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Director PAUL FEIG talks new cast, controversy and reinventing a classic

SFX

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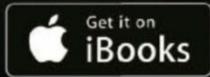
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"I'm not only about destruction"

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130 TOTAL RECALL

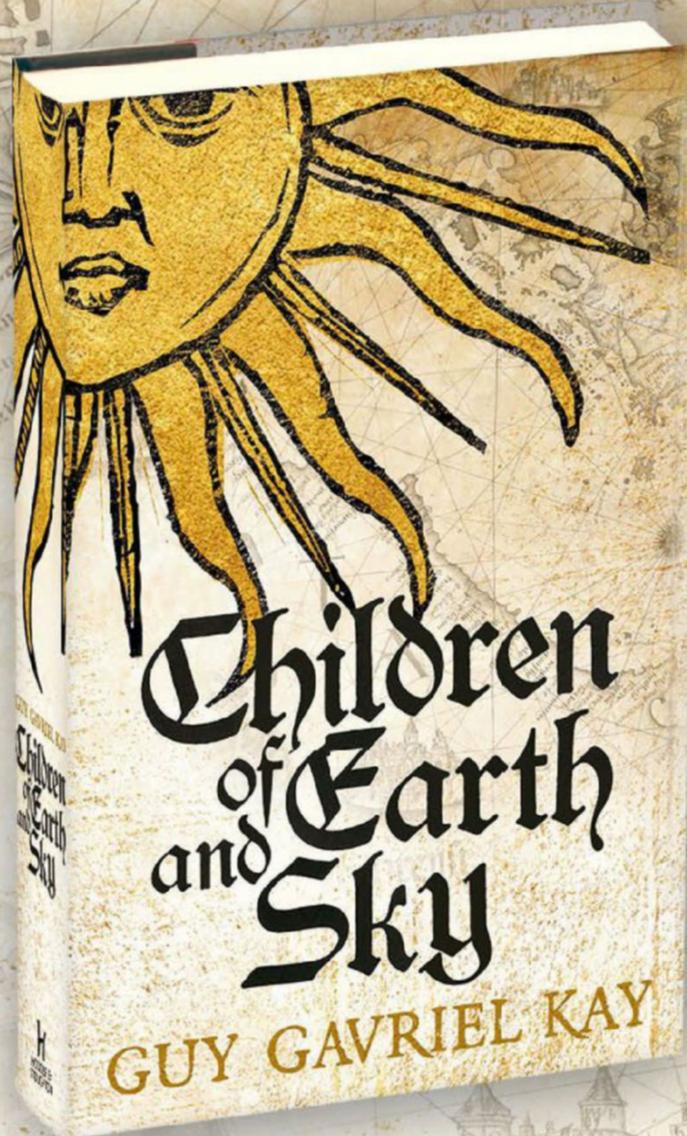
Nick Setchfield's spine tingles as he recalls *Sapphire And Steel*'s titles sequence.



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colliding religions,
and shifting
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Publisher's Weekly



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Rants & Raves

INSIDE THE SFX HIVE MIND

RICHARD EDWARDS

EDITOR

RAVES

→ Well done Shane Black for calling out Marvel/Disney's crazy decision to veto a female villain in *Iron Man 3*, because "a toy won't sell as well if it's female". Hopefully this will never be used as an excuse again.

RANTS

→ How did *X-Men: Apocalypse* make so many of the same mistakes as *The Last Stand*?



NICK SETCHFIELD

FEATURES EDITOR

RAVES

→ I've been re-reading the '70s Luke Cage comics ahead of the Netflix show. Now I really wish they'd made a movie back then. *SuperShaft!*

RIP

→ Such a shame about Darwin Cooke. His art brightened me up every time I saw it. Amazing style and spirit.



IAN BERRIMAN

REVIEWS EDITOR

RAVES

→ Love this video of John Carpenter playing the *Escape From New York* theme: <http://bit.ly/carpenterescape>.

→ Excited by the *Star Trek VI* trailer. Hope it is set post-*Trek VI* – that'd be a good call...

RANTS

→ ...the title font is hideously naff though. Ugh!



JOSH WINNING

NEWS EDITOR

RAVES

→ It's my first rave! Hello world. I'm more excited about becoming SFX's news wrangler than Bastian was when he got to ride Falkor that time.

RANTS

→ I love me some X-Men, but *Apocalypse* had me dreaming wistfully of Ragnarök. Mostly it was meh. Sad times.



RUSSELL LEWIN

PRODUCTION EDITOR

RAVES

→ Not sci-fi, but that Patrick Stewart was good in the tense *Green Room*.

→ Appropriate that I'm editing a *Ghostbusters* mag because back in '84 it saved the cinema I now work part-time in! (Little Theatre, Bath)

→ Our Tarzan article (p78) inspired me to watch one of the few I ain't seen – 1918's *Tarzan Of The Apes!*



JONATHAN COATES

ART EDITOR

RAVES

→ Have been enjoying volume two of *Darth Vader* and *Star Wars: Showdown On The Smuggler's Moon* comics. Exciting stuff, although I don't recall Luke being so kick-ass at the end of *New Hope*.

→ Looking forward to Marvel's *Force Awakens* comic.
→ Doctor Strange Lego. Gimme.



CATHERINE KIRKPATRICK

ART EDITOR

RAVES

→ Excited there's a new series of *Inside Number 9*. Already sounds like they're going even darker, with one episode concentrating on the half-goat, half-demon creature Krampus. I'm in!

RANTS

→ Worried the new *Ghostbusters* might be one reboot too many.



WILL SALMON

SPECIALS EDITOR

RAVES

→ Finally saw – and loved – *The Witch*. Unnerving stuff with fantastic performances. How about a Black Phillip spin-off?
→ I'm re-watching all of *Lost* and Boone has just died. Great days.

RANTS

→ *Game Of Thrones*. Ace season but by the Seven Hells, Daenerys, just bloody get on with it.



JOSEPH McCABE

US EDITOR (WEST COAST)

RAVES

→ The Golden Age of Screen Superheroes continues with *Civil War*, *Legends Of Tomorrow*, *Supergirl*... even *Preacher!*
→ Happy 50th, *Star Trek!*

RANTS

→ What will it take for Warner Bros to realise fans want Zack Snyder OFF *Justice League*?



JAYNE NELSON

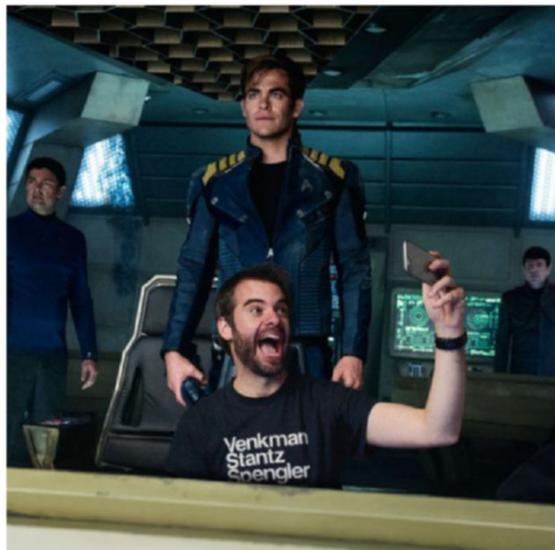
WRITER

RAVES

→ Goodbye, *Person Of Interest* – one of my top ten favourite shows of all time. I'll especially miss shipping Shaw and Root, mainly because their ship name is "Shoot". And as they're both assassins, that's bloody marvellous.

RANTS

→ SFX should cover *Vikings*. All sorts of supernatural goings on!



Five-year missions. Exploring strange new worlds. Seeking out new life and new civilisations. Boldly going where no one has gone before. Has there ever been a more exciting sci-fi mission statement than *Star Trek*'s? As with fellow quinquagenarian (it's a word!) franchise *Doctor Who*, its strength is its infinite possibilities, the opportunity to do anything and go anywhere in the galaxy.

So it was something of a disappointment when, after the spectacular franchise rejuvenation of JJ Abrams' first *Trek* movie, *Into Darkness* opted to bring back the film series' greatest villain, and make a few-too-many nods to the wonderful *The Wrath Of Khan*. Luckily, *Star Trek Beyond* looks set to learn from those mistakes, bringing the crew to face an all-new villain with major issues with the Federation. We've spoken to the most important names on the movie – including a huge one-on-one with captain of the ship Chris Pine – to get the Starfleet intel on the biggest space-set movie this side of December (p44).

And in something of a blockbuster issue, we have the pleasure of chatting with Paul Feig, the director taking the reins on the *Ghostbusters* reboot (p62), and Roland Emmerich (and his cast) about destroying the world (again) in *Independence Day* sequel *Resurgence* (p72). There's loads going on, so make sure you keep your finger on the genre pulse by subscribing to SFX. Details on p42.

Rich

Richard Edwards, Editor
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RICH'S PICTURE BY OLLY CURTIS

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→ NEWS //// INTERVIEWS //// INSIGHT //// KISS → edited by Josh Winning

DIRECTOR EXCLUSIVE!

DARK NIGHT

James DeMonaco reveals
the wicked secrets of
bonkers threequel

*The Purge:
Election Year*

→ **There was a moment during** shooting for *The Purge: Election Year* – the third film in the hit post-apocalyptic action series – that director James DeMonaco thought he'd finally lost it. "We have a big finale inside a cathedral," he tells Red Alert, chatting down the line from an LA edit suite. "We all turned to each other and said, 'Okay, we've gone off the rails...'. It's like an old Hammer film at one point, in the greatest way. It's got this great kind of Gothic feel, but it has people praying and killing; it's blending religion and murder. We're trying to depict a world that's truly gone bananas. We get there in the finale!" →



Highlights



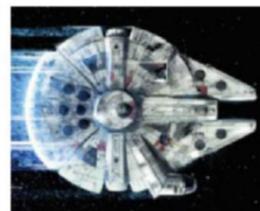
12 ENTER THE NEON DEMON

→ Nicolas Winding Refn and Elle Fanning spill their secrets.



14 NIGHT OF THE HUNTER

→ The gender-flipped *Van Helsing* heads up our TV preview.



25 SUPER STAR WATCH

→ A bumper round-up of news from a galaxy far, far away.

SCI-FACT! *The Purge* is next set to become a 10-part miniseries overseen by franchise creator James DeMonaco.

“Frank broke two of my stunt co-ordinator’s ribs! We literally heard them crack”

Anybody familiar with the franchise wouldn’t expect any less from DeMonaco’s trilogy closer. While the first film (“a tiny little thing,” the director laughs of its \$3m budget) was a Lena Headey/Ethan Hawke two-hander set almost entirely in a suburban family home, 2014’s *The Purge: Anarchy* tipped Frank Grillo into a night of carnage on the streets of LA. The crazy-cool concept that linked them? In the not-too-distant future, murder is legal for one night a year, meaning grudges big and small can be settled in deliriously bloody fashion.

Taking the series to its inevitable conclusion, *The Purge: Election Year* will finally unveil exactly how high up the corruption goes (and in a real-life election year, to boot, when a Trump-shaped apocalypse seems all but nigh). “It was always like, ‘How do we pull the focus back more and see more of the world; why we got here, how we got here, who are the puppet masters?’” DeMonaco says. “In part three, we meet the founding fathers who created the Purge. We find out why they created the Purge, broadening that horizon.”

PLAYING POLITICS

Relocating the action to Washington DC allows us “to see right into the heart of this crazy night”, the director says, with Purge survivor Sergeant (Frank Grillo) again taking the lead. His quest to kill the man who murdered his son ended in *Anarchy* and now Sergeant has ditched his combat gear for a suit and tie. “The last movie affected him greatly,” Grillo tells us, while DeMonaco adds: “It’s almost a redemption story. Sergeant almost did this heinous thing that he now sees could’ve ruined his life. He sees the Purge as this grotesque thing that needs to be abolished.”

Which is why Sergeant is now heading up the security team of one Senator Charlene Roan (Elizabeth Mitchell), a Presidential candidate who’ll abolish the Purge if she’s elected. Of course, the Powers That Be are determined not to let that happen, but Sergeant is no wallflower – and neither is the guy playing him. “Frank’s gotten into a lot of scraps in life,” says DeMonaco, who relied on his leading man to bring it during a gruelling 35-night shoot. “He’s an MMA fighter; he’s someone you don’t really want to mess with in real life. He broke two of my stunt co-



This new version of *Reservoir Dogs* featured much more casual outfits.

ordinator’s ribs! We literally heard them crack. Frank is really tough and I that’s why I love working with him, because it’s not pretend.”

It’s not all about breaking bones, though. Over the course of *Election Year*, Sergeant eventually joins forces with a shop worker played by Mykelti Williamson, whom both DeMonaco and Grillo say steals the movie. “We have to come together for a common cause,” Grillo says. “And eventually it becomes a little bit of a buddy movie with him and I. It’s cool. He’s just fantastic in it!” Adds DeMonaco: “The *Purge* films are very grim, but this one brings an element of humanity and humour that the other films didn’t have.”

