



# the zine

Issue #6 | December 2012

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Welcome to the latest issue of The 'Zine!

Thanks to the lovely people that submitted things, there's lots of stuff for you to enjoy so you've got no excuse not to get stuck in!

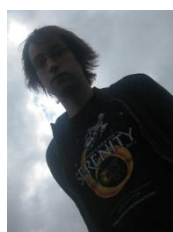
## Who's on the committee this year?

### President: Mike Krawec



Michael Krawec was born in Manchester in 1992. After being educated at Castlebrook High School and Holy Cross College he went to study Biology at the University of Nottingham. At the start of his second year of studying he became Vice-President of the Science Fiction & Fantasy Society, at the end of the same year he became President of the now renamed Science Fiction, Fantasy & Anime Society. He is currently in his third year of studying. He enjoys reading and other things.

### Vice-President: Hal Martin



Hailing from the frigid northlands (read: East Yorkshire), Harry 'Hal' Martin is the current Vice-President, but prefers the title of President of Vice and Ex. He is currently in his third year of study reading Medicinal Chemistry. He aims to one day make drugs and medicine, and will definitely not end the world in a zombie apocalypse, Umbrella-style. He mainly enjoys fantasy works, but also likes anime as well as science fiction, mainly Dr Who and Battlestar.

### Treasurer: Ed Wastell



Hi, I'm Ed. I'm a third year physics student and I have no amusing nickname/title. Feel free to make one up. I have a bad habit of hiding at the back of gatherings and such, so feel free to come and talk to me if you have any questions/interesting thoughts.

### Librarian: Verity Hanson



Hi, I'm Verity, although more and more people have started to call me Vexen (it has absolutely nothing to do with my MIND ERASING LASER BEAM!!). I'm studying Natural Sciences but in my case that actually means Maths and Physics. I'm the librarian therefore all

your books belong to me, even the ones you haven't bought yet. One thing I know for sure is that I will find out how it get into L-space.

### **Secretary: Helen Worrall**



Helen is a little delusional with self grandeur, and likes to call herself the Overlord Emperor King. You mustn't let that put you off though, she only thinks she rules the universe. She's doing her second year of a Classical Civilisation and English Studies and aims to one day be a speech and language therapist. She has varied sci-fi/fantasy interests including star trek, web comics and niche areas of anime. She also has some massive gaps in her knowledge, so don't be surprised if she hasn't

seen the Alien films!

### **Social Sec: Grace Currah / Tang Ka Wing**



Having spent most of her time at university running around being late, Grace generally fails at most things outside the society. She grew up reading fantasy novels and developed a love for the genre. She hopes to eventually earn enough money to live and continue her ever growing library. She enjoys pretty much all films and has recently taken a keen interest in anime and manga.



Though coming from the far far away land of Hong Kong, Tanka is up for organising social activities for the society and getting herself familiar to this foreign land at the same time. Outside society work she enjoys watching anime, writing fan fiction or just simply fangirl-ing over everything.

### **Webmaster: Ben May**



After defeating the forces of Reopen Nomination Ben became Webmaster with much fanfare and celebration. Aside from Sci-Fi he enjoys gaming (both computer and SATT), TV and physics.

### **Anime Rep: Mike Begg**



Attending the University of Nottingham having escaped the wretched hive of scum and villainy that is Birmingham, Mike Begg is a self-proclaimed otaku and Japanophile. He would eat, sleep and breathe anime if he could, however that currently remains an impractical lifestyle and so he settles for merely watching as much of it as he possibly can. Aside from anime-based interests he enjoys good music, gaming and all things Star Wars. From time to time he has been known to do

some physics.

## **Zine Editor: Holly Pownall**



I'm Holly Pownall. I know stuff.

I'm from the glorious place that is Up North (more specifically West Yorkshire) and I'm in my second year of a Mechanical Engineering degree. One day I hope to learn enough to build my own TARDIS. I like sci-fi, fantasy and comics.

## **Mascot: James Titmus**



James is old. Like, really old. And we can't seem to get rid of him. So we just let him sit around and blabber about whatever he likes. As MASCOT his is constitutionally responsible for nothing, so there is no chance of him breaking anything. He fancies himself as the one behind the scenes pulling the strings. We don't contradict his delusions for fear of what might happen to his already limited sanity.

## **What's on?**

### **Anime Night**

EVERY MONDAY 7:00PM FOR A 7:30PM START, C27 PORTLAND BUILDING

Our regular night for the Anime lovers among you. Whether you love Anime, are curious, or just have nothing better to do, we encourage you to come along so we can ~~steal your minds and souls~~ get to know you better.

EVERY MONDAY IN TERM TIME, EXCLUDING DURING EXAMS.

### **Science Fiction & Fantasy Night**

EVERY WEDNESDAY 7:00PM FOR A 7:30PM START, E126 PORTLAND BUILDING

The regular weekly schedule of film and series viewing: feel free to bring along DVDs and the like, as we will watch anything and everything.

EVERY WEDNESDAY IN TERM TIME, EXCEPT DURING EXAMS.

### **Alternate Fridays**

EVERY FRIDAY 7:00PM FOR A 7:00PM START, VARIES. SEE SPECIFIC EVENTS FOR DETAILS.

Alternate Fridays are when we hold those other events that don't quite fit on our other nights. Author talks, Cinema Trips, Bowling Socials, Treasure Hunts, Pumpkin Carving, and more. If our members will enjoy it we will do our best to make it happen. As our president will tell you, it's Alternate because we do different things every other week.

ROUGHLY EVERY SECOND FRIDAY.

## Upcoming Events

### Gremlins!

On Tuesday 11th December there's a one off showing of Gremlins. Time and place TBC in an email.

### SFFAS Are Making A Book!

19:00 Sunday 9th December, C20 Portland Building.

As you've heard, we've teamed up with The Last Line, an independent publisher specializing in science fiction, fantasy and steampunk, with the intention of putting together and publishing an anthology of short stories written by students from the University of Nottingham.

There will be a second meeting about the Anthology on Sunday 9th Dec. If you haven't gotten involved with the project yet, there's still chance to join in, and if you can't make it to the meeting, the details will be going up on the Facebook page.

### The Last Monday Night of Term

19:00 for 19:30 start Monday 10th December, C27 Portland Building.

The Last Anime Night of Term. Same as other Anime nights, only the last one of term. Or maybe ever, if those Mayans really did know the secrets of the universe better than modern day scientists.

### Winter Wednesday

19:00 for 19:30 start Wednesday 12th December, E126 Portland Building.

Like our normal Sci-Fi & Fantasy nights, only you have bring in films and series related to Christmas or Winter. The connection can incredibly vague, as long as you can justify the connection to Christmas/Winter.

As always, keep an eye on your emails/facebook/the forum for more information and new events.

### Caption Competition

Here's a photo, your job is to caption it. The best ones will be printed in the next issue.





## Halloween at the JA

Our annual Halloween party naturally involved dressing up but as we're all awesome, the costumes deviated from the usual supermarket 'scary/sexy' and were much more interesting. Here's some of the photos from the night.



# Video Game Quotes Quiz

BY GRAHAM MOORE

You may have heard and used these phrases but do you know which games they're from? Test your knowledge of video game quotes with this little quiz – some quotes are well-known, others slightly more obscure.

Disclaimer: Some of these quotes may have been used in other media coincidentally or as reference or parody. The correct answer is the game with which they are primarily associated.

