moved from second to main category; e - votes not moved from second to main category; f - total votes in main category as reported

## Best Novella

**Navigational Entanglements**, by Aliette de Bodard, is 42,600 words long. 77% of those who nominated it did so in the Best Novella category. It is within 20% of the 40,000 words threshold. We therefore determined that, under subsection 3.2.8, we would count it as a novella. 14 of the 18 votes cast for it in Best Novel were movable to the Best Novella category.

Votes moved:

Title	a	b	c	d	e	f
The Practice, The Horizon, and The Chain	119	Best Novel	1	1	0	120
Navigational Entanglements	61	Best Novel	18	14	4	75
Lost Ark Dreaming	50	Best Novel	3	2	1	52
Livesuit	23	Best Novelette	1	1	0	24
North Continent Ribbon	16	Best Novel	5	4	1	20
Ganger	15	Best Novel	1	1	0	16
Unexploded Remnants	9	Best Short Story	1	1	0	10
After Hours	9	Best Short Story	3	3	0	12
Bitter Waters	8	Best Novel	1	1	0	9

a - original votes in main category; b - second category with votes for nominee; c - votes in second category; d - votes moved from second to main category; e - votes not moved from second to main category; f - total votes in main category as reported

## Best Novelette

Title	a	b	c	d	e	f
Signs of Life	57	Best Short Story	1	1	0	58
The Brotherhood of Montague St. Video	45	Best Short Story	1	1	0	46
Lake of Souls	40	Best Novel & Best Short Story	1 & 1	1 & 1	0	42
By Salt, By Sea, By Light of Stars	35	Best Short Story	1	1	0	36
Negative Scholarship on the Fifth State of Being	30	Best Short Story	1	1	0	31
The Robot	28	Best Short Story	2	2	0	30
Encore	25	Best Short Story	3	2	1	27
Katya Vasilievna and the Second Drowning of Baba Rechka	22	Best Novella	1	1	0	23
Himalia	22	Best Short Story	1	1	0	23
Stars Don't Dream / 不做梦的群星	15	Best Novel	1	1	0	16
The Best Version of Yourself	12	Best Novella	1	1	0	13

a - original votes in main category; b - second category with votes for nominee; c - votes in second category; d - votes moved from second to main category; e - votes not moved from second to main category; f - total votes in main category as reported

## Best Short Story

Title	a	b	c	d	e	f
The Wood At Midwinter	22	Best Novella & Best Novelette	1 & 1	1 & 1	0	24
An Intergalactic Smuggler's Guide to Homecoming	21	Best Novelette	1	1	0	22
Autumn's Red Bird	10	Best Novella	1	1	0	11
You Will Be You Again	9	Best Novel	1	1	0	10

a - original votes in main category; b - second category with votes for nominee; c - votes in second category; d - votes moved from second to main category; e - votes not moved from second to main category; f - total votes in main category as reported

## Best Series

**The Singing Hills Cycle**, by Nghi Vo, received enough votes to be a finalist. However, by the end of 2024 the published stories of the series comprised fewer than 240,000 words, and so we determined that it was ineligible. That brought **The Stormlight Archive**, by Brandon Sanderson, onto the ballot.

## Best Graphic Story or Comic

**Star Trek Lower Decks: Warp Your Own Way** is (on the face of it) an interactive story where the reader chooses their own path through the story. We therefore considered whether it would be more appropriate to consider it also, or instead, as a nominee in the Best Game or Interactive Work category.

However, we noted that it has been marketed as a graphic novel, and, perhaps more important, not a single voter nominated it in the Best Game or Interactive Work category. Without being more specific (to avoid spoilers), there is also a twist in that the story that breaks its own internal “rules”. We therefore determined that **Warp Your Own Way** should be considered only in the Best Graphic Story or Comic category.

## Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form

**Flow** is 85 minutes in length and **Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl** is 79 minutes in length. In both cases, voters overwhelmingly nominated them in the Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form category, so we used our authority under Subsection 3.2.12 of the Constitution to count them as Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form nominees.