Which gifts the threequel something the first two films almost entirely lacked. “I think there’s hope now,” DeMonaco says. “This woman wants to stop this grotesque holiday, and you’ve got a sense of community in these people who work at this deli; I think within that community you get natural laughs coming. The film’s so insane at points, the action is so insane, that having these moments of laughter is a relief in between the chaos unfolding.”

That very chaos, though, is guaranteed to take the franchise out with a bang. “We really wanted to up the ante,” reveals DeMonaco. “The idea is that this violence is a virus that infects America and we said, ‘Let’s just go all in and make this a very surreal landscape.’ So the violence has a surreal, strange feel.” Not that it’s all about bloodshed. “I grew up with sci-fi and watching movies like *Logan’s Run* and *Soylent Green*, and they were metaphors for something else,” muses the director. “This is a metaphor for America’s relationship with guns and violence, but people really take it as something very real and plausible. Which is cool!” ●

The Purge: Election Year opens on 15 July.



We can't help thinking he'd bite.



The clowns he'd booked for the birthday party weren't quite what he'd expected.



You never know what's just around the corner.

BIG GRILLIE STYLE

Frank Grillo talks *Purge* antihero Sergeant and upcoming sci-fi...

DOES THIS THIRD *PURGE* FILM AMP UP THE ACTION?

→ Yeah, it's right from the get go, it does amp it up. That's by design. I think people responded to the type of film that the second one evolved into, so we wanted to make sure people weren't disappointed. We shot it in Rhode Island and it was all night shoots. That was about six weeks, so it really started to play with everybody's psyche. All of a sudden you feel like you're on Mars, you don't know which way's left or right! I've just seen a cut of this film. It's fantastic. I think it's better than the second one. It's great fun!

WHAT KIND OF IMPACT DOES THE ACTION HAVE ON YOU?

→ The show that I do [*Kingdom*] is very physical, and other movies that I do, like *Captain America*, it's all kind of physical action stuff, so I stay in pretty decent shape throughout the year. For me it's fun because I do all my own fighting and action stuff. I get involved in that, I have a good time!



Frank Grillo stars again as *Purge* survivor Sergeant.

WOULD YOU EVER MAKE A FOURTH *PURGE*?

→ You know, the funny thing about Hollywood is, you could say that this is a trilogy, but this movie opens 4 July [in the US] and if it does great business, guess what? There's gonna be another one. It's all about commerce. I don't think they expected to make seven or eight *Fast & Furious* movies, but people keep going to them... so it's a great opportunity for me. I love it, I have fun with it, I love the people who do it, so if there is a fourth one and Universal wants me to continue on this path, I'm certainly interested.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU HAVE COMING UP?

→ *Beyond Skyline* was a film I did last year. It's not really a sequel. The premise is there are these aliens that suck up human beings, similar to the first [*Skyline*], and it becomes an action movie with me and Iko Uwais from the *Raid* movies. We did a lot of cool fight stuff with the aliens. It's a bit like *District 9*, it's fun! Then there's *Stephanie*, a real spooky, supernatural thriller with me and Anna Torv and this young girl, Shree Crooks, who I think is gonna be the next Meryl Streep. She's phenomenal. It's very contained, it's the second film Akiva Goldsman's directed. I'm excited about that, too!

SCI-FACT! Refn thanks Alejandro Jodorowsky in the credits; he was interviewed in 2013 doc *Jodorowsky's Dune*.

DIRECTOR EXCLUSIVE

SAVAGE ART

Director Nicolas Winding Refn peels back the layers of cannibal horror movie *The Neon Demon*...



"It's a teenage horror film for teenagers," says Nicolas Winding Refn of his latest film, *The Neon Demon*.

Think a cannibal movie directed by Helmut Lang and you're some way to unpicking this bloody skewering of the fashion industry, a film that feasts on our global obsession with perfection in its story about 16-year-old LA newcomer Jesse (Elle Fanning), a wannabe model with a natural beauty that leaves all her peers envious.

"The world of fashion is so wonderful to manoeuvre," says the Danish-born Refn (*Only God Forgives*). "In a way, it's so campy and so ridiculous. But also it's so beautiful and intoxicating, so it's a very diverse world." The cattle-calls, shown in the film, where girls are rejected or hired are "very evil and very disgusting," he says. "You are just a piece of meat...[but] casting a movie is the same way. There's something very sadistic about having power, especially over women from a male perspective."

Now 18, Fanning was the same age as Jesse when the film was made. "Since we shot in chronological order, it was amazing," she notes. "I could really track her literally turning into a complete narcissist. In the beginning, we talked about her as Dorothy from *Wizard Of Oz* - she's plopped into this world and you don't really know where she comes from but she's innocent and wide-eyed, looking at these sparkly things."

Needless to say, innocence turns to experience as she meets a worldly-wise make-up artist (Jena Malone) and two haughty models (Abbey Lee, Bella Heathcote) who, it seems, have a taste for blood. "It's not the act of cannibalism that's interesting - it's what they consume," says Refn. "And I thought it was very interesting that beauty

“The world of fashion is so wonderful to manoeuvre. It's so beautiful and intoxicating”



We're not saying it got tense on set, but...

will start consuming itself, because the perception and the obsession with beauty continues to skyrocket."

Feeling like Refn's second love-letter to Los Angeles after his 2011 cult crime tale *Drive* – "it's such an incredible place to work," he says – *The Neon Demon* takes on the city in much the way David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive* did, as a seething hotbed of carnality. "For a while I thought LA was 'the neon demon' in a way because that city is so haunting but so enticing," says Fanning. "It sucks you in but it will spit you out."

Refn is rather hesitant to fully explain "The Neon Demon" – symbolised by a series of glowing triangles Jesse sees during a catwalk show. "I probably saw it in some [occultist] Aleister Crowley book I had," he says. "And I was like, 'Oh, that's the sign of The Neon Demon' – especially when it was in neon. There's some kind of glow to that; an almost creature-like instinct to it. There's something vulgar, there's something glamorous about neon."

Dubbed "a Robert Palmer video directed by Dario Argento" by one critic, it certainly has that feel of the Italian horror maestro in a dream scene where Keanu Reeves, playing the sleazy manager at Jesse's motel, thrusts a knife into her throat. "Just having Keanu with a knife in someone's throat is exciting," says Refn. "Keanu's the fucking best." Just don't accuse Refn of looking back. "I make films," he says, "for the future." ●

The Neon Demon opens on 8 July.

AERIAL ASSAULT

SCI-FI TV ROUND UP

→ **Outlander** has been renewed for a third and fourth series that'll adapt Diana Gabaldon's *Voyager* and *Drums Of Autumn*.
 → **X-Men spin-off Legion** has been given a full series order, but won't fit into film continuity – a relief, seeing as there doesn't seem to be any...
 → HBO's **Westworld** will air this autumn.
 → **Quatermass** is getting a reboot courtesy of Jeremy Dyson and BBC America.
 → **Damien** has been cancelled by NBC. Sometimes evil does die...
 → Pablo Schreiber will play Mad Sweeney in **American Gods**.
 → Bryan Cranston will star in **Electric Dreams: The World Of Philip K Dick**.
 → **DangerMouse** reboot will return for season two.
 → Michelle "Missy" Gomez could return for series 10 of **Doctor Who**.
 → **Sense8** co-creator Lilly Wachowski has departed the series, leaving it to sibling Lana.



GENE SIMMONS

THE **KISS** BASSIST ON HIS LIFELONG LOVE OF SCIENCE FICTION

Favourite SF/fantasy films

→ The original 1951 *The Day The Earth Stood Still* is one of my favourite movies, although I didn't mind the Keanu Reeves remake. I love *The Shape Of Things To Come*, which was based on the HG Wells novels and was one of the early talkies when it came out in 1936. I also like the 1953 *War Of The Worlds*, which was produced by George Pal. The Steven Spielberg version wasn't bad, but it was more about modern technology and special effects. The original was really terrifying, as you just had Gene Barry and this girl hiding in this farmhouse and you hear "beep, beep, beep..."

Favourite SF/fantasy books

→ I'm a big Ayn Rand fan. I particularly like her novella *Anthem*, which is about a couple who live in this dystopian society, where all they are known by is a number. It's about finding your own individuality in a future where there's only this single consciousness. Another short book I like is *Illusions: The Adventures Of A Reluctant Messiah*, which is by Richard Bach, who wrote *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*. It's about a gas station attendant, who has a conversation with this guy, where he asks him, "Who do you think you are? God?" and he says, "Yes!"

Favourite SF/fantasy comics

→ Probably the finest comic series ever has to be *Watchmen* by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons. I'm also a big fan of the *Watchmen* film, which was not well reviewed but it's one of the best movies ever, comic book or otherwise.

Kiss Rocks Vegas is out on DVD on 24 June.

© REX (2)

“DON'T QUOTE ME”
 “JOHN CARPENTER PREDICTED THE 21ST CENTURY IN *THEY LIVE* WITH MORE ACCURACY THAN THAT FRENCH APOTHECARY GUY, NOSTRADAMUS.”

Guillermo del Toro is in love with the horror auteur.



SCI-FACT! Neil LaBute was also behind the Nicolas Cage-starring remake of *The Wicker Man*.

CREATOR EXCLUSIVE

HIGH STAKES

Syfy's *Van Helsing* will be unlike any other entry in the vampire diaries...

➔ Such is the legend of Abraham Van Helsing that it's natural to assume he's the one who slayed the Prince of Darkness in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, not Jonathan Harker and Quincey Morris. His reputation as an executioner of the undead has been coloured by numerous media interpretations that have somewhat watered down his evocative name. That looks set to change, though, with Syfy's *Van Helsing*, which introduces a descendant of the Dutch doctor (played by *True Blood*'s Kelly Overton) to a vampire-plagued world far removed from the Count's medieval Carpathian hideaway.

"The contemporary post-apocalyptic setting – and the introduction of Vanessa Helsing as a human-vampire hybrid who is capable of turning vampires back to humans – make *Van Helsing* very different from any of the previous versions people have seen," says writer and executive producer Simon Barry.

The *Continuum* creator signed on to *Van Helsing* to collaborate with showrunner Neil LaBute (*In The Company Of Men*). Barry believes that LaBute will restore respectability to a subgenre that has too

often been reduced to melodrama in recent years. "I knew he would bring a fresh and unexpected take to this material," he says. "I also knew that with Neil's guidance, we could dig into the characters in a way that would elevate it to be more than what's expected by the audience."

Foremost among those characters is what Barry describes as a "tough-minded and resourceful" heroine. "Vanessa Helsing has emerged from a three-year coma to find a broken, post-apocalyptic world, ruled by vampires," he explains. "Her driving goal is to locate her daughter Dylan, but due to her special abilities to turn vampires back into humans, she has become the target for both vampires and the human resistance dedicated to fighting them."

This makes Vanessa Helsing sound more like Rick Grimes than the campy crossbow-wielding hero of the 2006 Hugh Jackman movie. If so, Syfy's new series might bring his myth back down to earth. "This show is a straight-up drama and embraces elements of horror and violence," Barry confirms. "There is the occasional comedic beat, but the tone and stakes of this world are real." ●



Not a bunch of angry, flame-wielding European villagers...

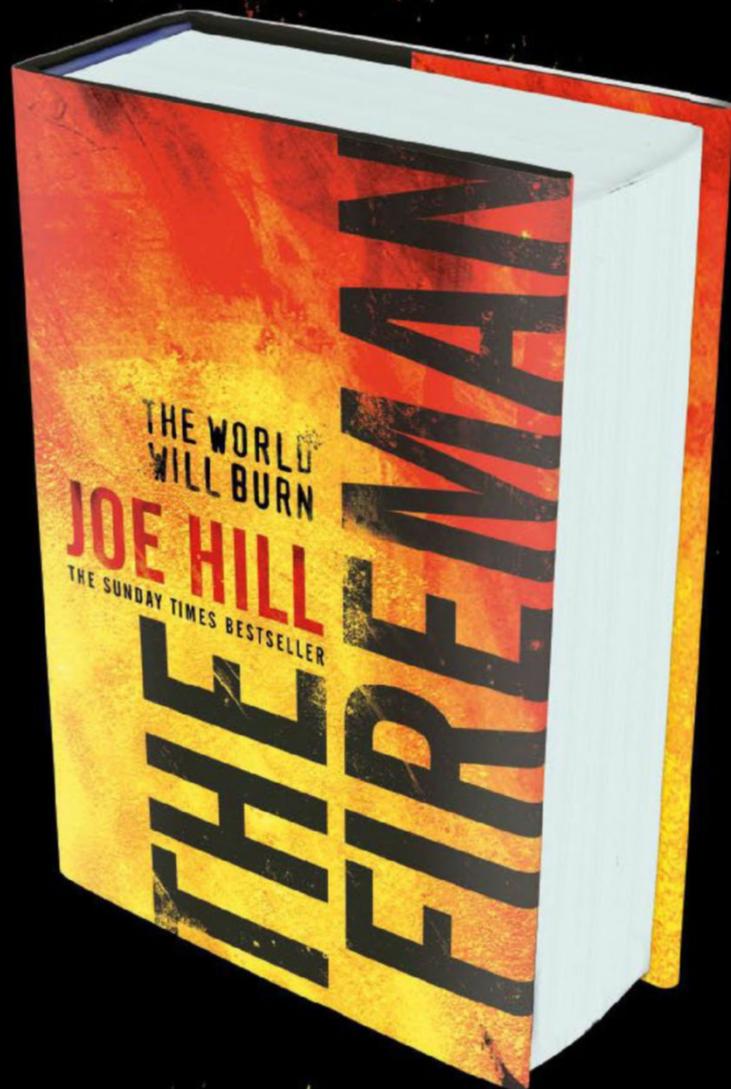
Kelly Overton is the gun-toting scourge of modern vampires.