1. You spoony bard!
2. You have died of dysentery.
3. Do a barrel roll!
4. You must construct additional pylons.
5. But our princess is in another castle.
6. I hear it's amazing when the famous purple stuffed worm in flap-jaw space with the tuning fork does a raw blink on Hara-kiri Rock. I need scissors! 61!
7. It's dangerous to go alone! Take this.
8. The cake is a lie.
9. There was a HOLE here. It's gone now.
10. Hit Deborah Cliff with your head to make a hole.
11. HEY, LISTEN! (*repeated ad nauseum*)
12. All your base are belong to us.
13. YOU'RE WINNER!
14. I used to be an adventurer like you, then I took an arrow to the knee.
15. What is a man? A miserable little pile of secrets!
16. I am the milk man. My milk is delicious.
17. You cannot grasp the true form of [villain's name]'s attack!
18. My liege? Your will, sire? What? What do you want? Why do you keep touching me?
19. C-C-C-Combo Breaker!
20. They were all dead. The final gunshot was an exclamation mark to everything that had led to this point.
21. OBJECTION!
22. Most people think time is like a river, that flows swift and sure in one direction. But I have seen the face of time and I can tell you they are wrong. Time is like an ocean in a storm.
23. I'm [main character's name] and this is my favourite store on the Citadel.
24. Finish him!
25. You nearly had me [main character's name]. But this is not where or how it ends. Fate promises more twists before this drama unfolds completely.
26. War. War never changes.
27. You almost became a [main character's name] sandwich!
28. Can I have some shoes?
29. Henshin a go-go baby!
30. M-m-m-monster kill!

Answers at the end.

## Editor Recommendations

### Read This!

#### SHADOW OF THE TEMPLAR SERIES BY M.CHANDLER

*'Simon Drake is an up-and-coming young FBI hotshot, an agent with a personal track record so outstanding that it borders on unbelievable. Not yet thirty, he's already the leader of his own special ops team; a ragtag bunch of talented but nigh-uncontrollable lunatics, it's true, but under Simon's inspired leadership they're a force to be reckoned with, a team with an unparalleled success rate, a team with an almost unblemished record — until now.'*

*Jeremy Archer is the brilliant and unpredictable scion of a long line of international art thieves, simultaneously a phenomenally wealthy English socialite and one of the most infamous criminals in the world. At twenty-seven years old he's already wanted on nearly every continent for thefts totalling more than ninety-one million dollars, and yet no one has ever come close to catching him—until now.*

*Now?*

*May the best man win.'*

Despite not being professionally published, the Shadow of the Templar series is up there on the list of my favourite books, and they're just as fulfilling and exciting on my second reread. The series consists of four fast paced action thriller novels, interspaced with generous amounts of team banter and character development, and will make you laugh, cry and cheer out loud, sometimes at the same time.

The author has kept the series available to read for free online at <http://mchandler.org/sott/>, but the books can also be bought in paperback or eBook format from the website.

### Watch This!

#### AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER

*'In a war-torn world of elemental magic, a young boy reawakens to undertake a dangerous mystic quest to fulfil his destiny as the Avatar.'*

In my friend Jess' words: It's an amazingly well-written, visually stunning and really very sweet series with wonderful arcs of character development, the likes of which are rarely seen, even in live-action series aimed at older audiences. It goes from slapstick humour to beautifully choreographed & animated fight scenes to heart-breaking stories with ease, providing for every type of viewer that's willing to stick with it. It's a hugely rewarding series for its sensitive handling of series-long arcs as well as for the gems of filler episodes. The world the series inhabits is fully fleshed-out and totally believable and the characters that inhabit it are truly varied along with a brilliant selection of kick-ass female characters (who are sometimes a bit hard to find unfortunately). ATLA is nothing if not a show that can maintain a balance between comedy and angst, love and war, individuals and nations. Please, do yourself a favour and watch this damn show already.

## Play This!

### PLANETSIDE 2

*'PlanetSide 2 is a free-to-play Massively Multiplayer Online FPS that delivers truly epic, massive combat!'*

Fight over three large continents for your chosen faction: Terran Republic, Varnu Sovereignty and New Conglomerate. Work together to attack with a column of tanks, a fleet of aircraft or on foot. Capture bases to control a whole continent. I enjoy this game for the persistent large and small scale battles involving potentially hundreds of people attacking and defending objectives. There is no start or end to the war. It's a totally unique experience as it's the only MMO FPS available.

## Reviews

### Hal Reviews... A Nuclear Powered Time Machine

BY HAL MARTIN

Greetings friends, and welcome to the first instalment of Hal Reviews, where I will test and evaluate new technologies for you to read. I hope you find it to be a useful guide to the ever-expanding world of science.

I answered the front door yesterday morning in a dressing gown to find that at long last, my time machine had arrived, ordered from IKEA some weeks ago (the instructions were to leave between 3 and 80,000 weeks for delivery, depending on availability and the stability of the temporal quantised space-time dimension created by the charged chronoton flow through the time core).

I got the pieces out and started assembling. Being IKEA, they gave me too many F-brackets and not enough D-screws, but I'm not reviewing IKEA, but the time machine itself (the reactor shielding was also missing, but I managed to improvise with a few sheets of everyday aluminium foil).

So I loaded 'er up with some of the spare primary school-grade plutonium I had found lying around in the garage (though virtually any grade of plutonium will do. I don't recommend buying from Libyans though. If you're short on some, I believe Tesco's currently has a '3 for 2' sale on radioactive metals currently too), and I fired it up.

Despite some tingling in my kidneys where my improvised shielding had failed, I got in and set the date to (what I had assumed to be) November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1955. I can't say why, but something about the date just beckoned to be visited. Sadly, the dials were all in Swedish, and I inadvertently travelled to the year 5670, where mankind had migrated to the moon due to the complete earth dominion of the mole-people.

The hotel that I stayed in was lovely, and I had a grand view of the mole-people's mole-gun destroying the moon, and all of humanity. Later that evening, I was invited to a party in Mole Soho, London (known colloquially as MoSoHoLoDo) whereupon I got violently ill over the Vice-Prime-PresiKing. Needless to say, that night, I slept on a farm.

**Final thoughts: Should you buy a nuclear powered time machine?**



Though it seems silly, I must say that a time machine is not for everybody, particularly pregnant women, people of less than 5' of height, and people with heart conditions. If you do buy a time machine though, I would heartily recommend investing in a Swedish-to-English dictionary.

And a nice rum for the mole parties.

## **Book review: The Deptford series (The Deptford Histories trilogy and the Deptford Mice trilogy) by Robin Jarvis**

**BY NEL TAYLOR**

Having read these books very recently, it has reminded me just how hard it is to answer the question 'So what is the Deptford mice trilogy actually about?' Because I know the moment the first few words are out of my mouth, the person who asked will become instantly disinterested and dismiss the books as merely stuff for kids that I'm only reading for the nostalgia of it. They never let me get far enough in the explanation to see why this really isn't much of a series for young children, especially not the secondary series The Deptford Histories that runs alongside and tells some of the history of the world. So in this review I'm going to tell you the other bits of the story first, and then tell you what its actually about.

First of all I'll start with the Deptford Histories. This is another trilogy of books, which can be read either before the mice trilogy but I feel they work better if you read them first. The first of these books is entitled 'The Alchemists Cat', and very nicely sets up the main evil of the Deptford Mice trilogy. It is cleverly written so throughout the book you are unsure which of two characters will actually turn out to be evil, though it is fairly clear from early on that at least one of them will be. Even if you read this book after the mice trilogy, there is still a nagging doubt in your mind as to who actually is evil in this book. You grow quite attached to the characters, even the ones who turn out to be evil sods, because this book shows you precisely how they turn out that way. Plus it's got a pretty good twist at the end.

The second in the Deptford histories is entitled 'The Oaken Throne', and tells the history of an entirely separate section of the civilisations explored in the series. Whilst these are not overly prominent in the Deptford mice, it is nonetheless interesting to see some of the origins of the characters and how their ancestors have changed their own lives by the time the mice trilogy occurs. One of the main characters in this, by the name of Ysabelle, reminds me a lot of the main character in the mice trilogy who is named Audrey. Both female leads are rather uptight and stuffy at times, being rude to those they love and then angsting about it afterwards. Thankfully Ysabelle has a lot of other things on her mind, like trying to not be murdered by an angry cult, so she doesn't do this too often. The other lead named Vespertillio is more dynamic and quite interesting as you watch his progression from firm belief in all he has been told, to acceptance for what is actually in front of his eyes.