Votes moved:

Title	a	b	c	d	e	f
Flow	73	BDP Short	12	9	3	82
Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl	34	BDP Short	9	8	1	42
Mars Express	15	BDP Short	2	2	0	17

a - original votes in main category; b - second category with votes for nominee; c - votes in second category; d - votes moved from second to main category; e - votes not moved from second to main category; f - total votes in main category as reported

### Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form

**Dune: The Musical** was first performed in 2023, and we therefore excluded it from this category. That brought **Fallout: “The Beginning”** onto the ballot.

The creator of **Dune: The Musical** told us that he had been told by “Glasgow” that it would be eligible, and pointed out that it had appeared on the volunteer-run Hugo eligibility spreadsheet and been marked as eligible there. We do not dispute these statements. However, the Glasgow 2024 Hugo Sub-committee was not formally approached on this question, and if it had been, it would have deferred to the Seattle Worldcon Hugo administrators.

We very much appreciate the work that goes into the volunteer-run Hugo spreadsheet, which is clearly one of the most important sources of information for voters at the nominations stage, and very helpfully drives participation in the awards as a whole. It is unfortunate if any confusion arose with respect to **Dune: The Musical**. Perhaps it might be helpful to state more clearly that the eligibility determinations on the Hugo spreadsheet are not necessarily definitive.

We remain very reluctant to create any expectation that Hugo administrators will make eligibility rulings in advance of the calculation of the final ballot. The rules in general are clear without any need for further elaboration (as they were in this case) and the administration process is made much more efficient by making eligibility rulings only for those works that have qualified, or potentially qualified, for the final ballot.

Another nominee, **The Dark Room**, presented us with several challenges. It received 25 nominations in Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form; 1 nomination in Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form; and 6 nominations in Best Game or Interactive Work. If we had transferred all of those nominations to Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form, it would not have been enough to allow **The Dark Room** to qualify for the ballot; but if we had transferred all or most of the nominations to the Best Game category, it probably would have qualified.

Subsection 3.2.12 of the Constitution states: “The Worldcon Committee may relocate a dramatic presentation work into a more appropriate category if it feels that it is necessary, provided that the length of the work is within twenty percent (20%) of the new category boundary.”

On the face of it, this precludes the Hugo Administrators from relocating votes for a Dramatic Presentation work other than between the two Dramatic Presentation categories, so we determined that we were not able to move the Dramatic Presentation votes for **The Dark Room** to the Best Game or Interactive Work category, or vice versa. We admit that this is a matter of interpretation that future Administrators may see differently.

However, if **The Dark Room** had become a potential finalist in either category, we would then have faced a similar problem to that with **Dune: The Musical**; it has been performed as a “live video game” since 2012, and we would have needed to investigate whether the 2024 performances could be considered a new production. Our initial presumption would have been in the negative, but we would have carried out further research before making a determination.

### **Best Game or Interactive Work**

**Caves of Qud** has been available in one form or another since 2007. However the December 2024 publication of what was billed as the 1.0 version of the game clearly qualifies as a “substantial modification”, sufficient for its eligibility on the final ballot, and we determined that it is eligible.

See above for discussion of **The Dark Room**.

### **Best Editor, Long Form**

One of the finalists, very honorably, approached us to query their own eligibility because they did not feel that their own role as editor on one of their four qualifying books had been as significant as in the other three cases.

We investigated, and found that both the author and the publisher had described this finalist as “editor” of the book in their publicity at the time of publication in 2024. We do not feel that the Hugo administrators are in a position to contradict the public statements of this finalist’s employer and the writer whose book they edited, and we determined that this finalist was eligible.

We had one other eligibility query in this category; we were asked if a finalist’s four qualifying books all need to have been published by the same publisher. We determined that they do not.

### **Best Semiprozine**

**Beneath Ceaseless Skies** declined nomination in this category. This brought **The Deadlands** onto the ballot.



## Best Poem

**Calypso** received 17 nominating votes in the Best Poem category, but also 13 in Best Novel and 1 in Best Novella. Similarly to the case of **The Dark Room**, discussed above, we determined that we would not combine the votes from different categories; **Calypso** qualified comfortably for the ballot counting just the votes from Best Poem.

## Lodestar Award

Andrew Joseph White declined nomination for his novel **Compound Fracture**. This brought **So Let Them Burn**, by Kamilah Cole, onto the ballot.