Van Helsing premieres on Syfy in the US later this year.

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'Ominously superb'

– Nick Harkaway

**'Joe Hill is a master
storyteller'**

– Lauren Beukes

**'A contender for book
of the year'**

– Sarah Pinborough

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SCI-FACT! Episodes of *Voyager* penned by Bryan Fuller include hard-hitters "Drone" and "Course Oblivion".

STAR TREK TV SHOW

New crew, old enemies and *Hannibal* helmers
– *Trek* is beaming back to TV

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

◉ Boldly going to the strange new world of Video On Demand, *Star Trek* is threatening to do what it does best – and this time it might actually do it, given that it's *Hannibal*-honcho Bryan Fuller running the show and Alex Kurtzman executive producing. The show – coming out in weekly instalments on CBS All Access – will "introduce new characters seeking imaginative new worlds and new civilisations, while exploring the dramatic contemporary themes that have been a signature of the franchise".

VETERAN CREW

◉ While the CBS teaser promises "New crews. New villains. New heroes. New worlds," there's Starfleet experience behind the camera. Fuller cut his teeth on *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* and *Voyager* – writing no less than 20 episodes of the latter – while Kurtzman co-penned JJ Abrams' *Trek* reboot. They've also filled their new bridge with familiar faces, adding Gene Roddenberry's son Rod to the production team along with *The Wrath Of Khan*'s helmer Nicholas Meyer in a consulting role. It's all sounding promising.

ABRAMS ABANDONED

◉ Despite the Abrams connection, don't expect any crossover with the cinematic reboot, those famous characters or that iconic ship. "*Star Trek* is such a big universe," Fuller mused, long before he landed this gig, "and there are so many places to go with it."

This first season is rumoured to be Stardated somewhere on the post-Kirk, pre-Picard timeline, most likely after *Star Trek VI*. As Meyer put it, "The one thing I can relate to you is that *The Undiscovered Country*, according to Bryan, is a real sort of taking off point, or touchstone, for how I guess he's thinking about the direction of the new show." Perhaps the show could explore the aftermath of the Khitomer Conference – a theory possibly enforced by the sight of a

partially exploded planetoid in the teaser. It couldn't be obliterated Klingon satellite Praxis, could it?

BADGE OF HONOUR

◉ Is there any meaning to the new-look Starfleet logo in the teaser? It's "fashionably" distressed, hinting at a more "used", *Star Wars*-y vision of space travel than we're used to in the traditionally clean-cut Federation. And what's with the split in the badge? Could there be disputes within Starfleet? Or is Fuller about to explore the Mirror Universe?

OPTIMISM PRIME

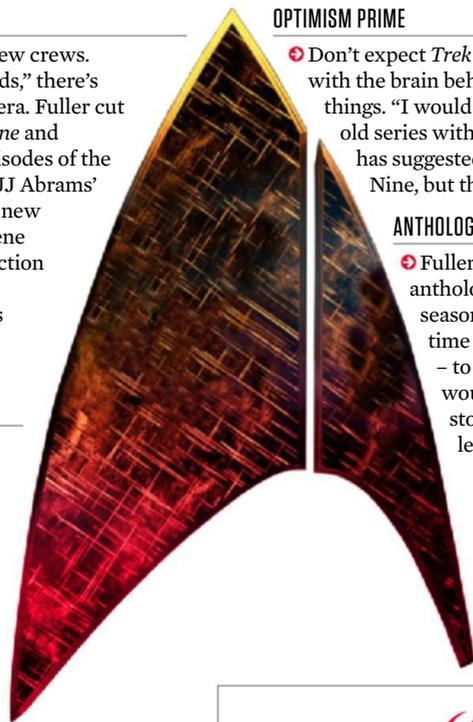
◉ Don't expect *Trek* 2017 to be too heavy though, even with the brain behind *Hannibal* masterminding things. "I would love to return to the spirit of the old series with the colours and attitude," Fuller has suggested. "I loved *Voyager* and *Deep Space Nine*, but they seem to have lost the '60s fun."

ANTHOLOGY OF INTEREST

◉ Fuller's show is rumoured to be an anthology show, with the following season being set a completely different time and story – maybe even characters – to the one that preceded it. This would also chime with Fuller's storytelling success with *Hannibal*, letting him tell a season-long arc as opposed to *Trek*'s standard more-episodic plotting.

WHEN WILL IT BEAM IN?

◉ January 2017. Filming is set to begin imminently in Toronto so expect a flood of casting news very soon. ●



“DON'T QUOTE ME”

“I MEAN, IT TOOK \$800M, SO THE KICKING DIDN'T MATTER, BUT IT WAS SORT OF OVERSTUFFED.”

Jeremy "Alfred" Irons wasn't a huge fan of *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice*, either.



AERIAL ASSAULT SCI-FI TV ROUND UP

→ E4 show

The Aliens won't be back.

→ **Jessica Jones'**

Carrie-Anne Moss will return as lawyer Jeri Hogarth in **Iron Fist**.

→ Sundance TV's futuristic **Cleaverman** to get second season. The first will air on the Beeb this year.

→ **John Barrowman** has hinted he might be making a **Doctor Who** comeback.

→ A massive crossover between **Supergirl**, **Arrow**, **The Flash** and **Legends Of Tomorrow** is in the pipeline.

→ Mike Colter says "**Luke Cage** is gonna have to step up and be the man" in his upcoming Netflix series.

→ The **BBC** given the go-ahead to create its own Netflix-like paid streaming service.

→ Fox says "everyone is on board" for another **The X-Files** series.

→ Kevin Smith is keen to write a couple of episodes of **Arrow**.

→ Showtime president David Nevins has hinted **Twin Peaks** could (finally) air in spring 2017.



REX

SCI-FACT! *Supernatural* is already the longest-running sci-fi/fantasy show in US TV history, having overtaken *Smallville* last year.



Good guys and bad travel into the past in NBC's *Timeless*.

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT...

THE NEW US TV SEASON

Checking out the trends in the networks' upcoming shows...

NETWORKS ARE STICKING WITH WHAT THEY KNOW

1 Remember when shows got cancelled left, right and centre? It's still happening, of course, but numbers seem to be dwindling – networks are playing it safe with established properties. This means, to cite a few examples, a season six for *Grimm* and *Once Upon A Time*; *Sleepy Hollow* hits its fourth year (despite losing its female lead); *The 100* and *The Originals* are four, *The Vampire Diaries* is eight and *Supernatural* is up to a round dozen.

EVERYBODY'S TIME TRAVELLING

2 ABC, Fox and NBC have all greenlit shows about time-travel – as though there weren't already enough to go around. So, on ABC we'll get *Time After Time*, about HG Wells hunting Jack the Ripper; Fox is bringing us comedy *Making History*, about a bunch of guys who discover they can hop through time; and NBC is working on *Timeless*, where a criminal heads to the past to change history.

SUPERHEROES ARE STILL BIG

3 In addition to all the current staples – *Gotham*, *Agents Of SHIELD*, *Supergirl* (which is moving to The CW), *The Flash*,

Arrow, *Legends Of Tomorrow* and the like – we're also getting *Powerless* on NBC, a comedy set in an insurance office in the DC universe, and Syfy are producing Superman prequel *Krypton*. The only surprise here is that *Agent Carter* didn't make the cut, nor the mooted *SHIELD* spin-off, *Marvel's Most Wanted*. Boo.

THERE ARE FEWER SHOWS MADE FROM ESTABLISHED BRANDS

4 Recently we've been subjected to *12 Monkeys*, *Minority Report*, *Heroes*, *The X-Files*, *Damien*... It was starting to feel as though network execs were browsing IMDb, randomly pointing at things and ordering them to be updated. While a few were successful, we're not seeing the same approach this year. Among those that were greenlit are *Frequency* on The CW, Geena Davis in *The Exorcist* on Fox, and *Emerald City* on NBC. The trend has

also decreased for more mainstream TV, but it's still just as popular on the big screen... Live-action *The Little Mermaid*, anyone?

COMIC ADAPTATIONS ARE ALL OVER THE PLACE

5 You already know how many subscription-only comic-book shows are being made right now – one day we suspect Netflix and Amazon might actually fight a real-life Civil War over them. But comics are also being adapted for network TV like there's no tomorrow. The CW is producing a surreal version of the classic Archie comics named *Riverdale*; while ABC has ordered a full season of *Marvel's Cloak And Dagger*. Meanwhile NBC has grabbed *Hawaiian Dick*, about a PI (Johnny Knoxville) investigating supernatural crimes. There are more. Many more. Comics continue to take over the world. We approve. ●



Powerless heads to a lesser-known part of the DC universe.

Yet more time travel in *Making History*.

Geena Davis stars in a reimagining of *The Exorcist*.

Red Alert Aug 2016
Freeze Frame *Top trailers dissected*

SCI-FACT! Ubisoft, the creators of the *Assassin's Creed* game, gave the movie a weapons bible as inspiration for its arsenal.

ASSASSIN'S CREED

OUT
30 DEC
2016

Michael Fassbender gets medieval in moody videogame adap...



➔ Criminal Callum Lynch (Michael Fassbender) wakes up at a facility called Abstergo Industries. "Where am I?" he asks the woman sitting by him.



⬆ That woman is scientist Sophia Rikkin (Marion Cotillard), who helpfully tells him, "You no longer exist." He doesn't ask for a second opinion.



⬆ Turns out Abstergo faked Callum's death and now he belongs to them. "What kind of prison is this?" he asks.



⬆ The company has a snazzy logo which helps hide the fact that it's a cover for an age-old secret society seeking to create a perfect world.



⬆ Sophia's father Alan Rikkin (Jeremy Irons) is the only character from the videogames; everybody else was created for the film.



⬆ Told that he's wanted for his past, Callum has blades attached to his forearms. Is this medieval *Fight Club*? It looks like medieval *Fight Club*.



⬆ Callum's hooked up to the Animus, which will send him into his past and enable him to inhabit the body of his ancestor, Aguilar de Nerha...



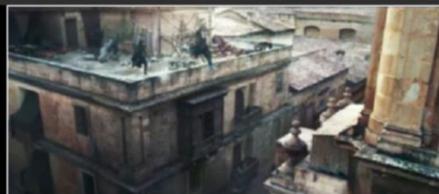
⬆ ...who was an assassin in 15th century Spain. "Welcome to the Spanish Inquisition," Sophia says in voiceover. Well that was unexpected.



⬆ Why does Abstergo need Callum's past? Why is Aguilar chained up and in desperate need of a bath? We'll find out in six months...



⬆ Meet Maria (Ariane Labed), whose character remains shrouded in mystery, though it's fair to say she can hold her own in a fight.



⬆ In a shot that could've come straight out of the videogames, Aguilar and Maria leap from rooftop to rooftop. One way to beat traffic.



⬆ This final shot from the trailer ups the ante big time as Aguilar plunges from a cathedral. While we peek between our fingers.

The Buzz



JAYNE Watching this, my first reaction was: "Michael Fassbender, woo!" Followed by: "Hmm, this looks like a computer game..." But hey, *Fassbender kicking ass*. I'm in.



RICH There's not much here to get me excited - yet. The unmistakably videogamey action is competent, but there's not much to lift this above generic action trailer territory.