The third and final book is simply named 'Thomas', and actually tells the history of the titular character who is a main character in the mice trilogy. Throughout the mice trilogy, he makes numerous references to his many adventures at sea in his youth, and particularly to a young friend of his who goes by the odd name of Woodget. Whilst rather a sad tale, and the least necessary in

order to understand the sequel books, Thomas is a good read and brings you deeper into the character of the gruff old seaman with the heart of gold.

Finally the mice trilogy. This brings in elements from all three of the Histories, though introduces nearly an entirely new cast of characters. The main protagonist of the books is Audrey, along with her brother Arthur. The books do end up with a slight theme of 'Oh Gods we need to save the world or everyone will die', and there is the slight pondering as to how the hell no one else in London notices this giant evil God turning up, but that's what artistic licence is for right? Again Robin Jarvis shows his willingness to kill off his beloved characters, but he does not do so unnecessarily, and each death is sad and often a shock. His writing style lets you grow attached quickly, and whilst it is not overly complex he still leaves you wanting to know more.

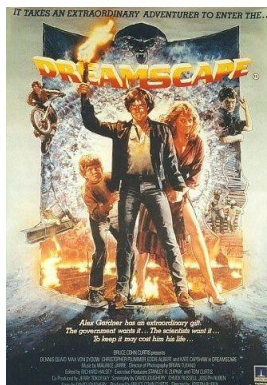
So overall I think it's safe to say I love these books. Sure they may not be the most complicated, hard to read adult books, but considering the graphic death scenes and the rather dark themes underlying most of the books, it's certainly not something I would recommend for children. So if you want a decent urban fantasy story packed full of adventures and good vs evil that is a fairly easy read, then I definitely recommend the Deptford books by Robin Jarvis. Oh, and as to what they are about? You have probably guessed it. The main characters of the Deptford mice are...Mice! Highly human attributes are applied to them, and other animals make appearances throughout. I implore you though not to make the quick and sad judgement that so many have made before you though, and do not dismiss these books out of hand just because the main characters happen to be furry. Not all books are for everyone, but every book is for someone, and these could just be the books for you!

## Ten Sci-Fi/Fantasy Films You May Not Have Seen (Or Even Heard Of)

**BY GRAHAM MOORE**

About two years ago, I decided it was about time to tick off some titles from my ever-growing list of “films I want to see”. In doing so, I also discovered a whole group of new titles that I hadn't even heard of – some good, some bad, but generally at least noteworthy in some aspect. Here is a short list of some of the films I have watched in the past year that may have escaped your attention. While I'm not promising them to be among the best ever made, they are at least entertaining for one reason or another and definitely worth a watch.

### Dreamscape (1984)



Director: Joseph Ruben

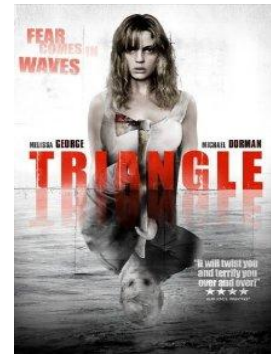
Stars: Dennis Quaid (*Innerspace*, *Dragonheart*), David Patrick Kelly (*Commando*, *The Warriors*, *The Crow*)

*Dreamscape* is like an 1980s forerunner to *Inception* – it stars Dennis Quaid as a psychic who can enter people's dreams, with both beneficial and negative consequences. It suffers from poor special effects in some areas, but I felt that it was an interesting idea done reasonably well. It also managed to get to #93 on Rotten Tomatoes' greatest sci-fi films.

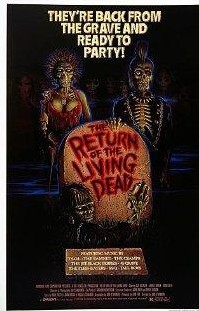
### Triangle (2009)

Director: Christopher Smith (*Severance*)

From the box art, one might be forgiven for thinking this is a generic horror movie with a no-name cast, but there's a surprising amount of cleverness in the story and the plot twists come thick and fast, with a few beautifully disturbing moments and it will definitely keep you hooked until the end.



### Return of the Living Dead (1985)



Director: Dan O' Bannon (*Alien* (writer), *Total Recall* (writer))

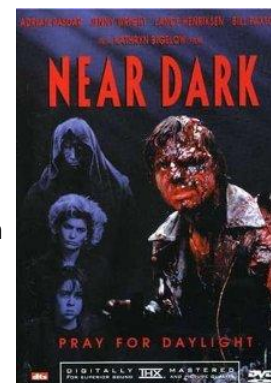
Not to be confused with the classic *Night of the Living Dead* series by George Romero. Chances are, you will have quoted this film without realising it, as this is the film that popularised the notion that zombies groan “Braaaaiinnssss!!” and that they consider that part of the human anatomy to be a delicacy. This is a prime horror comedy, as it manages to be both creepy and funny in equal measures, with decent special effects for its time. It's fast-moving and highly entertaining, though suffers from a disappointing and abrupt ending.

### Near Dark (1987)

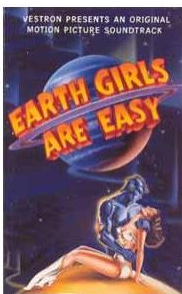
Director: Kathryn Bigelow (*Point Break*, *The Hurt Locker*, *Strange Days*)

Stars: Adrian Pasdar (*Heroes*), Jenny Wright, Bill Paxton (*Aliens*), Lance Henriksen (*Aliens*), Jeanette Goldstein (*Aliens*)

Imagine if *Twilight* had a similar sounding title, was made in the 1980s, had real vampires and was actually good, you might end up with *Near Dark*. A man falls for an attractive young woman, only to be bitten by her and discover she is a vampire, and that he has to join her coven for survival. It was released in the same year as *The Lost Boys* (another cult vampire film), but the emphasis here is a little more on horror and action.



### Earth Girls Are Easy (1988)



Director: Julien Temple

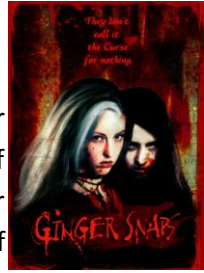
Stars: Geena Davis, Jeff Goldblum, Jim Carrey, Damon Wayans

A musical sci-fi comedy. Three furry aliens seeking women crash land on Earth, in the swimming pool of recently-single Geena Davis, who then shows them how to have a fun time on Earth. If you demand sophistication from you comedies, perhaps look elsewhere but if you like films that don't take themselves seriously at all, this is for you. It's funny, silly and has a few good songs to boot.

## Ginger Snaps (2000)

Director: John Fawcett

I've mentioned zombies, vampires and aliens, let's talk werewolves. This is a horror comedy about two death-obsessed sisters, one of whom is bitten by a werewolf and begins the slow transformation. The werewolves themselves are rather unimpressive looking, but the story is well done and manages to distinguish itself from other films about lycanthropy.



## The Adventures of Baron Munchausen (1989)



Director: Terry Gilliam (*Monty Python, Time Bandits, Brazil, The Imaginarium of Dr Parnassus*)

Stars: John Neville, Eric Idle, Jonathan Pryce, Robin Williams, Uma Thurman

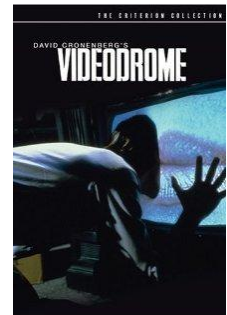
One of Gilliam's least successful films, but also one of his best. During a stage production of the German folk legend Baron Munchausen, the real Baron shows up and tells elaborate stories of his unusual life and adventures. The film is packed with comedy, action, adventure and Gilliam's trademark surreality – a true fantasy.

