

## My Top 4 Books

Fantasy: *Imager's Intrigue* by L E Modesitt, Jr.

*Review*

*Imager's Intrigue* completes the story that LE Modesitt Jr. began in *Imager*. It again deals with Rhenn, the son of a wool factor who studied as an artist and ended up as an Imager, a person who images things into being. In this book, he faces many problems right off the bat. A very potent form of elveweed, a drug, is killing addicts in the slums. The drug dealers are growing more and more cocky, even using their funds to buy weapons and fighting the watchmen sent after them. This, along with corruption in the Watch, a certain naval officer becoming suddenly interested in his affairs and the constant looming threat from foreign powers, is understandably weighing on the young Imager and Watch captain. But is it possible that all of these events are related, even guided, by some unknown and unfriendly entity? Read on to find out.

Science Fiction: *Ship Breaker* by Paolo Bagigalupi

*Review*

*Ship Breaker* tells a grim tale of a shattered future. In America's Gulf Coast Region, any semblance of law and order disappeared decades ago. Now, the only money comes from finding valuable metals in all the rotting hulks that wash ashore, and the only protection from paying some toughs to enforce it. The beaches are a dangerous place, where one step into the wrong person's territory could get you killed, and the only safety comes from being in a ship-stripping crew. Nailer is one such worker, who crawls into the ducts of the ships to strip wires and cables. When he and a friend discover a passenger boat washed ashore with a girl in it, they aren't sure what to do. When the daughter turns out to be the daughter of a billionaire businessman who purchases all the scraps harvested on the beach, he has to make the choice between handing her over to her father's enemies, and striking it rich, and saving her life.

Nonfiction: *Collapse* by Jared Diamond

*Review*

In this fascinating book about rise and fall of cultures past, present and future, Jared Diamond looks at the factors that have led to civilizations succeeding and failing. It starts off with two farms in Greenland, looking at the factors that led to one's demise and the other's success. It then branches out to cultures all over the world, from the famous Easter Island people to the Anasazi in the Americas. Throughout the book, the same sorts of mistakes come up again and again: overpopulation, resource depletion, and not being willing to adapt. Modern cultures are also discussed, from the terrible situation in Rwanda to the United States. It isn't all doom and gloom, however. Some cultures discussed are ones that managed to succeed by efficiently managing their population size and natural resources. Lastly, the book finishes with a warning of what may be to come. The world cannot support the current population forever, and something may happen soon unless we start making difficult choices. An excellent read.

Nonfiction: Cradle to Cradle by William McDonough and Michael Braungart  
*Review*

To say Cradle to Cradle is just a book is a bit like saying that our world is just a ball of rock, drifting through space, which happens to be able to support life. Superficially true, but it doesn't capture any of the amazing and awe-inspiring sights and ideas contained within. You see, Cradle to Cradle isn't just a how-to book on how to clean up our world and stop our wasteful ways, although it does cover many ways we can do so. It's a blueprint for a new way of life, a new way of looking at the world and its resources, that humanity will need to adopt or risk cultural collapse on an enormous scale. As I know from reading Collapse, a book that looked back at how and why societies have collapsed, overuse and misuse of resources spelled the end for countless civilizations, from tribes on Easter Island to the mighty Incas. The world is changing, because of foolish decisions powerful people in our past made and still are making today, and we need to adapt to it, beginning now. In Cradle to Cradle, you'll see the blueprints for a new way of life, one that sees nature as an inspiration and an ally instead of a hindrance to financial success, one that places people, the environment and commerce on an equal footing and tends to the various needs of each. It might sound impossible, but there are countries and organizations that are already beginning to implement some of these ideas to great effect. Cradle to Cradle, and other books that flesh out the ideas within, may well become universally read in the world of the future, to help citizens understand and come to accept a new way of looking at the world.