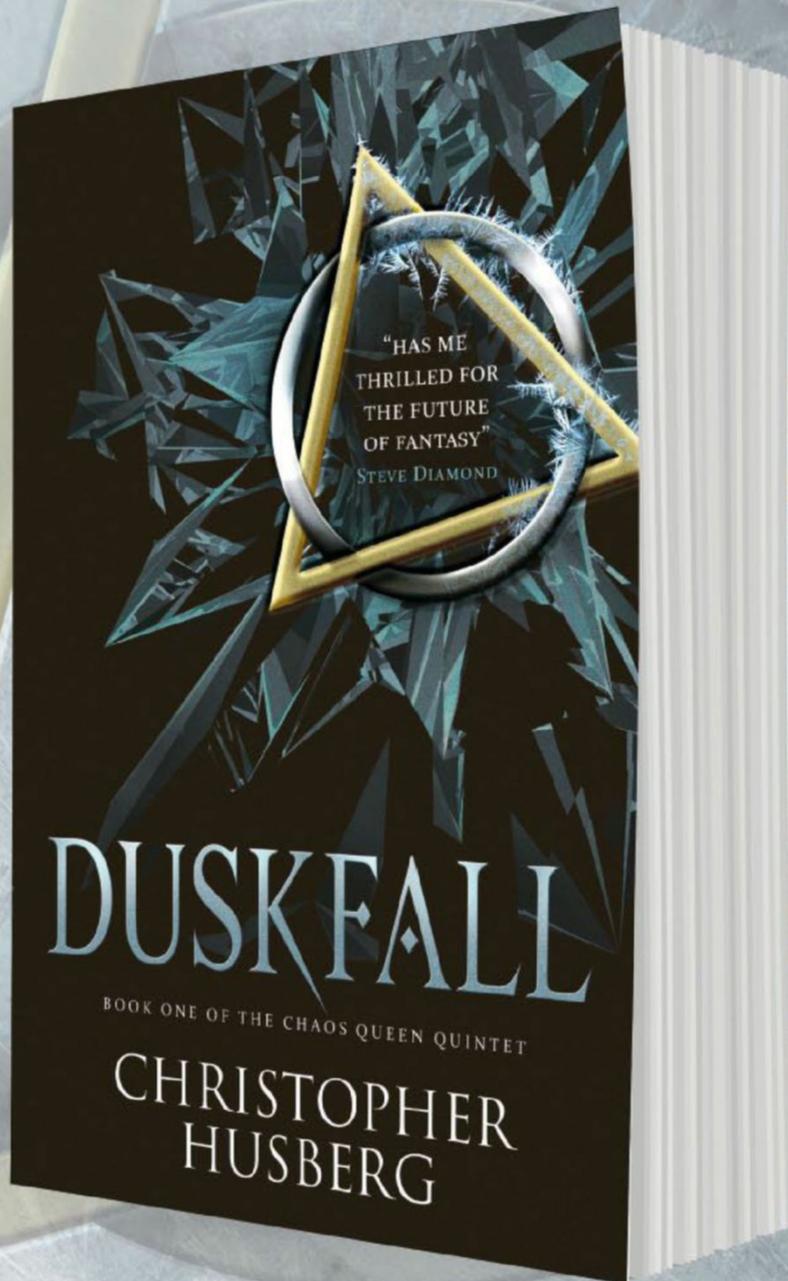
TARA The whole trailer looks like an extended cutscene from an early instalment of the game franchise. I'm hoping there's a lot more going on to intellectually support the pretty visuals.



JOSH If anybody can dispel the videogame movie curse, it's the team behind *Macbeth*. This looks grubby and fighty in the best way possible, like *Braveheart* meets *The Matrix*.

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SCI-FACT! Sean Connery played Robin Hood opposite Audrey Hepburn in 1976's *Robin And Marian*.

CAST EXCLUSIVE

BACK IN THE HOOD

Audio drama *Robin Of Sherwood: The Knights Of The Apocalypse* reunites the Merry Men after 30 years



➔ **When *Robin Of Sherwood* was cancelled by ITV in 1986, creator Richard "Kip" Carpenter, unwilling to see his series go out without a proper send-off, wrote a script that he hoped to have filmed as a coda. Unfortunately, it didn't happen – but now, 30 years on, almost the entire cast have reunited to record it for charity.**

"When I first read it, I could see it playing out in my mind," says producer Barnaby Eaton-Jones, who funded the project with a Kickstarter that hit its target in one day flat. "It's so well-written that, oddly, you feel like you've watched it."

Picking up not long after the series finale, the story sets our Sherwood-loving heroes against



Anthony Head is a new member of the cast.

a band of religious knights who start raising mischief, with Anthony Head playing their leader. The original cast – who worked for reduced rates, with a few even donating their fees to charity – were thrilled to be recording it, as they told *SFX* during the London premiere of the drama's first chapter.

"We were all excited about the fact it was Kip's writing; that makes a big difference," says Jason Connery, who played the second Robin, Robert of Huntingdon. The actors – including Ray Winstone, Judi Trott, Clive Mantle and Nickolas Grace – were also joined in the drama by the original Robin, Michael Praed, who makes a mysterious cameo. Others who have sadly died, such as Robert Addie (Guy of Gisborne) have been carefully recast.

Given the logistics of reuniting so many people after three decades, *The Knights Of The Apocalypse* is an extraordinary achievement, and it's also a landmark event for some of the characters. "I had more lines in this thing than in three years of the show," laughs Mark Ryan, who played the taciturn Saracen, Nasir. Hear what he has to say by purchasing the audio drama from www.spitefulpuppet.com. ●

The Knights Of The Apocalypse is out on 30 June.

NEW AUTHOR

YOON HA LEE

THE MATHS STUDENT TURNED NOVELIST ON THE FIRST IN HIS NEW MILITARY SCI-FI TRILOGY



What is *Ninefox Gambit* about?

➔ A disgraced captain is given the chance to redeem herself by recapturing a fortress. She allies with a 400-year-old undead general. The good news is that he's a tactical genius who has never lost a battle – the bad news is that he was executed for massacring two armies...

Tell us a little about your protagonist.

➔ Kel Cheris longs to be a good soldier, but is a little too independent-minded. She's also a first-rate mathematician, and because the technomagic in this setting runs on maths, this makes her very dangerous...

You majored in maths. How has this influenced your writing?

➔ Learning to write mathematical proofs taught me one way of structuring stories – you start with a set of axioms and work out the consequences. I used some mathematical terminology in the book, like matrix diagonalisation.

How have you found moving from short stories to novels?

➔ I was nervous about my ability to handle a novel, so I warmed up by writing a 27,000-word *Fullmetal Alchemist* fanfic for practice!

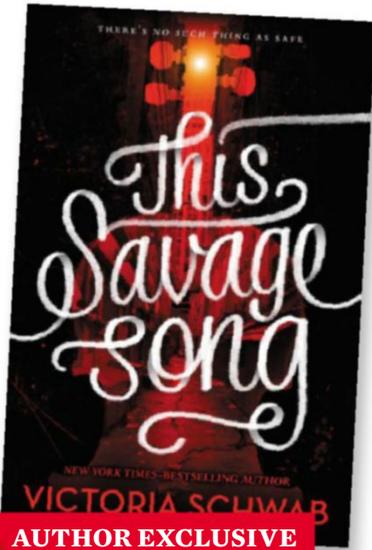
This is the first of a trilogy. Have you

started book two?

➔ It's finished! Book two introduces new characters and has more space battles. Parts of it are less grim. I like grimdark as much as the next reader, but there has to be some humour!

Ninefox Gambit is published on 16 June.

SCI-FACT! Alexi Zentner isn't good with spiders: "If I'm surprised by one, I shriek, then smash it with whatever's closest."



MONSTER MASH

Author **VE Schwab** unveils her latest monster-populated creation...

➔ **Nobody could ever accuse VE Schwab** of being lazy. The Nashville-based author of *Vicious* and *A Darker Shade Of Magic* has published 11 books in the last five years, amassed 30,000 Twitter followers and been nominated for numerous fantasy awards, including the Publishers Weekly Best Book Of 2013. And the 29-year-old is showing no sign of slowing down.

"Oh man, I'm just getting started," she tells Red Alert. Quite literally in the case of *This Savage Song*, which kicks off a new series set in Verity, an alternate United States where, according to Schwab, "brutal acts of violence start breeding actual monsters." Adds the author: "In the US, we have been seeing so much internal violence over the last several years, I was fascinated by the idea of a metaphysical aftermath. That's where my monsters come from."

Attempting to evade blood-draining skeletal monsters are Kate Harker and August Flynn, youngsters from warring families who must unite when Kate's targeted for assassination. So how does *This Savage Song* compare to Schwab's previous work? "It's probably the strangest, which for me is saying something," she reveals. "It's at turns the most commercial and the most literary, the most violent, and the most introspective. It's the book 18-year-old me would have wanted." ●

VE Schwab's This Savage Song is out now from Titan Books.

Ezekiel Boone wants you to wake up screaming!



EIGHT LEGS BAD

It'll take more than a tumbler and paper to see off *The Hatching's* spiders...

➔ **Arachnophobes, brace yourselves** for sleepless nights: new novel *The Hatching* is unleashing hordes of ancient flesh-eating spiders. Eek! It's been compared to *World War Z* and *Jurassic Park* and as the TV/film rights have already been snapped up, it could soon be scuttling in their filmic footsteps.

For author Alexi Zentner – here using the pen name Ezekiel Boone – the primary motivation was "writing something fun as hell".

"It started with the idea that there must be a reason we're so afraid of spiders," Zentner explains, "and wondering what in the past has seemingly turned that fear into something innate. From there, I had the image of a spider burrowing into your body. That led to the nightmares: me waking up, screaming, swatting at spiders I thought were crawling all over me!"

Although the premise – spiders that emerge

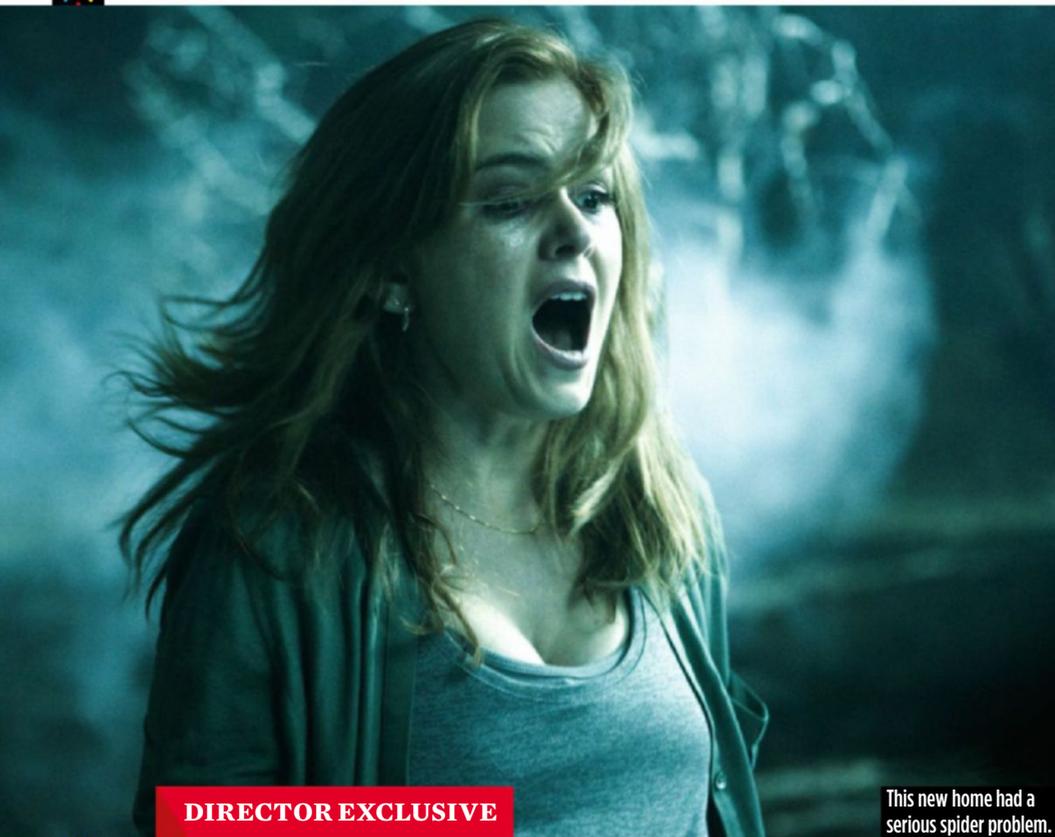
every 10,000 years to devour everything in their path – has no basis in reality (fingers crossed), the book does draw on biological fact.

"Most of the little details are true," Zentner says. "The way spiders have hairs that they can 'throw' at you as irritants. The idea of all of them coming out at once comes from cicadas. The most surprising thing is that there *are* types that are social and work together."

The Hatching is something of a return home for Zentner, whose first two novels were literary fiction. "All I read growing up was genre books," he reveals. "I tried writing SF and thrillers at first. What I wrote was terrible! I convinced myself it was the genre that was the problem, not that I hadn't figured out how to properly write yet. Getting back to my roots seemed like a blast – and it has been." ●

The Hatching is published by Gollancz on 5 July.

SCI-FACT! Greutert had to vacate the director's chair on *Paranormal Activity 2* to make *Saw VII*.



DIRECTOR EXCLUSIVE

This new home had a serious spider problem.

SIGHT FOR SAW EYES

Saw veteran Kevin Greutert on his spooky new supernatural chiller *Visions*

➔ “Producers and studios they really value the jump scare,” says *Visions* director Kevin Greutert, talking exclusively to Red Alert. “However a horror film only works for me if there’s a deep and abiding sense of dread that you start to experience early on.” Greutert knows a thing or two about shocks and scares – having worked as an editor on the first five *Saw* films as well as home-invasion horror *The Strangers*, Greutert made his directorial debut with *Saw VI*. But now with his new twisty haunted house movie starring Isla Fisher as a pregnant woman, he’s venturing into different territory.

“I never want to say that the *Saw* movies were easy, because they weren’t, they were very technically difficult. But they’re not studies in character or even studies in creepiness per se, they’re more like action horror. In a haunted house film it can only work if the audience

embraces the characters and it can only be scary if it’s quiet.”

Greutert came across the script back in 2008, yet it wasn’t until years later when he was working with Jason Blum that he finally had the chance to realise the project, assembling a supporting cast which includes Eva Longoria and *Community*’s Gillian Jacobs. And then there’s *The Big Bang Theory*’s Jim Parsons, who plays Fisher’s character’s doctor.