## Videodrome (1983)

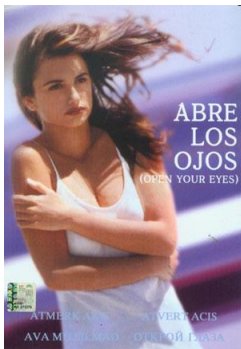
Director: David Cronenberg (*Scanners, The Fly, A Dangerous Method*)

Stars: James Woods

A surreal and quite intense horror film about a man seeking hardcore material for his TV channel, who finds more than what he bargained for and begins a descent into madness and murder. Not for the squeamish or those who have nightmares easily, but I like films that are slightly confusing mind-trips and this is about as trippy as they come. Voted #62 in Total Sci-Fi Online and #77 in Rotten Tomatoes' greatest sci-fi films.



## Abre Los Ojos/Open Your Eyes (1997)



Director: Alejandro Amenabar (*The Others*)

Stars: Eduardo Noriega (*Vantage Point, The Devil's Backbone*), Penelope Cruz

Remade in 2001 as *Vanilla Sky* starring Tom Cruise, which I haven't seen but it would be quite hard to beat the original. This is a mind-bending thriller about a man who, after suffering a car accident, begins to lose track of dreams and reality. It's the right level of intellectually engaging – confusing enough to make you pay attention but not too much that you completely lose track.



## Interstate 60: Episodes of the Road (2002)

Director: Bob Gale (*Back to the Future* (writer))

Stars: James Marsden (*X-Men*), Gary Oldman, Christopher Lloyd, Amy Smart, with appearances from Kurt Russell, Amy Jo Johnson (*Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers*), Michael J. Fox and Chris Cooper (*American Beauty*, *The Muppets*).



How so few people have seen this film I'll never know – it's got a stellar cast, a wacky concept and makes thoroughly light-hearted entertainment. A young man (Marsden) unknowingly makes a wish to a mischievous supernatural being (Oldman, being as awesome as you'd expect) and ends up travelling a journey down a non-existent road, encountering strange places and meeting strange people, not unlike *Big Fish*.

## Stories

### Parallel Worlds

BY NEL TAYLOR

What would you do if I told you that this was a parallel world, and that the real world was almost entirely but not quite unlike this one? Yeah I thought so, you would laugh. Just like everyone else. But it's true. I can see the other world in all the mirrors. Only once for ten minutes every hour, but it's better than staring at people for three hours whilst eating a muffin.

Life's not all bad here I suppose. The problem is, I can't get back.

Let me explain. Everything here is just that little bit different. For one I am definitely not ginger in the real world. For another, Birmingham is most definitely not the capital city of the UK, London is. Call me crazy, but it's true. Cars are not steam powered, Coffee is not some mythical substance made up in legend, and animals undeniably do not talk. Seriously, I had a twenty minute debate with a rabbit about this the other day. He was totally positive about the fact that he could talk, and I was just as totally positive that no he bloody well couldn't. He got sniffy and flew off after a while. Can rabbits really levitate? I'm fairly sure they can't.

So here I am, stuck in a parallel world that won't let me go, and no one believes me. I would say I was surprised that I haven't been dragged off to a mental asylum, but I wouldn't be surprised if I found out they don't exist.

Oh and do you know what the best part of this whole parallel worlds thing is? (read the sarcasm in my voice there if you will). Ghosts are real! Yup, here they really do exist. Must be something to do with all those nut jobs in the real world running around with their E.M.F readers and their stupid infra red cameras shouting about how ghosts exist and just look at all their (lack of) evidence. They'd have a field day here, before getting bored and going home again. Probably to prove the existence of flying fish or something. (Interesting note, they actually do exist in the real world. I

looked it up in this parallel world as a joke, and lo and behold, they're a myth. Flying rabbits on the other hand...fact)

So now I bet you're wondering how on earth I discovered a parallel world, and how on earth I got here in the first place, and how on earth I got stuck here (the list could go on and on I suppose to include why flying fish exist, but I'm not going into that now). Well...it's kind of a long story...

Ok no its not. It's a fairly simple story. And kind of cliché, but what am I supposed to do about that? You did ask, so don't complain. Oh right, story...So I bought a new mirror from this creepy old shop that magically disappeared the day after I bought it, and then this parallel world suddenly shot out giant green cthulu-esk tentacles and dragged me inside, forever to drive me insane with tantalising images of my home world... Hah! Fooled you. Ok, so I actually did buy a new mirror, but it was from IKEA rather than the mysterious vanishing shop that always conveniently buggers off the moment that creepy stuff starts to happen. And there was no Cthulu waiting to drag me into insanity. Sad times. It would have made this thing a whole lot cooler if Cthulu had been real here. Unfortunately he is just a piece of fiction written by Lovecraft still. Cthulu fans in the real world need to work harder.

Anyway, back to my story. So I bought this dumb mirror from IKEA, left it in the lounge for a few hours (ok ok, so it was more like a week or two) and then put it up in my room. Now, my room may not exactly be the tidiest place in the known universe, but it's not that bad (honest!). However, something stupid had somehow stupidly managed to find its stupid way into the middle of my stupid floor right in front of the stupid mirror, and conveniently camouflaged itself into the carpet (I wasn't really looking). So here goes me, flying face first at the mirror, and all that's going through my head is 'well bugger, that's seven years bad luck coming my way right about now. Oh yeah, might want to close my eyes, this is gonna hurt...' Then I'm on the floor of my room, the mirror behind me. (yeah yeah, I told you some of this story was cliché, stop moaning, you were warned!) So of course, I did the sensible thing of staring like a gormless idiot at my surroundings for about ten minutes before running screaming back through the mirror like a little girl. My parallel world room is just different enough to be noticeable by me, and definitely different enough for me to totally freak out about the first time I saw it.

So after I got over the fact that I had an inter-dimensional portal in my room (I have SO always wanted to say that!) I thought, hey why not explore? Note to everyone in the known universe(s) parallel or not, if you find an inter-dimensional portal in your room, don't explore it. Smash it to bits or call MI6 or whoever. The movies should have taught you all by now (yeah, I'm an idiot) that it's a REALLY bad idea. No really, it's an awful idea. Knowing nothing about space and time travel bar what Dr. Who has told me, I'm gonna make a wild stab in the dark and say that interdimensional portals don't always stay open. And once they've shut that's it, you're screwed. And that's what happened to me.

You're still laughing at me aren't you? You still don't believe me that this world isn't the real one, isn't the right one. Well maybe for you this is the right world. Maybe it is the real one. Not for me though. I'm going to keep trying, and maybe one day I'll get home. Meanwhile I'm going to go and invent the flying fish whilst becoming the first insane person in the world to climb up to the top of a building and throw paper aeroplanes at people for three hours whilst eating a muffin.

Life's not all bad here I suppose.

## The Firm

BY WILLIAM DAWSON

"You know, Emma," Gordon said, taking his tea from the office i-Ped, "I've had it. I'm ending it all this afternoon, and nothing is going to stop me. No sugar, or milk, thank you." The i-Ped, in the manner of such devices, had poured both in generous quantities. Gordon sighed, but drank all the same.

"Certainly not." Emma tapped at her Pad decisively, as if at a recalcitrant witness. "We have the Torp vs. Peabody at seven-thirty, and your death would be most inconvenient for it."

"Oh, I don't think that's really important anymore." Gordon smiled wryly, and ran a hand through his thinning hair. "You seem most able."

"I am. Very much so. But you have collected and considered half of our evidence, so that's that. You must present it." Then something struck Emma. "Gordon, are you serious?"

"Afraid so." He shrugged. "You'll have the firm when I'm gone, of course."

"Yes."

Their office clock, a little plasticky thing, ticked on. And so, presently, did their keyboards.

"Why now?" she asked after a while.

His eyes flickered for a moment, to the tan on her hand-and a little white line on a finger, where a ring had once been worn. He had known both well, once.

"I have achieved nothing." He said it firmly. "Nothing, in my entire life."

In a certain sense, Emma thought, that was true. Gordon, she knew, did not take the initiative. He wafted through life, towards his own self-interest. And, as Gordon was not an ambitious man, this was not as pleasant as it might have been for some. Exactly what sort of self-interest would be served by death was a mystery to her.