In **Sheine Lende** by Darcy Little Badger, it is clear that the protagonist's name should be spelt "Shéine Łendé" in the Lipan Apache language. However it is also clear that the published title of the book eschews diacritical marks. We think this is unfortunate, but we used the title of the book as published for our official records.

## Astounding Award

Two of the finalists for the *Astounding* Award were already known to have published fiction before 2023, but we determined that neither had crossed the threshold of professional publication under the rules.

## Post-announcement withdrawals

The final ballot was announced on 6 April. On 2 May, Yoon Ha Lee informed us that he wished to withdraw his novel **Moonstorm** from the Lodestar Award.

Subsection 3.10.1 of the Constitution states:

Worldcon Committees shall use reasonable efforts to notify the finalists, or in the case of deceased or incapacitated persons, their heirs, assigns, or legal guardians, in each category **prior** [emphasis added] to the release of such information. Each person notified shall be asked at that time to either accept or decline the nomination. If the person notified declines nomination, that finalist(s) shall not appear on the final ballot. The procedure for replacement of such finalist(s) is described in subsection 3.9.4.

Sub-section 3.9.4 of the Constitution states:

After the initial Award ballot is generated, if any finalist(s) are removed for any reason, they will be replaced by other works in reverse order of elimination.

During the process of identifying the finalists, we had used this process to replace the two potential finalists who were not eligible and the two who declined nomination.

However, Sub-section 3.10.1 of the constitution applies explicitly only to the period **prior** to the release of the final ballot. There are real logistical challenges with re-generating the ballot as

late as 2 May, almost four weeks after the finalist names had appeared. With Yoon Ha Lee's agreement, therefore, we retained **Moonstorm** on the ballot, with a note that the author had withdrawn it from consideration.

## **Hugo Voter Packet**

The Hugo Voter Packet has become a tradition at Worldcons although it is not a constitutional obligation or even regulated by the Constitution.

This year's Hugo Voter Packet was the most accessible it's ever been, thanks to the voter last year who asked us to include audiobooks, and the staff member this year who asked us to check the text versions of Packet materials for accessibility (and taught us how to do that). It was far from perfect, but significantly better than it's been before, and we have ideas for improving things further for future Packets.

The Packet this year was the largest ever. As usual, we provided this year's Packet as a set of downloads, one for each Hugo category, as well as a single download for the entire Packet. We also provided a couple of other options for downloading most of the Packet but leaving out some of the largest files and folders, to make downloads faster for voters who didn't need those.

Unfortunately, we don't have data about how many Worldcon members downloaded some or all of the Packet.

Thanks to all of the authors and artists and editors and publishers and studios who granted us permission to include materials in the Packet. Thanks, too, to the finalists and the staff members of publishers and studios who put in extra work to provide us with Packet materials that matched our accessibility guidance.

## **Final Ballot Voting**

Detailed information on voting for the final ballot is contained in a separate document 2025 Hugo Voting Statistics. In summary, 1962 final ballots were counted over all 21 categories, including this year's special category for best poem.

## **Thanks**

We thank the great many individuals who worked on the 2025 Hugo Awards for their contributions.

We are exceptionally grateful to Chris Rose who created and managed the Nomnom system used in our nomination and voting process. He worked tirelessly to build in canonicalization for the nomination period under tight deadlines. He has truly earned the title Hugo Plumber.

We appreciate the work of our Hugo eligibility research team John Coxon and Liz Batty.

Many thanks to our liaison team of John Coxon, Alison Scott and Gisele Peterson. We are grateful for their work.

We also want to acknowledge and thank Terry Neill as the Hugo Help; Jed Hartman as our Hugo Voter Packet coordinator; Tom Becker, Spike, Scott Bobo and Ed Scarbrough as our Hugo trophy wranglers. And we thank the many members of the Events Division who ran the Hugo Awards ceremony.

Much of the content of this report is regarding work and decisions made in conjunction with the former members of our team, we gratefully appreciate all their contributions during the nomination process and the beginning of the voting process.

Kathryn Duval, WSFS Division Head and Hugo Administrator

Rosemary Parks, Deputy Hugo Administrator