“Jim Parsons as a gynaecologist is a little bit strange,” he smiles. “For me he did a really good job of bringing that creepiness to it.”

Next up Greutert’s got cult-reprogramming horror *Jackals*, though he says he is interested in other genres. “In the meantime I have a career and I don’t want to jeopardise that by doing a musical.” ●

Visions is out now on DVD and Blu-ray.



AFTERLIFE
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SCI-FI STARS

118

**MEG
FOSTER**

*Evil-Lyn in
Masters Of The Universe*



Meg Foster’s career began with guest starring roles on such early ’70s TV fare as *The Six Million Dollar Man*, and she played Chris Cagney on *Cagney & Lacey* for six episodes before being replaced by Sharon Gless. Moving into films, Foster starred in *They Live* and *Masters Of The Universe*, in which she played Skeletor’s henchwoman, Evil-Lyn. More recently, she co-starred in Rob Zombie’s *The Lords Of Salem*.

Would you like to play Evil-Lyn again?

➔ No! There’s already enough evil in the world without bringing her back.

What’s the strangest request you’ve had from a fan?

➔ Nobody’s ever asked me for anything inappropriate or strange really. I feel left out!

Would any of Evil-Lyn’s attributes have been useful in real life?

➔ Just the opposite, I think some of my attributes would have been useful to her! Though I drew on several relatives of mine in creating her character, and I was able to deal with them through her, I guess. There are a lot of the women in my family in there.

Is there anything from *Masters Of The Universe* you wish was real?

➔ I think it would be great to have a cosmic key! Who wouldn’t want to be able to open a portal to anywhere?

What would it say on Evil-Lyn’s gravestone?

➔ “Dig me up – I’m not finished yet!”



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SCI-FACT! Guillermo del Toro's bloodsucker obsession began when he read *Varney The Vampire* as a youngster.



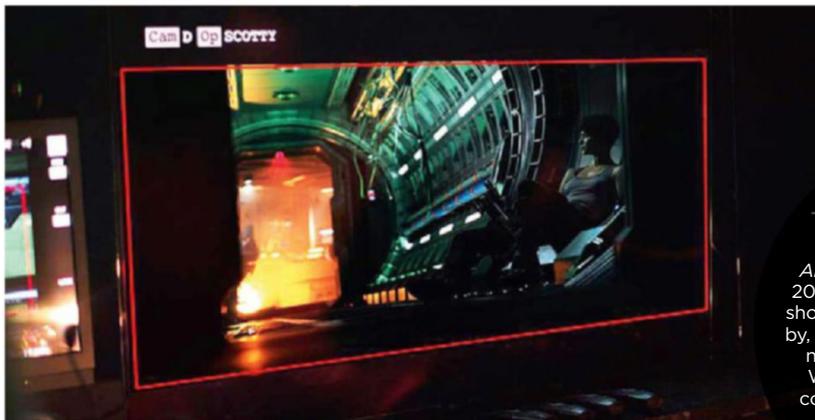
VAMP IT UP

It's fair to say that Guillermo del Toro's *The Strain* is one of the weirdest, goriest vampire shows ever to air on network television. Doubt it? Gorgeous new book *The Art Of The Strain* delves behind the scenes of the show, revealing artwork and make-up sessions in gloriously goopy detail. "I marvel at the sick images that came into my head," del Toro says in his foreword. Us, too. The book's out now from Titan.



THE FORCE REAWAKENS

Star Wars withdrawal symptoms? Well, Marvel is releasing a new, five-issue limited series based on JJ Abrams' blockbuster. Not only is *The Force Awakens* #1 hitting shelves this month, the series will also see superstar comic-book artists like Joe Quesada, John Cassaday and Phil Noto contributing variants. Which should tide us over until *Rogue One* hits in December.



CORRIDOR PERSON

Ridley Scott's back in space (well New Zealand) shooting *Alien: Covenant*, his follow-up to 2012's *Prometheus*, and if this first shot from the film is anything to go by, it's (creepy) business as usual as new heroine Daniels (Katherine Waterston) holes up in a dingy corridor. No sign yet of the film's only *Prometheus* holdover, android David (Michael Fassbender)...

SCI-FACT! *Rogue One* is rumoured to end ten minutes before the start of *A New Hope*.



NEWS WARP

HIGH-SPEED
FACTS

→ Brie Larson is current favourite to play **Captain Marvel** in the 2018 movie.
→ Legendary comics artist **Darwyn Cooke** has passed away at the age of 53. His unique style brought retro-futurist glamour to the likes of DC's *New Frontier*, *Catwoman* and the recent *Twilight Children*.
→ **David Mitchell** has buried his latest novel as part of the **Future Library** project in Norway – it won't be dug up until the year 2114.
→ A sixth series of **Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy** has been ordered by Radio 4.
→ **Paramount** has dropped its copyright lawsuit against Kickstarter-funded fan film **Star Trek: Axanar** at the request of JJ Abrams.
→ **TJ Miller** (*Silicon Valley*) has joined Spielberg's **Ready Player One** adap as online troll i-R0k.
→ Producer Simon Kinberg is still keen to make **Fantastic Four 2**.
→ **Edge Of Tomorrow's** Emily Blunt will lead **Mary Poppins Returns**, out December 2018.
→ A remake of '80s mermaid fantasy **Splash!** is on its way.
→ **John Boyega** has signed on to **Pacific Rim 2**.



STAR WARS GOSSIP

TO THE STARS!

A bumper round-up of happenings in a galaxy far, far away...



STAR WARS: ROGUE ONE

ETA: 14 DECEMBER 2016

🔥 May wasn't the best of months PR-wise for the hunt-for-the-Death Star-plans standalone movie. First, leaked images from a visual story guide to the movie revealed numerous previously-under-wraps character names; second, news of reshoots this summer led many to assume that all was not well on Gareth Edwards' *A New Hope* prequel.

So, alongside the already known Jyn Erso (Felicity Jones), we now know about Captain Cassian Andor (Diego Luna), assassin Baze (Jiang Wen), enforcer droid K-250 (a performance-captured Alan Tudyk), rebel soldier Bodhi (Riz Ahmed), and the warrior Chirrut (Donnie Wen). There are also VERY LOUD hints that Darth Vader is, as we suspected, in the movie.

As for those reshoots, early rumours suggested that Disney really didn't like the film's dark tone and craved more adventure and excitement. However, quoting "high level sources" at Lucasfilm, *Entertainment Weekly* says that the reshoots were planned all along, and that "the changes have everything to do with clarity and character development and all take place within scenes we've already shot."

EPISODE VIII

ETA: 15 DECEMBER 2017

🔥 JJ Abrams did a spectacular job of keeping us in the dark about the plot of *The Force Awakens*, and Rian Johnson is

picking up where he left off. We do know that Mark Hamill, Daisy Ridley and Adam Driver have been spotted arriving in Ireland to shoot in Donegal, so the smart money's on Luke Skywalker and Rey facing off against Kylo Ren and his knights of, er, Ren.

John Boyega, meanwhile, has described *Episode VIII* as "a different take, darker, bigger [than *The Force Awakens*], while Oscar Isaac told *Rolling Stone*, "there's a lot more to do. What happens now is the heroes get tested. All three of them. BB-8 gets tested too! Everybody gets tested! It's the dark second chapter, but not really dark." We'll undoubtedly learn more about both movies at *Star Wars* Celebration, which takes place in London from 15-17 July. (www.starwarscelebration.com)

HAN SOLO: THE MOVIE

ETA: 25 MAY 2018

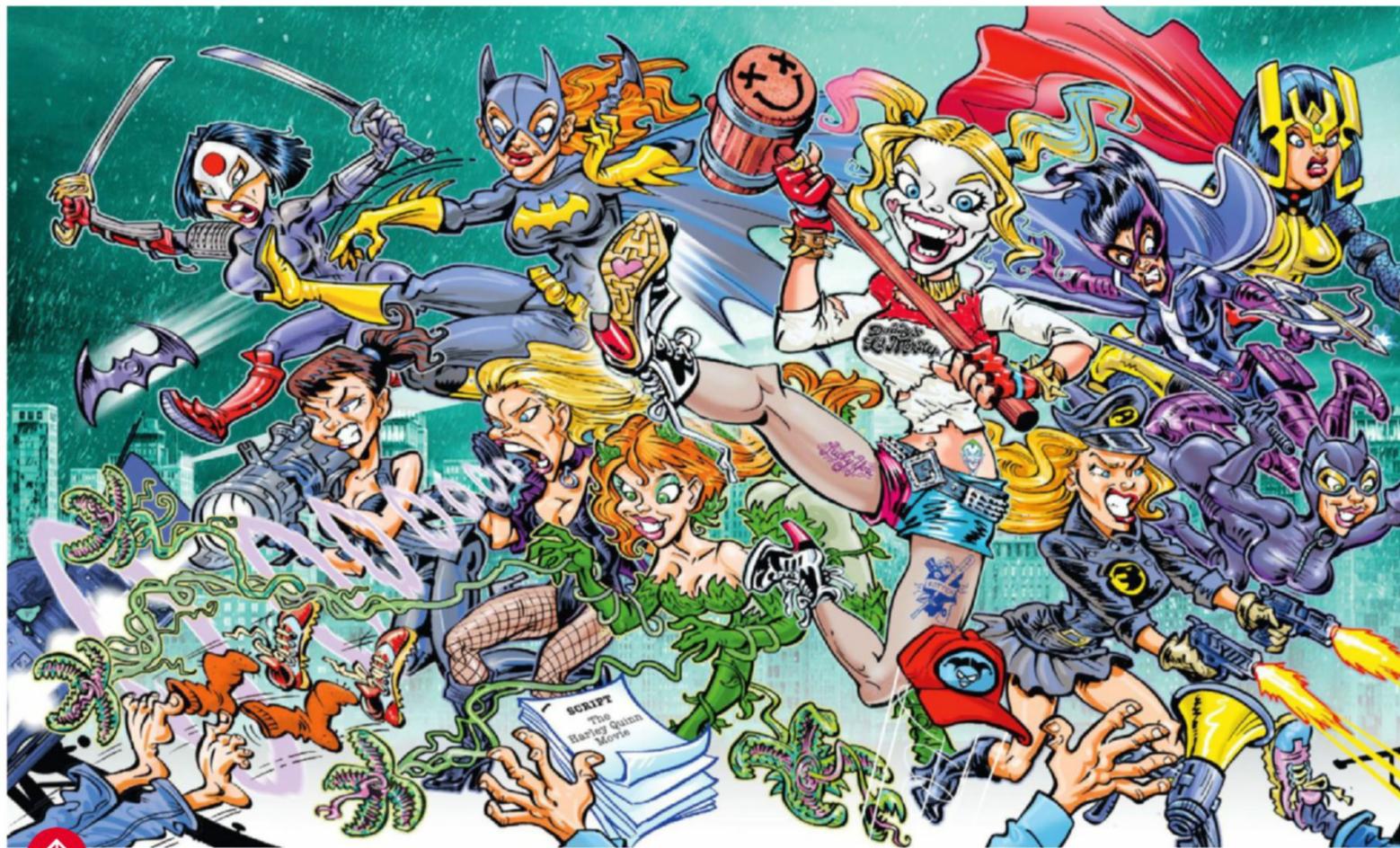
🔥 We now know, of course, that the unenviable task of stepping into Harrison Ford's very tight trousers falls to newcomer Alden Ehrenreich – only time will tell if he's both scruffy and nerfherdery enough for the Han Solo gig. The prequel movie's writer (and *Empire Strikes Back* and *Force Awakens* scripter) Lawrence Kasdan has also revealed that the movie – which will show Han and Chewbacca's origins – will start shooting in January. But rumour has it that the solo Solo movie won't be Ehrenreich's first appearance in the famous waistcoat – he might just be required for those *Rogue One* reshoots... ●



Nick Setchfield's

DEVELOPMENT HELL

Your monthly glimpse into Hollywood's hoped-for future



PUDDIN' IT ABOUT!

HARLEY QUINN

☛ We all know **Margot Robbie's** Harley Quinn is going to steal *Suicide Squad*. And not just steal it but maybe slice off some of its fingers and mail them to the cops with a crazed ransom demand. Warner Bros clearly know this too – the word among the Gotham underworld is the studio's developing a spin-off film for her.

The plan is to populate the movie with an oestrogen-packed army of DC's female characters, from Batgirl to Katana to Poison Ivy and the Birds of Prey. Let's see the military industrial toy complex try not to target little girls with this one... The pitch for the project is said to have come from Robbie herself, who reportedly engaged her own writer to take a shot at it. She'll also earn a

producer's credit. More power to her baseball bat, we say.

THUNDERBULL?