"That is not true. We have our firm together. FitzMorgan and Mortimer." At the name, Gordon flinched. "Lawyers for hire."

"We are for hire, yes. You know, that's perhaps part of the reason." Gordon glanced at the office door. "Out there is one of those death booths. I've had enough people dragged into them, on my word."

"We both have."

"Yes. For the appropriate fee." Which, of course, wafted closely to his self interest. Gordon was able to analyse documents, if not with beauty-for he was not, by nature, a beautiful man-then with a

certain finesse, like a pig through muck. "So, how do you think that makes me..." he petered out, staring hard at his keyboard.

"Now, you must understand that Torp vs. Peabody is a very appropriate fee," Emma said encouragingly.

Gordon did not answer. He glanced, like a tortoise out of a shell.

"Appropriate enough for me to give you a very decent funeral."

"What's left of me out of one of those booths," Gordon said firmly, "will not be decent."

"Nonsense! Why-"

"We had to pay a couple of months back, for cleaning fees. The one outside, I think, managed to misfire."

"Yes, well, I'll ensure that you get cleaned up properly. Which, if the mess that one made is to judge by, will involve the hire of a road sweeper. They don't come cheap, if E-bay is anything to go by." A few clicks from Emma's keyboard. "Seventy-eight grand. This case will net us two hundred. Easily enough."

"You, you mean. For I will not be around to experience it. You may spend it how you see fit; I, on the other hand, will be apologising to all those poor souls who I-"

This was, for Emma, too much.

"Oh, be quiet Gordon! Self pity will just get you tears. I, on the other hand, intend to enjoy my fee, for all it's worth, and lapse into the grey dust you've been living in for the past forty-seven years of your life on earth when I die. Now push on! I've got a speech to write, and you a series of God knows what to do!"

"But I don't. There's been no major case since Hadley vs. Baxter. It's been busywork ever since Profitable, mousing busywork."

"H vs. B?" Emma barely remembered it. The fee was low, the hours long, and all parties involved so dreadfully dull.

"Now *they*," Gordon said, "were *men*. And that was a *case*. Everything's gone downhill since then."

"Well, if it's so unarduous, why not help me finish this one off?" Emma reached for her glasses. "Come on, darling, it's desperate enough that I must call you that to get you moving? Just a few more hours."

It remained a mystery to both of them why they had ever married, or continued to work with one another. If pressed, Gordon would say that "She was blonde, once," and nothing more, staring into the middle distance over a glass of Scotch. Emma, meanwhile, was of the belief that Gordon needed support and structure. She knew, from painful experience, that neither of these usually brought about wedding vows.



"Oh, I suppose so. Still, after the case. I'll do it. And nothing," Gordon said with a rare decision, "will stop me tonight!"

They both ordered tea from the i-Ped, the air conditioning coughed, and the keyboards rattled on.

--

It was the custom, in the enlightened age of 2062, for judges and juries to be assembled entirely by home network; only the executioner was required to be present at trial. Some felt that even the defendant's presence on film was excessive. Nevertheless, this system was not without flaws.

Most notably, as the FitzMorgan and Mortimer Firm discovered to its consternation, its inadequacy when, as a result of a God-damned thunderstorm which took place at 7:23, the court's network was cut off. Due to busy scheduling-the New Delhi Olympics, of course, waited for no man, especially on live television channels-the trial could not be held until the next day.

"Half six?" Gordon asked, with something approaching eagerness.

"Eight o'clock, it says here. Damn! Damn! Damn!" Emma pounded at their horn. Their vehicle of choice, with an Asian name that neither of them could pronounce, leered unerringly at the traffic.

"In the morning?"

"Yes, am."

"Ah." Gordon leaned back into the seat, and re-studied his notes. His eyes slid across the page. He yawned. "What now, then? It's the last night of my life. I could do anything." The realisation came suddenly, and he decided that he quite liked it. "Anything."

So, naturally, they turned away from the route to the network station, stopped their car where they could, and went for a Chinese.

Whilst waiting for their meal, they considered what else could be done. But Gordon was not an ambitious man. When the new Abramovichi Gallery was mentioned-tickets were supposedly available, and the flying dolphin was something to behold-his only comment was that, as a dolphin was a fish, it seemed a bit stupid that it should take to the air, and it wasn't really worth going through the traffic for that. The skyline was, in the baleful glow of the Fauxozone layer, uncommonly beautiful-but he had seen it already. Plays-he had acted, once, as the Fool in Macbeth. If there was a Fool in that play; he misremembered the exact details. And Emma, he knew, hated Shakespeare.

It may seem strange that a divorced couple should dine together in this manner. But, Emma had thought to herself, long ago, even such a little creature as Gordon FitzMorgan should not have to die completely alone. And, without her, completely alone he was.

As they reached the end of their meal, it came to them. He had, he realised now, never really used his money for anything. So, this evening, he would do just that. What on, exactly, he couldn't say. Pleasant things to remember him by, perhaps.

So he did. He and Emma soon arrived at his flat, a neglected grey box in a neglected grey neighbourhood, and set to work. They surfed through charity after investment, impoverished Italian

village after former-tundra buy up scheme. They laughed at the pictures of bucolic Canadian settlers, gave them names and faces. When the kettle boiled and boiled over, they scarcely noticed. When a small fire started, they scarcely noticed. They did notice when the fire brigade turned up, but only briefly, and laughingly at the red-faced captain's jowls. They scoured beautiful statues to be purchased, and gravely considered the contents of American Princelings' bank accounts. The money drained away into this and that, but they relentlessly pressed on. They even found more legal practice; tax evasion of some sort. It was worth looking in to, Emma decided to herself, due to the money involved, although a bit heavy on paperwork for her tastes.

Whilst doing so, incidentally, they drunk a number of glasses of wine. They never mentioned the events of their marriage. They talked, animatedly, of a thousand topics; of their work, their cars, the sport, Gordon of a book he had once discarded and Emma of one she from which she had taken advice, and modelled herself.

They slept apart.

Eight o'clock soon came. They, for once, cooked breakfast-something they had never done before. They arrived two minutes late, smelling strongly of a misused fire-extinguisher (not that the jury could tell any of that), and promptly lost the case. The defendant, Mr. Peabody, walked free.

Gordon decided to postpone his death; he had a number of things to consider, such as the purchase of tundra in Canada, the bank account of an American Princeling, and a case involving tax law. But first, he needed to get a new i-Ped. One that didn't serve sugar and milk with his tea.

## When The Moon Is Full

BY LAURA BEACH

### Chapter One: Disaster In The Moonlight

A chill September breeze ripped through the forest causing the treetops to tremble in the impending darkness. A small group of rather unusual students huddled closer in a clearing, relying on each other for warmth and company.

Several of them sported pointed ears, while others still took stranger forms. In the centre of the gathering stood the most unusual of them all, a female centaur, her large warm body providing much needed relief from the cold.

Standing apart from them all, hidden on a bank beyond the tree line, was a young elf. His arms were wrapped around the neck of a beautiful unicorn stallion, his long raven hair contrasting vividly with the silver of his steed as he buried his face into the creature's copious forelock.

"I'm going to miss you Cedric." He sighed mournfully.

*And I you* the unicorn replied, directly into the young elf's thoughts.

"To think that we have only known each other since the beginning of the summer break, I feel as though we have known each other since we were children."

*Such is the strength of the telepathic bond we now share young one. Our souls were meant to be as one. We unicorns will only accept one true master of our being. Only that single person may ride upon our backs as they please; only the orders of one will be obeyed without question. That one is you Elourhay Rhododendron.*

The young elf squeezed the unicorn tighter, ruffling the perfectly groomed silky mane in the process.

"The bus will be here any moment. I best get down to the others." Elourhay began as he brushed some of the unicorn's forelock aside to reveal large liquid sapphire eyes that began to glitter in the evening light. "I'll write regularly, you just keep an eye on things here and make sure my dad doesn't get too crazy. If anything happens, you only have to call..."

