

L.A. STARKS



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L. A. Starks Newsletter, Fall 2010

Welcome to my semi-annual newsletter.

New Releases:

I'm excited to announce a short story, *Gumbo Filé*, coming soon! You can find it with nineteen other thriller and horror stories in an anthology published by L&L Dreamspell called [DREAMSPELL NIGHTMARES](#). **Nightmares** will be available in print at Barnes & Noble and Amazon and in e-book on several platforms.

Equally exciting, [13 DAYS: THE PYTHAGORAS CONSPIRACY](#) is hot off the wire as an e-book! Also accepted and published by L&L Dreamspell, it's at Kindle, at multi-format Fictionwise (a Barnes & Noble company), and at OmniLit. Within a few weeks, and all of L&L Dreamspell's one hundred books will also be available from Apple i-Books, Kobo Books, and library specialist Overdrive. Check out the cool cover for the [e-book edition](#).

Swag:

All L&L Dreamspell covers, including the **Nightmares anthology** and [13 DAYS](#), can be flaunted on your favorite swag from Café Press. Café Press offers illustrated keepsakes from trucker hats to hoodies to mugs and boxers.

Print Edition of [13 DAYS](#) and Short Stories:

[13 DAYS](#) in [print](#) continues to provide a base for energy discussion, notably the Macondo disaster (more below at Energy). During the summer I spoke at a book signing hosted by the Weekend Reader Bookshop and the Balch Springs Public Library.

Amazon Shorts gave its authors the chance to move our works to Kindle, and I took it. *Robert and Thérèse Guillard: Choices*, furnishes back story on one of [13 DAYS'](#) antagonists. *A Time for Eating Wild Onions* introduces two key characters in the second book. Both are priced at just ninety-nine cents.

Writing:

I have written about three-fourths of a “good” draft of my second book, also an energy thriller. Some characters continue from [13 DAYS](#), notably protagonist Lynn Dayton. Several characters are new or have more emphasis.

Reading:

Of the fifty-two books I've read so far this year, several stand out. I liked Helen Grant's book, *The Vanishing of Katharina Linden*. It's been described as a modern Grimm's fairy tale, told through the eyes of a ten-year-old protagonist.

At the recommendation of Cynthia Crossen, books aficionado for *The Wall Street Journal*, I'm reading *Blame*, by Michelle Huneven.

I've begun reading Russian noir by Martin Cruz Smith, starting with *Three Stations* and *Gorky Park* and continuing to *Stalin's Ghost*, my first Kindle book. While I expect to continue to buy the majority of my books in physical form, the Kindle is a sure space-saver.

I enjoyed the newest, highly topical thriller from Brad Thor, *Foreign Influence*. I don't read many memoirs, but *Nomad* by Ayaan Hirsi Ali is exceptional, and motivational. I recommend it.

I also read all of Nobel Prize winner Huerta Müller's books that have been translated into English; I'm looking forward to the novels of Peruvian Mario Vargas Llosa, this year's winner. My own nonfiction champ, *Power Hungry* by Robert Bryce, is simply the best book on energy policy published in the last

decade. It's numerate, literate, and engaging. Put it at the top of your list. And, this segues to the next topic.

Energy:

The Macondo oil rig explosion in the Gulf of Mexico provided many lessons at the cost of great tragedy. As operator, BP had the ultimate contractual responsibility. It's been said before, but with US exploration limited to the central and western Gulf, deepwater drilling requires the expertise and laser focus on safety of a moon shot. Most companies working in deepwater achieve it. Unfortunately, the price of even one Macondo is massive.

Macondo, by the way, refers to a similarly unlucky town in Gabriel Garcia Marquez' **One Hundred Years of Solitude**.

Moving onshore, to the chagrin of its producers, natural gas shales seem to exist everywhere. Companies are shifting domestic capital to oil shales.

Together with ace website designer Clara Mizenko, I'm constructing an energy economics website that will feature free and subscription pages. More about it in the next newsletter.

Personal:

Some, but not all of you, may know my younger sister died in her sleep the morning of Sunday, September 26th. She had just turned fifty in August. Linda had been diagnosed with stage IV cancer at the end of 2008. Although I was fortunate to have twenty months with her after her diagnosis, the loss is profound.

Until next time,

L. A. Starks



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