BOND 25

☛ Somewhere in deepest Pinewood, **Tom Hiddleston, Idris Elba, Aidan Turner** and **Jamie Bell** are suspended above a pit of komodo dragons, locked in a brutal Bond-off while Barbara

Broccoli watches, purring like a white Persian. Yes, the news that Daniel Craig has reportedly turned down a Max Zorin-style payday to renew his licence to kill has sent the media into casting speculation meltdown. One hard fact among the disinformation: don't look for Sam Mendes to helm the next 007 caper (well, not unless Eon offer him a private orbital laser and volcanic pied-a-terre, and they

might...): "I think it's time for somebody else. I'm a storyteller. And at the end of the day I want to make stories with new characters." In the frame to helm the next mission is **Susanne Bier**, who made the BBC's *The Night Manager* such a compelling and stylish pseudo-Bond experience. Hey, did the odds on Hiddleston just shorten?

ROCK ON!

DOC SAVAGE

☉ It's a deal: **Dwayne Johnson** will take the title role in *Shane Black's* big screen take on pulp superhero Doc Savage. "He is literally master of everything," raves The Artist Formerly Known As The Rock. "But here's the number one reason I'm excited to become Doc Savage... He's a fucking hilarious weirdo! Confidently, yet innocently, he has zero social graces whatsoever due to his upbringing so every interaction he has with someone is direct, odd, often uncomfortable and amazingly hilarious." We fear Dwayne may be confusing Doc with someone he once met on the upper deck of a night bus but hey, let's stay optimistic here. Black promises the film will stay true to the character's '30s roots: "It's all about ingenuity and cleverness and thought. It wasn't based on satellite tracking and this infinitude of gadgets. You have to find the clever, old-school ways that Doc gets out of traps." Expect some pulp era globe-hopping too: "Back then you could still look around, and the world was full of uncharted places... Today if there's a yeti we would have found him."

JASON LIVES! DUMB KIDS DIE!

FRIDAY THE 13TH

☉ Old horror franchises never die. They just keep coming at you. Next in line for a reboot from beyond the grave is hockey-masked charmer Jason Voorhees, longtime bane of Crystal Lake's TripAdvisor page. Producer **Brad Fuller** tells *The Reel World* that the movie will give us a new perspective on Mr V: "You kind of have to understand Jason Voorhees, so we go back and we



ALSO BURNING

→ **Elizabeth Debicki** orbiting **JJ Abrams' God Particulate** for Paramount... **Colony** writer **Ryan Condal** taking a shot at the *Logan's Run* remake... Disney adapting **Tony Cliff's Delilah Dirk** comics... **Rosa Salazar** reportedly the star of *Battle Angel Alita*... **Jeff Bridges** and **Elton John** joining *Kingsman: The Golden Circle*... **Nicole Kidman** producing vampire thriller *Cuddles*... **Rila Fukushima** joining *Ghost In The Shell*... **Michael Keaton** back in the frame for *Spider-Man: Homecoming*... **Lucy Liu** and **Snoop Dogg** joining **James Franco** and **Milla Jovovich** in post-apocalyptic *Future World*... **Fan Bingbing** starring in giant shark film *Meg*... **Nicolas Winding Refn** producing remake of *Witchfinder General*... **Olga Kurylenko** joining **Adam Driver** in **Terry Gilliam's** *The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*... **Rob Letterman** directing *Dungeons & Dragons*... **Gareth Edwards** bailing on *Godzilla 2*... **Helen Mirren** starring in supernatural thriller *Winchester*... **Jack Black** in talks for *Jumanji* remake... **Gael García Bernal** is a near-future *Zorro* in Z...



“There were a lot of found footage scripts that they wanted us to make”

kind of start over and work our way forward. Origin-ish, but it's an origin that no one has seen before. Obviously Pamela's there [Jason's dear old mum] but it's a little bit different from what you've seen before." Don't look for *Blair Witch* style camcorder creepiness. "There were a lot of found footage scripts that they wanted us to make," says Fuller. "I was not going to do that because I don't think that can exist in Jason Voorhees' world." The latest draft of the screenplay is by **Aaron Guzikowski**, who's also writing *The Wolf Man* for Universal.

KILLER QUEEN!

THE MUMMY

☉ In a cloud of ancient dust the first synopsis for Universal's *Mummy* reboot has staggered, blinking, from the tomb. The movie will pit **Tom Cruise** against a female antagonist: an Egyptian queen "whose destiny was unjustly taken from her" and who now awakens in the present day, "bringing with her malevolence grown over millennia and terrors that defy human comprehension." That's one hell of a Tinder profile. *Star Trek Beyond's* **Sofia Boutella** plays the undead monarch while **Russell Crowe** is in talks to join the project as Dr Jekyll, part of Universal's cunning plan to establish a functioning monsterverse. Crowe claims it's a full-on horror take rather than a Brendan Fraser style Disneyland ride: "This one is more designed to seriously scare the shit out of you. It's very interesting, what they're going to do with that stuff. I've had a couple of chats about it with the director." The curse is fulfilled 9 June 2017.

THE DEFINITE ARTICLE!

THE PREDATOR

☉ As well as prepping *Doc Savage: Fucking Hilarious Weirdo Shane Black* is also deep in pre-production on his resurrection of the *Predator* franchise. **Fred Dekker** – who co-wrote the screenplay with Black – tells *The Movie Crypt Podcast* that the next film won't necessarily rehear the trusted pick-em-off-in-the-jungle formula that made the original film such a suspense-fest: "If you think of the first *Predator* as *Alien*, ours is much more *Aliens*. It's not *Ten Little Indians*, it's not let's kill off all of our characters... Our idea was okay, we know that story already. What's behind the curtain? Why are they here? What's the bigger picture of this? I think these are questions you can answer, or at least explore, without defeating that sense of scariness. And who knows if their agenda's changed?" Tough questions, but then these are tough times. Filming begins this autumn for a 2 March 2018 release and Black is shooting for a hard R rating.

THE LIFE AQUATIC!

THE SHAPE OF WATER

☉ It's the oldest story in the world. Boy meets girl. Girl meets girl. That's the essence of **Guillermo del Toro's** next movie, pitched as an otherworldly romance in Cold War era America. Set in 1963, it's the tale of Elisa, a mute janitor – played by *Paddington's* **Sally Hawkins** – who works at a secret lab where an amphibious man is being held captive. Naturally she falls for his submersible, oxygen-defying charms and devises a plan to bust him out – only to discover that the lab may be a safer bet than the world outside... Think of it as *Hellboy's* Abe Sapien, only with more kissing, less goggles. *Man Of Steel's* **Michael Shannon** is currently being courted to play the villain and **Octavia Spencer**, **Michael Stuhlbarg** and **The Cabin In The Woods' Richard Jenkins** are also expected to star. Del Toro's aiming to begin filming this Fox Searchlight production this summer. ●



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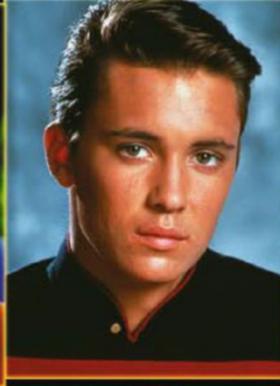
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//// SFX HAILING FREQUENCIES OPEN! ////

First Contact



THIS MONTH'S COMMUNICATIONS MONITOR

**RUSSELL LEWIN,
PRODUCTION EDITOR**



Well, the days are getting shorter once again (*cheer up Lewin, it's only the end of June you crazy man!* – Ed) so what better course of action to undertake than curl up with this here copy of *SFX* and peruse the letters you've been sending to us. This issue your missives are very much superhero-themed, with some mixed views on the latest X-Men film in Hot Topic, and some surprising opinions aired in the *Civil War* vs *Dawn Of Justice* debate. Plus, an extraordinary muffin, a brilliant picture of Daleks and our shortest ever letter. Enjoy!

SFX Hot Topic Your views on the month's big issue

#X-MEN: APOCALYPSE

- **MarcelvanDriel, Twitter** Much more fun than I expected, even though Apocalypse was a mediocre villain and it has a questionable moral.
- **Visulth, Facebook** The X-Men movies have always been held back because of Bryan Singer. He's stuck in this rut where he refuses to be fully accurate to the comic characters in costumes or personalities, as if he's embarrassed or ashamed. It's not the '90s anymore, Marvel has shown clearly that you can be source accurate. Instead of putting the comic book characters on screen, he's brought his own little troupe of actors and actresses and disguised them under the X-Men banner, so we get Mystique who bears no resemblance to her comic character in personality or visuals, and Cyclops who is never anything but a joke and not a leader. So many missed opportunities.
- **Ada363, Facebook** Let's just say I enjoyed the comics more than the movies. I've never had the same fun and excitement with the X-men movies as I have had with the MCU. The X-universe comes across as a bit of a mess.

Great stories and they keep messing them up. Time they did a Spidey and joined the MCU.

- **OrangeClover, Facebook** As good as McAvoy is he's not a patch on Stewart's Xavier and looks very odd with a shaved head. Skullcap next time, methinks. Please, for the love of god, get rid of Jennifer Lawrence – awful, just awful. Romijn was great as Mystique; sorry to see her needlessly replaced for the new films. Wolverine's time is gone, time for X-23.

➤ **Russell Garland, Facebook** I loved it! Great seeing Jean Grey and some of the others get a bigger part and Quicksilver was brilliant again.

➤ **James Daykin, Facebook** Sophie Turner was right – third one is always worst. Felt less intelligent than other two, just mutants smashing against each other.

➤ **Andy Meakin, Facebook** At times I thought I was watching *Mortal Kombat: Annihilation*. A bland, uninspired entry into the X-franchise. If I was to say something good about it, then it would be that it isn't the worst X-Men film.

➤ **Andrew, Facebook** Best X-Men movie so far, and much better than *Civil War* was.

➤ **Ross Warren, Facebook** Fun characters hampered by a seen-it-all-before bad guy and finale.

➤ **Nick, Facebook** Really enjoyed it. Just wish there was more Psylocke!

Orange X-Men are the best ones.





Get in touch!

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“The X-Men movies have been held back because of Bryan Singer”

- 👤 **Sandy Munro, Facebook** A bit “meh”. All the horsemen bar Magneto were pointless.
- 👤 **Chris Evans, Facebook** Loved it, more or less as good as *DoFP* although wish McAvoy and Fassbender had more scenes together.
- 👤 **Matt Sandry, Facebook** Some characters felt flat such as Angel, but Professor X, Magneto, Quicksilver and Nightcrawler stole the show.
- 👤 **Lee Perry, Facebook** They’re getting a bit OTT for me now. Need to trim back the mutants.
- 👤 **Jayne Harris, Facebook** My husband and I saw it last Friday and loved it. Can’t understand all the negative reviews.
- 👤 **Peter Campbell, Facebook** Loved it, just wish there hadn’t been so many trailers for it. *SFX I haven’t seen it yet, but I doubt it’ll match up to the only X-Men flick I really love, First Class. That was a most enjoyable plane journey back from Bangkok (although I wasn’t IN first class, sadly). Even though this one has got mixed reviews, we’ll still be seeing the X-universe on the big screen for a long, long time to come.*



You know they're in love really.

#CIVIL BORE

👤 **Jim Connolly, email** After watching *Civil War* I felt compelled to write. While it was admittedly a fun action flick I felt annoyed that it scored so highly over *BvS*. *Civil War* is essentially just a forgettable \$230 million episode of *Power Rangers* whereas *BvS* is a highly stylish, if flawed, *DKR* derivative with possibly the finest live-action Batman. It’s worth noting that *Iron Man 2* still scores higher than *Watchmen*, which was out around a similar-ish time, which tells me how little the reviewers understand the source material.

👤 **MediumAtomic** I can’t be the only person who’s getting a little bored with Marvel movies. I’m glad DC are forging ahead with their own look and feel. I enjoyed the gritty darkness of *BvS*, full of unexpected twists and touches, and I’m excited to find out how some of my most treasured heroes – Superman, Wonder Woman, Green Lantern – find their place in this brooding, cynical world.

SFX I agree that Civil War was just a tad overpraised – it was essentially an Avengers film, and one with too many characters (like Hawkeye, War Machine, Vision and the majestically tedious Black Panther). But it was mostly enjoyable, and

Snyderman’s universe just turns me off from the word go. In fact, before the word go – I didn’t even go and see Dawn Of Justice.

#LAMENTING LANGFORD

👤 **Dave Durant, email** I’m sad to hear that Dave Langford is stopping writing for you after being part of the *SFX* family all the way from issue one. I’ve always valued his contribution and the connection he brought to the “old school” world of F&SF fandom. I hope *SFX* stays connected to the Hugos, Worldcon etc as well as the more obscure and wonderful parts of our great history.

👤 **Matt George, Norwich** Drops to knees, looks directly up into pouring rain and yells “Noooooooooooooo!!!”

Dave Langford leaving the vaulted halls of *SFX* after all this time is breaking my heart.

Like his good self, I have been with you guys since issue one and his column has always been my favourite part of the mag. That’s not just lip service, the man’s a sci-fi god!

👤 **Craig Bunting, email** All the bloody best Mr Langford, and thank you. *SFX We miss Lord Langford too. If it’s any consolation, you can find all of his SFX columns online at <http://ansible.uk/sfx/index.html>.* →





James Bond will return, but will *this* one?