*I know young one. You care so much for your family and others but so little for yourself. Keep an eye on your health, for I fear your constant fretting will do you harm. I sense something different about you today, and the feeling gets stronger by the hour.*

"It's just excitement that's all. I haven't seen John all summer and it'll be great to be back on campus. I just wish you could come too."

*I pray you are right Elourhay, even though we will be too far apart for our bond to be effective, and I would not suffer your discomfort should you become ill, it would still upset me greatly if I were to hear that you had succumbed to sickness.*

Elourhay smiled softly as he removed his bag from the unicorn's broad back. He was short for a unicorn, only around fourteen and a half hands high, but as Elourhay himself stood at only five and a half feet this suited him perfectly.

He took a second to admire his new steed as he stepped back to swing his bag over his shoulder. Cedric truly was a magnificent specimen. His shining silver coat highlighted every muscle in the unicorn's powerful frame. His copious wavy mane fell like a silken waterfall over his arched neck. His tail, as was usual for unicorns, was covered with short hair no different to his body at the base but ended in a large silky plume. The effect was completed by the copious amounts of the same long fine strands on the hind surface of each of his legs, almost right down to his cloven hooves.

His body and head were shaped like that of an Andalusian horse, except for the long silver horn on his forehead and beard on his chin. All in all he was a most impressive sight.

Elourhay said goodbye to his friend properly before beginning his journey down the muddy bank. Despite the unsure footing he never slipped once, after all, he was an elf, a species renowned for their ability to transverse any natural terrain.

As he began to cross the clearing, a faint glow began to appear. At first it was diffuse and difficult to pinpoint, but soon it formed a clear bright archway, settling about fifteen feet from the tree line on the far side.

Elourhay joined the others, waiting calmly. He spotted his younger brother on the other side of the crowd, but Windsong ignored him as usual. He probably thought that he was too cool to be seen with his dorky older brother...

Elourhay turned his head to discover a pair of young girls whispering excitedly. First years he thought with a faint smile. He remembered back to his first time catching the school bus. Its appearance had been somewhat shocking to say the least...

Suddenly a double-decker bus came shooting out of the portal, skidding on the damp grass. Elourhay had already chosen a reasonably safe spot, but many of the other students had to dodge the speeding vehicle, running for their lives. The first year girls screamed and began to run but were stopped when Elourhay grabbed their hands.

"We're all right here, there's no need to start a panic, just keep calm. It's only the driver; he's always been like this. It's amazing that he still has the job to be honest."

The panic began to subside as the driver brought the vehicle under control and stopped precisely in the centre. What a show-off thought Elourhay as he began to walk slowly towards the bus. Many of the older students were already forming an orderly queue outside the doors.

The school bus itself was nothing great to behold. Years of abuse by its regular driver showed in the scratches and dents scattered on every possible surface. Its maroon and cream paint still forming a plain striped pattern despite having faded with age.

Despite its poor condition, it was a reliable form of transport, and had never broken down in over ten years. The inside too, was kept immaculately clean and tidy. You wouldn't think that they belonged to the same vehicle.

The driver was another thing that never changed. He was a goblin (and a rather short one at that), and how he reached the pedals was still a mystery to every student in the entire school. As the doors opened everyone could see his wrinkled face and large ears poking out just above the level of the driver's door.

"Well get on then!" he croaked, his gravelly voice booming over the student's constant chatter.

The effect was immediate; Elourhay was promptly knocked to the floor by the tide of bodies rushing to get through the tiny entrance. It was over almost as soon as it had started; leaving the fragile elf lying battered and bruised in the mud.

"You all right there kid?" the driver asked, not bothering to move from his seat to help (or maybe he couldn't, who knows?).

Groaning Elourhay attempted to pick himself up, instead slipping on the slick surface and landing face first back in the mud with a rather inelegant splat.

"Need a little help there buddy?" laughed a warm voice that Elourhay found comfortingly familiar.

"John! Good to see you although there are better ways to start the academic year I'm sure."

John, a young human wizard with golden blonde hair that swept down to just past his shoulders, held out his hand to pull his elven friend to his feet. Once upright Elourhay immediately began to dust himself off as best he could.



“Well, the walking book stack finally has a face!” John joked, nudging Elourhay playfully. “Where have all your books gone?”

Elourhay patted his bag as they both entered the bus and attempted to find a spare pair of seats.

“My father allowed me to magically extend my bag over the summer so I don’t have to walk around with a pile of books in my arms all of the time.” He stated as he shuffled sideways into a spare seat near the back.

“But that’s like...final year magic!” his friend squeaked excitedly, landing heavily in the seat next to him as the bus began to drive forward through another portal that had appeared in front of it.

“Well, I’ve always had a knack for this sort of thing. I hope third year isn’t going to be too hard though. I’ve picked out my modules for my diploma and I like all of them, but if they all set coursework at the same time I just can’t cope.”

John shook his head and face palmed. Really...elves are high stress creatures by nature if anything disturbs their natural routine, but Elourhay really was the absolute limit.

“Will you STOP WORRYING!” He groaned. “You have had the highest grades of the year for the past two years you’ve been at the academy. You’re not going to fail now just because you’ve moved from foundation to degree level.”

Elourhay sighed deeply. Baggs’ academy for the further and higher education of magical beings only offered two levels of qualification. The foundation two years, which John reliably informed him were the equivalent of ‘A levels’ (whatever they were) and the much harder degree, where students are allowed to select their chosen subjects, often according to their own career plans.

“I suppose...but I am taking one of my modules at final year level. Remember the extra classes I asked for in my first year?”

“Yeah. I thought you were pretty stupid to go in for even more work but hey. It was your choice after all. I wasn’t going to butt in.”

“I was taking degree level dark magic with professor Yagami.”

John froze. Did anyone else hear? It looked like all of the other students were busy with their own conversations. More importantly, did he hear correctly, dark magic...being taken by AN ELF!?

He turned to face his friend, his own hazel eyes meeting directly with Elourhay’s striking emerald ones. Elourhay’s cheeks were beginning to redden under his friend’s judgemental gaze.

“If I heard that correctly you should be embarrassed. What were you thinking? What if your dad finds out? Good lord. You have a room-mate for two years and just when you think you know him BAM! He’s a closet dark wizard.”

“IT’S NOT LIKE THAT!” squeaked Elourhay, his cheeks instantly flushing as he realised how high pitched his voice went.

The other students on the lower deck began to look for the source of the noise. Elourhay cringed as he heard footsteps from the upper deck, which was reserved exclusively for nocturnal students and fitted with blackout curtains and blinds to keep it dark.

A tall figure walked casually down the steps, his long silver hair tied behind his back in a low ponytail, extending past the small of his back to beyond his buttocks. His blood red eyes seemed to flash warningly as the lower deck fell silent. They had woken none other than Vladimir, a kelpie house prefect, and a powerful vampire.

“Could somebody please tell that bitch who screeched to shut the fuck up I’m trying to sleep.”

He stared at a group of girls accusingly, causing several of the younger ones to hide behind their friends in fear. One of the older females pointed towards Elourhay before opening her mouth to speak.

“I think we’ve just been given a demonstration of the remarkable vocal range of a pure blooded elf. If you want to pick on someone I suggest you make it the right gender.”

Vladimir smirked, he recognised the girl as the oldest phoenix house prefect and had no desire to start a fight with such a powerful opponent so soon after waking, but he was undeniably amused at the origin of the screeching sound.

“Well well well, I should have known it was you Ellie.” He sneered, using a pet name he had bestowed upon the elf the first time they met each other two years ago, being unable to pronounce Elourhay’s full name.

“Vlad, my name is Elourhay, use it.”

Elourhay rose from his seat, causing gasps from several of the first years. Were they going to see a genuine magical fight? John placed his hand on Elourhay’s arm in warning. They were both well aware of what Vladimir was capable of. Elourhay gave his friend a comforting look. John didn’t know what *he* was capable of, and it wouldn’t be pretty...

“Are you challenging me elf?” said Vladimir, his voice lowered threateningly.