#NICHOLAS FISK RIP

📍 **Angela Owen, Birmingham** Just writing to say how sad I was to hear of the death (on 10 May) of children's author Nicholas Fisk. His book *Grinny* – in which a boy discovers his visiting “great Aunt” is actually a brainwashing alien robot, here to study humanity in advance of an invasion – scared the living daylights out of me. I also loved a couple of his other books: *A Rag, A Bone And A Hank Of Hair* and *Trillions*. Fellow readers, if you have kids then I thoroughly recommend hunting down second-hand copies and pressing them into their hands. I think authors like this have more influence than we usually credit – those two books were hugely responsible for getting me into SF literature.

SFX *We were saddened by this news too. A few years back we printed a short piece on Mr Fisk (real name David Higginbottom) and were delighted to hear it found its way to the home where he spent his final years. Grinny was reissued a couple of years ago, and we gather the rights for a movie option were recently renewed. Let's hope they eventually make one – it'd make a splendidly creepy film.*

“I think Craig's good for at least another two movies”

#THE NAME'S...?

📍 **Oilly Hayman, email** Anyone else sick of all these stories about Daniel Craig quitting as James Bond? Every day now it seems there's some new load of nonsense, full of the usual guff from unnamed “insiders” and “sources” – I bet even MI6 doesn't have that many moles! Frankly I think it's really disrespectful to Daniel, who has been a brilliant Bond, exactly the shot of adrenalin the franchise needed after pretty-boy Brosnan (who wasn't bad, to be fair, but always looked like Q supplied him with hi-tech grooming products along with the gadgetry!). Put yourself in Daniel's position. It can't be much fun being told that the likes of Idris Elba and Tom Hiddleston are sniffing around your job! He'll let us know he's moving on when he's good and ready, I reckon, and no amount of

tabloid stirring will smoke him out. Personally I think he's good for at least another two Bond movies – and he's got to have a rematch with Christoph Waltz as Blofeld, right? Those two were just getting started...

SFX *On screen I think Craig is fine, but I really dislike the way he disses Bond and the role off screen, especially after SPECTRE.*

#DAVROS WRITES

📍 **PJ Walsh, Bradford** Any chance of more Daleks in *SFX*? Cos I luv 'em! **SFX** *Here you go, PJ, see below.*

#PEARL ASSURANCE

📍 **Annie Marter, email** Best of luck to Pearl Mackie as the new *Doctor*

Invasion! Either that or some kids from the '60s.



REX

Who companion, I'm sure she'll be good. Looks like she will provide a perfect contrast to old man Capaldi. If only the series wasn't so long in coming!

SFX *I may come to like Bill more than Clara (wouldn't be difficult!) but the bad news is that the flipping Daleks are back again. Rest 'em, I say. Sorry, PJ.*

#MUFFIN DOING

📍 **Richard Morrell, email** Looks like Disney is prepared to consider merchandising opportunities that would have made even the Beard say “No, that's too much.”

Keep up the good work, guys.

SFX *Hmm, he might actually have said yes.*



The Millennium Muffin.

#THE FINAL VERDICT

📍 **Peter Lowdon, Oxford** I recently saw *Blade Runner: The Final Cut* on a cinema re-release, and for the first time I appreciated it. I'd seen it a couple of times before and always thought it was a dour, formless and depressingly dark film about a future place that no one in their right minds would live in. But watching it this time I saw new things in it. I managed to immerse myself in its atmosphere, admire the care and expertise that went into the production design and tolerate the slow spots more (you've got to admit there are slow spots). It also surprised me just

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how many long sequences there are with no dialogue at all. So, finally, I can see why its reputation has grown since its original release, and why it's called a classic. (Although I can also see why critics originally didn't like it!) **SFX** That you saw the *Final Cut* helped, I reckon: losing Deckard's narration and having a bleaker ending was a wise move.

#TO THE POINT

👉 **Jane R**, email Hodor!
SFX *Indeed*.

#WE ALSO HEARD FROM

👉 **Bob Pierce**, email Are there any readers like me who hate GamesRadar? Not only do we get old news, but TV reviews are just rubbish! That's when they can be bothered to review them! Games tend to hog the limelight and when did book news suddenly go out of favour? Discussions like the old forum are gone, in favour of Facebook and Twitter, and also one-sided. I want my forum back, or at the very least a website devoted to *SFX* magazine.

👉 **Iain Skea** With regard to the picture on page 50, *SFX* #274, why have none of the cast told Michael Fassbender that he is not starring in a movie called *Alvin Stardust: The Glam Rock Years!* That hairstyle (looking suspiciously dyed), that stare with head tilted to one side, that tight black glove lifted towards us... It's uncanny!

👉 **Karl Macks**, email There was a full stop missing on your Joe Hill feature in *SFX* 275, page 84, paragraph four.

SFX *Apologies. We've put an extra one right here to make up for it.*

👉 **Ben Warren**, Hertfordshire Why are people bashing *BvS* when the real travesty is hidden in plain sight on Netflix? *Shadowhunters* is so bad it makes me wonder what could possibly have gotten a second season green-lit?

SFX *We hope you enjoyed Dave Golder's Shadowhunters Scriptease in issue 274.*

👉 **Paul Baker**, email I'm middle-aged and loving kids' TV *The Amazing World Of Gumball* and *Adventure Time*. Maybe a feature in your pages perhaps?

SFX *What, on you loving kids' TV? Nah, not enough space.*

Wishlist

WHAT YOU WANT TO SEE IN UPCOMING MOVIES AND TV

JUSTICE LEAGUE

DC's version of The Avengers is coming soon – can they match up to mighty Marvel? *Illustration by Paul Garner*

YOUR TOP 5 REQUESTS

DC – THIS IS WHAT OUR READERS WANT FROM YOUR UPCOMING MEGA-MOVIE! AND BELIEVE US, THEY KNOW A THING OR THREE

SACK ZACK

1 After *Batman V Superman* a lot of you are out for the helmer's blood. "Remove Zack Snyder and recast Superman," hollers **Msquare1**, while **Sam Sprague** wants, "A good movie that's not directed by a 10-year-old who thinks adding darkness makes it more mature." Hang on, Zack's older than 10, isn't he?

LIGHTEN UP

2 Fed up with needing a miner's lamp to peer through the literal and metaphorical darkness of *Man Of Steel* and *BvS*, many *SFX* readers called for a less heavy touch. "I like my Knights dark, just not *BvS: DoJ* dark. Lighten him up a bit," says **Brian Stabler**. **Tomas Becks** agrees: "Besides more Wonder Woman, a leaner and brighter film."

PAY ATTENTION TO DC TV

3 While DC's movie ventures have attracted a lot of ire, its TV shows have, in the main, been much more successful. That's something that shouldn't be ignored, you

recon. "What I want is Flash and Arrow from the TV shows to be integrated instead of new editions being created. DC still not thinking 'joined up'," chirps **Mike Bird**.

LOOK AT WHAT MARVEL HAS BEEN UP TO

4 There's no denying that DC has a mighty rival that's been doing things bang-on, so you want them to learn from the House of Ideas. "The lesson Zack should take from *Civil War* is that it's possible to do a superhero movie with lots of characters if they are each given something to do," opines **Jonathan Harvey**, and we're minded to nod along.

CALL THE WHOLE THING OFF

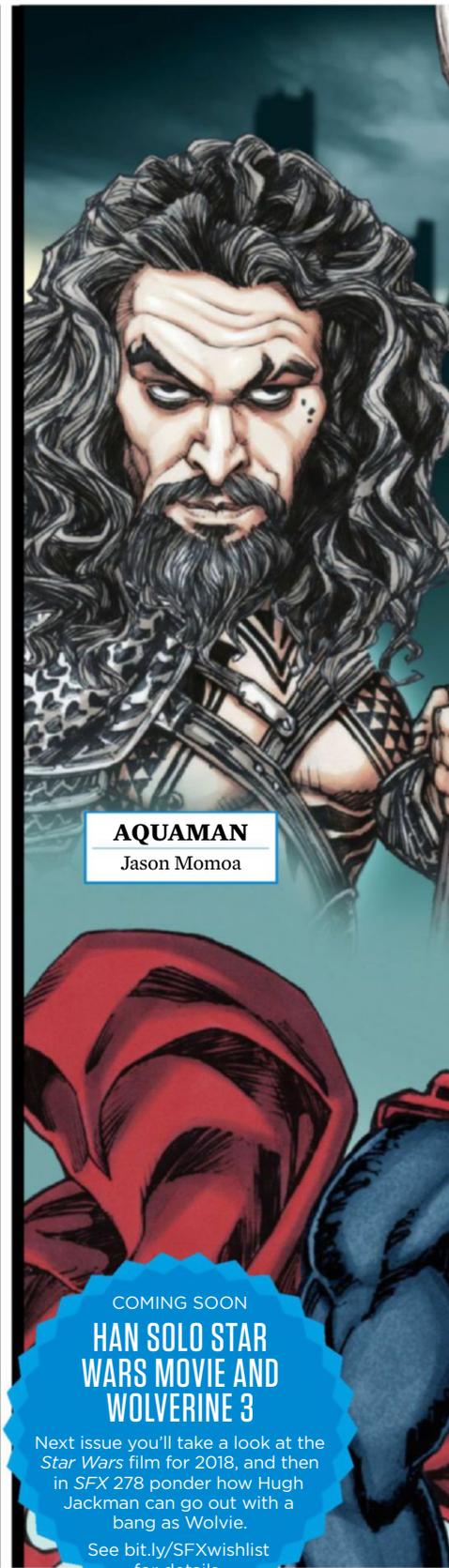
5 A few of you are so fed up you want the franchise cancelled altogether: "For it to not happen and the whole thing to be abandoned. Seriously! That's how sickened I was," cries **Brett Pritchard**. But complaining can be fun and without the film we'd have less to moan about next November!

And that's not all they want... ↓

→ **Emmet O'Brien** Heart and fun. It doesn't have to be *Super Friends* but I want to believe these Super people could actually be friends.
 → **Bryan Bessette** Better editing and fewer dreams and flashbacks. Between the rough editing and the flashbacks, flashforwards and dreams, I could barely keep track of what was really going on.
 → **Andy Kinnear** A proper story, balanced character arcs, new aspects to Wayne's past, less bloody CGI and some inspiration/uplifting scenes!
 → **Matthew Sowden** Lots of explosions, zero character development, a confusingly rushed plot and absolutely NO HUMOUR! So it sounds like I might be in luck...

→ **Daniel Thomas Johnson** No more crappy dark filters and, most importantly, FUN!
 → **Rob Burch** Actually, I'd rather have *Young Justice* back.
 → **Martin Ouellet** Another director and a good script.
 → **Olly Hopkins** A coherent storyline... always a good start.
 → **Mark Waters** Proper character and story development.
 → **Kirsty Leanne** I want colours. Sometimes gritty works but not with everything.
 → **Jack Woodgate** A scene in which Superman and Batman drink coffee together.
 → **Edgar Torné** Plastic Man!
 → **David Latham** Humour. Fun. No Batfleck.

→ **3markcooper** Have Superman be a good guy who smiles; don't let Batman kill; no change for Wonder Woman; learn from *Supergirl* and *The Flash*.
 → **Sozki** How about the '80s Giffen/DeMatteis version? In other words "De-Nolanise" it!
 → **Alison L** Please don't make it super-long – so sick of near-three hour superhero movies!
 → **Ridley** More in the same vein as *BvS* would suit me – thought it was a cracking film. Can't understand the haters.
 → **Red Rose** I think until *Suicide Squad* comes out we can't properly make comments because, who knows, it could completely change our perspective on DC movies.



AQUAMAN
Jason Momoa

COMING SOON
HAN SOLO STAR WARS MOVIE AND WOLVERINE 3

Next issue you'll take a look at the *Star Wars* film for 2018, and then in *SFX* 278 ponder how Hugh Jackman can go out with a bang as Wolverine.

See bit.ly/SFXwishlist for details.

In association with

TALES OF WAR FROM THE GRIM

DARKNESS OF THE FAR FUTURE

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YOUR DREAM CAST



DARKSEID

Tom Hardy

BATMAN

Ben Affleck

SUPERMAN

Henry Cavill

WONDER WOMAN

Gal Gadot



Penny Dreadful

SFX's high priestess of horror

REBOOT ON THE OTHER FOOT

They're rebooting **Halloween** and I'm not even allowed to be angry about it. John Carpenter, cult horror hero and director of the original, is attached and he's teamed up with my favourite modern horror producer Jason Blum to make a tenth *Halloween* movie, due in 2017. The bastards. Carpenter, who'll exec produce, has talked before about how focusing too much on Michael Myers' motivation and connection to the victims made the sequels less scary. I couldn't agree more – the original faceless, motiveless unstoppable killer lurking among the clean washing and white picket fences was a clear message to suburbia: no one is safe. So now when he says, "I'm going to help to try to make the 10th sequel the scariest of them all," he only bloody might. Urgh.