“And what if I am?” Elourhay answered sarcastically. He didn’t want to fight, especially in such a crowded place with so many first years, but if Vladimir didn’t back down he had no choice. Hopefully like most bullies he would avoid a direct fight...

Vladimir was elected to be a prefect the same year John and himself started at the academy as sixteen year olds, and since then he has made the lives of all diurnal (and some of the nocturnal) students hell. It was time now someone put a stop to his tyranny.

The phoenix prefect was readying herself to intervene. Pure blooded elves are powerful even when casting bare handed, and she already knew of Vladimir’s considerable talent with a wand. If these two started a scrap it would be a bloodbath...

Vladimir frowned at the elf's insolence as he reached for his wand. Suddenly the entire bus pitched sideways as it was struck by a considerable force. Vladimir grabbed hold of the bars on the stairs as Elourhay scrambled for a grip on the headrest of his seat.

His blood ran cold as he felt the wheels of the bus on the right hand side leave the floor...

"EVERYONE TO THE RIGHT!" shouted the phoenix prefect, her cries echoed by other prefects trying to herd panicked students to the right side to keep the bus upright.

Elourhay had only just enough time to get to the aisle before he felt his feet leave the floor and everything went dark.

## **Chapter Two: An Even Older Rivalry**

As he regained consciousness, Elourhay tried to move, but gasped as a sudden pain ripped through his back, sides and shoulders.

"Stay still." Ordered a calm female voice.

Elourhay opened his eyes but all he could see was the glittering floor of the magical motorway, the pathway between the portals used by magical vehicles to avoid human traffic without the uncomfortable and dangerous process of teleportation. He must be looking through a window...meaning the bus did tip after all. Good thing the windows were enchanted to strengthen them, otherwise they may have shattered.

He turned his head slowly, to find himself nose to nose with one of the first year girls whom had panicked at the sight of the bus in the clearing. It only took him another second to realise that he was lying on top of her. He tried to move off of her only to be greeted once more by stabbing pain.

"I told you to stay still." growled that same voice from before. "She's fine, but we can't move her until we can move you. You're an elf that's just had at least four times your bodyweight land on you. You could be really badly hurt so you have to stay still until the medical crew can get round to seeing you. I told them to hurry but apparently they have to clear the bus of as many people able to walk as they can so that they have the room to move the more seriously injured patients."

Elourhay tried to take deep calming breaths but his sides hurt too much. Instead he ended up taking short rapid gasps.

"Try to breathe more slowly, calm down." The voice crooned softly.

Sometimes it really sucks being an elf thought Elourhay...Although all elves have much denser muscle mass than humans and are physically stronger, their lithe frames are much more delicate, increasing the chances of serious or fatal injury.

Elourhay felt a soothing hand gently rest on his back, the touch so gentle he could barely feel the warmth through his clothes. He opened his eyes once more to see that it was the girl that he had landed on trying to comfort him.

"Sorry." He whispered. His voice trembling as his hands began to shake through the pain.

The girl smiled kindly and brushed his fringe out of his eyes. She seemed to be blushing slightly, but he wasn't sure. She could simply be flushed due to her heart beating rapidly in panic when the bus turned over.

"It's fine; if it wasn't for you I would have died I'm sure of it." She began. Her voice was higher pitched and more delicate than the other woman behind him. "I couldn't make it over fast enough so I ended up on the bottom when the bus tipped over. I was trying to get nearer the front where there was space left for me to grab onto a seat. We sort of collided on the way down. You would have landed really hard on top of me but you braced your arms and legs on either side to protect me. Then everyone else landed on top of you and you collapsed. If you hadn't taken most of the impact I would have been more than just a little squished. Thank you. Besides, I'm not complaining about being stuck under a handsome elf or a while."

This time Elourhay was sure that she was blushing as her cheeks went a deep shade of pink. He felt his own cheeks begin to burn at her statement. Handsome elf? She really thought so?

"Here he is" shouted the other female. "Down here!"

Elourhay winced as a large hand; most likely male was placed heavily on his shoulder.

"Alright lad, where does it hurt?" said a gruff deep voice; yep...the medic was definitely male.

Elourhay tried to answer the best he could, but his breathing only allowed him the odd word between gasps.

"Down back...shoulder...side...can't breathe...hurts...bad."

"Alright, keep calm. How about you missie? OI GET ME THAT SPINAL BOARD OVER HERE WILL YA!"

Elourhay winced at the pain the medic's shouting caused his sensitive elven ears. The young girl insisted that Elourhay was to be treated first. He closed his eyes and began to mentally prepare himself for the pain he was sure to feel when the medic attempted to move him. He lay there waiting for what seemed like an eternity, then he felt a warm sensation creep over him, like someone had wrapped a preheated blanket around his entire body.

Elourhay relaxed as the warmth relieved the pain in his aching muscles. For the first time since regaining consciousness he could breathe deeply. Elourhay could hear a voice talking to him, but it became nothing more than a soothing background noise as his breathing slowed and he drifted off to sleep.

He awakened to find himself in his own bed in the academy dormitory, the solar dorm to be precise, which is reserved for diurnal students only and lies a short distance south of the academy itself. The nocturnal equivalent would be the lunar tower to the north of the main building. Each of these dormitories in turn are divided into two houses named after their guardians, one for girls and one for boys.

Elourhay resides in dragon house, its equivalent being kelpie. For the girls the houses are called phoenix (diurnal) and unicorn (nocturnal).

The room's décor was typical of dragon house, the guardian of which being a rather large dragon named Wymeswold, in that it was very cave like and plain except for the odd shiny crystal. The students were expected to bring their own hoard of treasure to brighten things up. Needless to say the rooms never ended up changing that much. After all, who had a treasure hoard these days? The best that could be done was the odd poster in places flat enough to stick then up.

Elourhay began to rise cautiously. Feeling no pain he sat upright and began to stretch. Just as his arms were above his head he suddenly found himself horizontal again, with a rather emotional room-mate gripping him in a bone crushing hug.

"NEVER DO THAT AGAIN!" John sniffed, tears beginning to well in his eyes. "They dragged you out all unconscious...I thought you were DEAD!"

Elourhay sighed. Although John could be a little ditzzy at times, his heart was definitely in the right place. He could always be counted on to take care of you in any emergency, and equally likely to go to pieces beside you later when it all sunk in. He was definitely the kind of guy who doesn't hide his feelings well...

Elourhay wrapped his arms around his friends shoulders to return the hug (with somewhat less intensity) and sighed as John finally let go, leaving the winded elf lying on his back somewhat dazed.

"I'm alright John, I feel fine now. Did they say how badly hurt I was? That warmth I felt before I passed out, it was a diagnostic spell, with a little pain relief added in I think..."

John groaned and shook his head before grabbing a pair of envelopes from his room-mates bedside table and thrusting them right under that dainty elven nose.

"Really Elourhay, do you ever give that brain of yours a rest?"

Elourhay's gentle smile as he began to open the first envelope seemed to provide the answer the blonde was looking for.

"I'll take that as a no then." He sighed as he sat on the foot of Elourhay's bed, curious as to what the envelopes contained. The one which Elourhay had just opened was a plain cream colour with a short piece of writing on the front reading 'for the attention of the injured elf' so he assumed it was from the medic. The wince that came from his room-mate as he began reading confirmed his suspicion.

"What's wrong? Was it bad?" John enquired, leaning in to see if he could catch a glimpse of the message.

Elourhay steeled himself for a moment, his already pale skin losing whatever colour it already had to become pure white.

"I had several fractured spinal processes; luckily my spinal column itself was intact, mildly dislocated shoulders and several cracked ribs. All of these were relatively minor injuries and were healed with magic on the way here. The most serious problem was that the forces involved had somehow ruptured a small artery in my abdominal cavity. According to the medic I would have died by the time they arrived at the school had they not cast a full diagnostic on me and discovered that I was bleeding out."

John paused for a moment, his skin almost reaching the pale extreme of his pointy eared friend.

“Holy shit....” He mumbled.

“My thoughts exactly.” Added Elourhay.

Picking up the other envelope he tried to shake off the warm prickly feeling that warned of an impending panic session. Breathe he thought to himself firmly. No use panicking over something that has long since been fixed.

Gazing out of the window to distract himself he saw that it was light outside! Panicking he turned to his room-mate, shaking the blonde violently by the shoulders.

“HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN UNCONCIOUS JOHN!?” he shouted, his voice once more rising in pitch to become closer to that of an irate female.

“Calm down.” Crooned John, managing to stop himself being shaken like a hare in a dog’s mouth by wrapping his own arms around Elourhay’s shoulders, sliding them down to pin the elf’s arms to his side. Luckily Elourhay didn’t resist, otherwise his elven strength would have one out... “You arrived here around eleven last night. The medic told me that you would be alright but you needed to rest and sleep it off. The spells they had to use to heal you worked using your own magical energy so the medic wouldn’t get tired. The only downside, he said, was that you were only just strong enough at the time so the spell exhausted you. It’s only half seven, you’ve just had a good night’s sleep that’s all.”

Elourhay let out the breath he was holding with a long shuddering sigh. His eyes began to prickle warningly as tears of shame began to well up. Collapsing into his friend’s arms he tried to control himself. What the hell is wrong with me? Elourhay thought looking at his trembling hands. I’m panicking over nothing; this isn’t like me at all. Maybe Cedric was right, am I really worrying myself into an early grave?

Elourhay’s train of thought was interrupted when John gently lifted his chin, leaning back a little so that he could look directly into those emerald eyes, so striking that they could only belong to an elf.

“What the hell is wrong?” John began. “You’re a mess. The only thing that can usually do this to you is waiting for exam results outside the school office. Heck, even exams themselves don’t get you this upset! Do you want me to get the school doctor, or maybe that elf that teaches medicinal herbs and potions?”

Elourhay shook his head, wiping any tears from his eyes with his sleeve. The medics had left him in the simple robes he had been wearing on the bus. The mud had been cleaned off them though, probably the spells woven into all elven fabrics. Why do lots of laundry when you can make fabric that cleans itself?

Tearing open the other envelope (which had fallen onto the bed again when Elourhay let go of it when he began to panic) he began to read the letter out loud. It was obviously from the school and Elourhay had a good feeling about how thick the letter was. If it was what he was expecting then he would definitely feel better after reading it.



“Guess who our star elf is this year!” Elourhay began, rolling his eyes at the distinctive and very colloquial style of the academy’s head mistress. “We told you just before summer that we were thinking about making you this year’s new prefect. Well guess what, no one objected (big surprise there...not)! You have to fill out some paperwork (a lot of paperwork) and get it back to me as soon as possible. You are also going to be tested against the other two prefects to see who will be head prefect this year. As you know, only the final three years have a prefect each as the younger years aren’t fully up to scratch with the old self defence thing, and the head prefect is traditionally the best able to defend him or herself. We could train up youngsters but three prefects a house are plenty to quell trouble. Besides you always have us staff for back up! Don’t worry too much, just keep out of the way if the older ones start to bully you sweetheart. No third year has been head prefect...ever (well at least in the past six hundred years, the records before this point have been filed away so well the board still can’t find them) so just have fun and don’t expect too much of yourself.”

John groaned sympathetically at his friend’s plight, despite holding back fits of laughter.

“Honestly, she writes every letter as though it was to her own child!” he remarked.

“I would rather read letters from the headmistress than those from my mum!” Elourhay joked. His mother was strict to say the least. Couple that with her having his father wrapped around her little finger...yeah, you did not want to upset that particular elf.

Both of them began to laugh. John’s characteristic shrieking cackle (which has often been jokingly compared with that of a hyena), blending in with Elourhay’s melodious tone. Elourhay’s parents had often wondered whether his laugh was more beautiful than his singing. To this day they had still not made up their minds.

Their laughing was interrupted when they heard a static like noise emanate from the air around them. A message from a member of staff perhaps? As the static subsided, they instantly recognised the smooth dark voice of Professor Kazuki Yagami, master of dark magic.

“I have a grave announcement to make, so you should all be listening. Yes I can hear you talking because I made it two way so shut up, and someone stop those first years from screaming...” John and Elourhay gave each other a worried glance, careful not to make any noise. It was scary sometimes how easy it was for staff to spy on you inside the academy... “Thank you, now I may begin. It seems that the school bus tipping was no accident. It was knocked over by a magical barrage from students of Darkcross academy. This petty school rivalry has stemmed back many years, centuries even, ever since we began to offer non-defensive, more academic courses and it has gone too far. If you see a student from Darkcross, do not engage them, even during the holidays. They are highly trained in combat and would be a match for even my own dark magic students. I have informed the headmistress and we will be contacting the educational authorities to exact our revenge. The pen is mightier than the sword students, remember this well.”

With another static sound the spell ended, leaving the entire academy in silence. We were attacked...



*Elourhay Rhododendron* by Laura Beach



*Angel* by Laura Beach



## Mr November by Laura Beach

'In a previous issue of the 'Zine, there's a picture of a half-kitsune (the fox boy) basking in flames, well this is his (human) father Timothy Baxter (the picture is called Mr November as it was sort of inspired by a part of the story when the hunting guild makes their own calendar...). A demon-slayer who scares the shit out of everyone, unless they know him! Seriously, he may be a formidable swordsman but he is a mega ditz and a constant source of embarrassment for his sons.'

## Word Search

- Avengers
- Doctor Who
- Game Of Thrones
- Firefly
- Lord Of The Rings
- Star Trek
- Star Wars
- Torchwood

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K W C Y P V T P H G J N Y N K V Z Q
V Q N J I H V X M B P W
H N T M L Y N F D W G
D H V E P O J Y Q V M L R
S A I Y I N S V Q N I E I
H O X T A V E N G E R S Y Y X S J X O K H N D P
N F W K O C S Z G E K A B K F X V A W Q H Y J U R K
S E M L F Q L F X D M G A M E O F T H R O N E S T B
L O H W R O T C O D O T A W P R W C H U R R J I L D
D M S G N I R E H T F O D R O L T C Q Q M M E O E D
O L B G L F I R E F L Y W O U X M R I I X S Z H G
M S Y K Y R R B S I S P Z H N S T T A F X E X L K
X T A Z W J L N Y N R X E W C P R S G T T P T N P
P C C P E W G F V V Y X G L H R R A R L S O H M L A
L S K N V N R A D W D Z T C E X O L W T P L T O B B I
Y U X J L Z N P W F O K K I W T Q T E R X F N A X V L Z
B J V M U C U Y M X S Z U L H N C K C W A X D O J K P Y O
Q Q A I U M F M Y X K F X M X T I U L R
O K K K J I H M S S U W
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## Quiz Answers

Can you remember your quotes like Mei Ling or are you less eloquent than Gordon Freeman?

1. Final Fantasy IV (or FFII in original North American release).
2. The Oregon Trail.
3. Star Fox 64/Lylat Wars.
4. StarCraft.
5. Super Mario Bros.
6. Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty.

7. The Legend of Zelda.
8. Portal.
9. Silent Hill 2.
10. Castlevania II: Simon's Quest.
11. The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time.
12. Zero Wing.
13. Big Rigs: Over the Road Racing.
14. The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim.
15. Castlevania: Symphony of the Night.
16. Psychonauts.
17. EarthBound.
18. WarCraft: Orcs and Humans.
19. Killer Instinct.
20. Max Payne.
21. Ace Attorney series.
22. Prince of Persia: Sands of Time.
23. Mass Effect 2.
24. Mortal Kombat.
25. Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver/Soul Reaver 2.
26. Fallout series.
27. Resident Evil.
28. Command & Conquer Generals.
29. Viewtiful Joe.
30. Unreal Tournament.

## Score

0-6: You have died of dysentery.

7-12: Finish him!

13-18: Henshin a go-go baby!

19-24: M-m-m-monster kill!

25-30: YOU'RE WINNER!