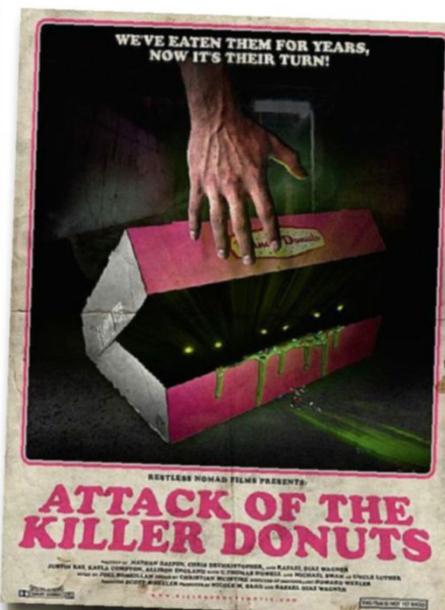
A GEM IN WOLF'S CLOTHING

The best thing I've seen in ages is a movie about a bloke who likes to dress up as a wolf called Peachfuzz. **Creep**, which screened at FrightFest 2014 but is now on Netflix, written by and starring Mark Duplass and Patrick Brice, is a very weird, deeply unsettling bit of "Mumblegore" that I couldn't recommend more. It's a hand-held two-hander, where Brice plays a freelance cameraman hired to make a video diary for a bloke who says he's dying of cancer and wants to leave a record for his unborn child. It's funny, frighteningly awkward and has a devastating ending. Plans are already in the works for a second and third instalment and while I can't imagine how this would play out, it's a Jason Blum film, and the man knows how to build a franchise. Check it out – and watch for Peachfuzz costumes at Halloween.

THROUGH THE KEYHOLE

The Winchester Mystery House is an incredible building in San Jose, California. It's huge, has more than 100 rooms and comes with an amazing backstory. And now it's going to be the basis for a movie, starring Helen Mirren. Story time: Sarah Winchester was the heir to the fortune generated though the production of Winchester shotguns. When her father-in-law and husband died in quick succession she suddenly inherited millions but was consumed

Donuts, Cron-nuts and a reboot I'm on board with



The *Halloween* fella is coming home again...



You will be scared by *Creep*. Honest.

with grief. The tale goes that she visited a medium who suggested she was cursed by the people killed by Winchester guns – the only way to break the curse was to begin building work on a house and to never stop. So she bought a big piece of a land and employed builders to go to work based on her own plans. They didn't stop for 38 years. As a result the house is nuts – full of staircases which go nowhere, doors opening onto sheer drops, secret rooms with tricks, codes and puzzles built into the architecture. I've seen it and it's amazing. The Spierig brothers (*Predestination*, *Daybreakers*) are attached to direct and it's not clear yet what the actual story will be, but the myth is rich. Here's hoping for *13 Ghosts* meets *Grand Designs* via *Bowling For Columbine*.

PALME D'ONUT

Veteran Brit director Ken Loach might have bagged the top prize at the glamorous Cannes Film Festival this year, but what about **Attack Of The Killer Donuts**? Premiering at the Cannes Marché (the market place, where films come to be bought and sold) *AOTKD* is a B-movie throwback in which a botched experiment transforms benign Krispy Kremes into murderous munchies bent on destroying donut shop workers and coffee-crammed cops alike. Have a familiar ring to it? Don't let your eyes glaze over. Bizarrely, reviews suggest it's not actually *that* bad. According to *The Hollywood Reporter* it doesn't quite satisfy like *Attack Of The Killer Tomatoes* but is way tastier than *The Attack Of The Giant Moussaka*...

Dreadful old movie

Think you know Cronenberg? Check out David Cronenberg's *Early Works*, available on Blu-ray on 1 August from Arrow Films. The set contains his first shorts, *Transfer* and *From The Drain*, his first feature, *Stereo*, and his first colour feature, *Crimes Of The Future*. Look out for reoccurring themes of sickness, sex and telepathy.



**“To date, the
Star Wars saga has only
picked up one Oscar
nod for acting. Name the
nominated thesp!”**

#SMARTERMOVIE MAG



PASSING IT ON

The *Passage* author **Justin Cronin** on handing his sci-fi loves to the next generation



“FORGET THE CAT!” MY SON YELLED, PRACTICALLY LEVITATING OFF THE COUCH”

My science fiction life began in 1972, when a kid I knew gave me a book for my birthday. The gesture was strange to me. I wasn't, until that time, much of a reader. I found reading tedious, far less interesting than the actual world. The cover, however, was alluring: a square-jawed figure in a space suit, and floating around his face an assortment of extraterrestrial creatures and semi-human-looking thugs. The writer was Robert Heinlein; the book's title was *Have Space Suit – Will Travel*.

It had everything I wanted in a book without ever asking – action, adventure, a somewhat nerdy and misunderstood teenager who saves the Earth. Reading it was like stumbling upon a jewelled city in the jungle.

In due course, I moved on to meatier fare, and there was plenty of it. The '70s were a golden age for science fiction; in novels and movies (and even, in a few instances, television), science fiction was the arena in which many storytellers explored the most pressing questions of the day. Science fiction writers were not afraid to be allegorical even as they sought to thrill.

My son has grown up in a different sci-fi world. His principal portals to the genre are movies and videogames, each of them a banquet of mind-blowing CGI effects. All well and good, but something feels missing to me. Last autumn, having sat with him through yet one more superhero movie at the multiplex, my middle-aged sensorium thoroughly over-stimulated by sound and spectacle, I made my son an offer: I will go to whatever movies you want, and play *Halo* till the cows come home, if you let me show you the sci-fi I grew up on.

I began with Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles*; on television, the original *Star Trek*, one episode each night after dinner; on the big screen, *Alien*. *The Martian Chronicles* was a minor flop, but not the other two. My son is a smart cookie who knows a cultural touchstone when he sees one. Cheesy plywood sets and hammy overacting notwithstanding, he was quick to grasp the period charm of *Star Trek* with its Cold War subtext, and recognised the historical line between *Alien* and every first-person sci-fi shooter he's ever played.

Our “Weekend Classic Sci-Fi Film Festival” has become a staple, as has a nightly episode of one series or another. Bradbury bombed, but to my lasting happiness, not Heinlein, whose novels my son devoured like bonbons. He's read, at last count, 15.

We pass many things onto our children, or at least we try to. As my son and I watch Kirk and Spock trade bromance barbs, or Ripley make one last-ditch effort to save the cat (“Forget the cat!” my son yelled, practically levitating off the couch), I know that what I'm really saying to my boy is this: I was a boy, like you, here is one of the best parts of my boyhood.

Last week my son made a suggestion. On a recent vacation, we had taken a break from the old stuff and ended each day with an episode of Syfy's new series *The Expanse*, which both of us loved. I was only vaguely aware of the James SA Corey novels on which the show is based, but not my son: he went straight to Amazon and found them. “Let's order two copies of the first one and read them together,” he said. “You know, like a dad-son science fiction book club.”

Did I say yes? You bet I did. ●

Justin Cronin's The City Of Mirrors, the third book in his Passage trilogy, is out now.

Take the smart movie quiz...



www.gamesradar.com/new-totalfilm-quiz



#SMARTERMOVIEMAG

THE SLEEPER AND THE SPINDLE

by Neil Gaiman, 2014

Author *Angela Slatter* admires a modern retelling of classic fairytales

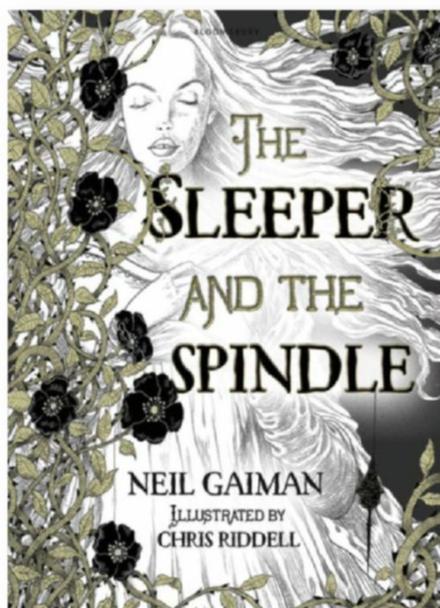


Some authors make us want to sit (literally or metaphorically) on the floor at their feet, preferably in front of a hearth, and listen to whatever they will tell us.

For however brief a time, we can be children again, transported somewhere the mortgage and the performance appraisal reports don't matter. When we're engulfed by such stories we can forget the cares of adulthood and simply dream once more.

Neil Gaiman is such a teller of tales: give him a flute and a colourful suit and he'd be the Pied Piper. In *The Sleeper And The Spindle* – an exquisite rendering of a fairytale we both do and don't know – he's teamed with UK Children's Laureate and Kate Greenaway-winning illustrator Chris Riddell. First sight of this artefact may well bring on something akin to a religious experience. Riddell's particular pen and ink style, deceptively simple but with astonishing depth, fits perfectly with Gaiman's text, which is measured yet lush, rich yet stripped back, cunningly giving the reader just what they need to fire the imagination.

The Sleeper And The Spindle is a marriage of two well-known fairytales, *Snow White* and *Sleeping Beauty*, although the protagonists are never named ("Names are in short supply in this telling," as we are told). But we know them by their acts and their histories, which have led them to this place, the promised happily-ever-after. Snow White is simply "the Queen" – she rules wisely, she's about to marry, and she's no longer the little girl who willingly accepted a



poisoned apple from a stranger. Yet into this stable, possibly contented, most probably boring existence, come faces from her past: three of her dwarves. Seeking the perfect wedding gift for their erstwhile domestic servant, they've discovered a terrible threat: a plague of sleep gradually creeping across all lands.

Naturally, the Queen must investigate. When she and the dwarves arrive in the rose and thorn overgrown Forest of Acaire, they must fight their way through to find Sleeping Beauty, the old woman who watches her, and all those

uncannily slumbering courtiers. That's where things get even more interesting... but... spoilers, sweetie.

In Riddell's gorgeous gothic-y art only three colours are used: the white of the page, the black of the ink, and the elegant gold highlights. As stated, on first glance it's deceptively simple, but look carefully and you'll find the exquisite details: the constricting ribbons of the Queen's wedding gown wrapping her into a new life; the skulls adorning her coverlet, sword hilt, belt buckle – and her horse's tail, for she's a warrior carrying the heads of her enemies to warn others; the sleeper hanging out of a window, precariously clasping another's foot.

Angela Carter, no mean fairytaler herself, said such reworkings are like putting new wine in old bottles – so much the better if it made those bottles explode. With the shards Gaiman and Riddell have given us, we might make a stained glass window. This book, dedicated to the author's and illustrator's respective daughters, isn't a story for girls alone. It's for fathers and brothers, sons and nephews, uncles and grandfathers: it's a tale to show that women are never what they seem and you forget this at your peril. ●

Angela Slatter's Vigil is published by Jo Fletcher Books on 7 July.

Like this? Try these!

THE BLOODY CHAMBER
by ANGELA CARTER (1979)
→ Carter's bawdy take on fairytales breathes new life into old stories: *Bluebeard*, *Beauty And The Beast* and *Little Red Riding Hood* all get new, astonishing interpretations.

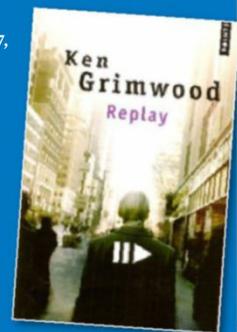


KISSING THE WITCH
by EMMA DONOGHUE (1993)
→ Donoghue's series of 13 nested fairytales takes the reader on a journey that re-imagines the stories, heroines and wicked witches we all think we know. A worthy heir to Carter.



NEXT ISSUE ↓

Our next edition of Book Club (in SFX 277, on sale 22 June) sees bestselling author Jenny T Colgan look back at Ken Grimwood's award-winning 1986 sci-fi novel *Replay*. If you've never read it – or just fancy giving it another go – now's the time to do so before a top writer gives her opinion.



Next Issue

SUICIDE SQUAD

DC'S JOKER IN THE PACK?

Plus!*

- + Massive movie preview
- + Fear The Walking Dead
- + Pete's Dragon
- + Nicolas Winding Refn

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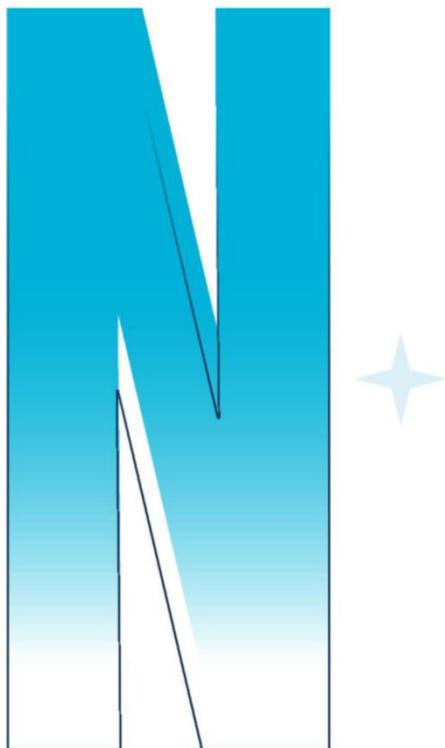
ON A MISSION TO MARK ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY,

STAR TREK

ENGAGES WARP WITH NEW DIRECTOR **JUSTIN LIN**
AT THE HELM. JOSEPH McCABE BEAMS ABOARD

THE NEW

F* R* O* N* T* I* E* R

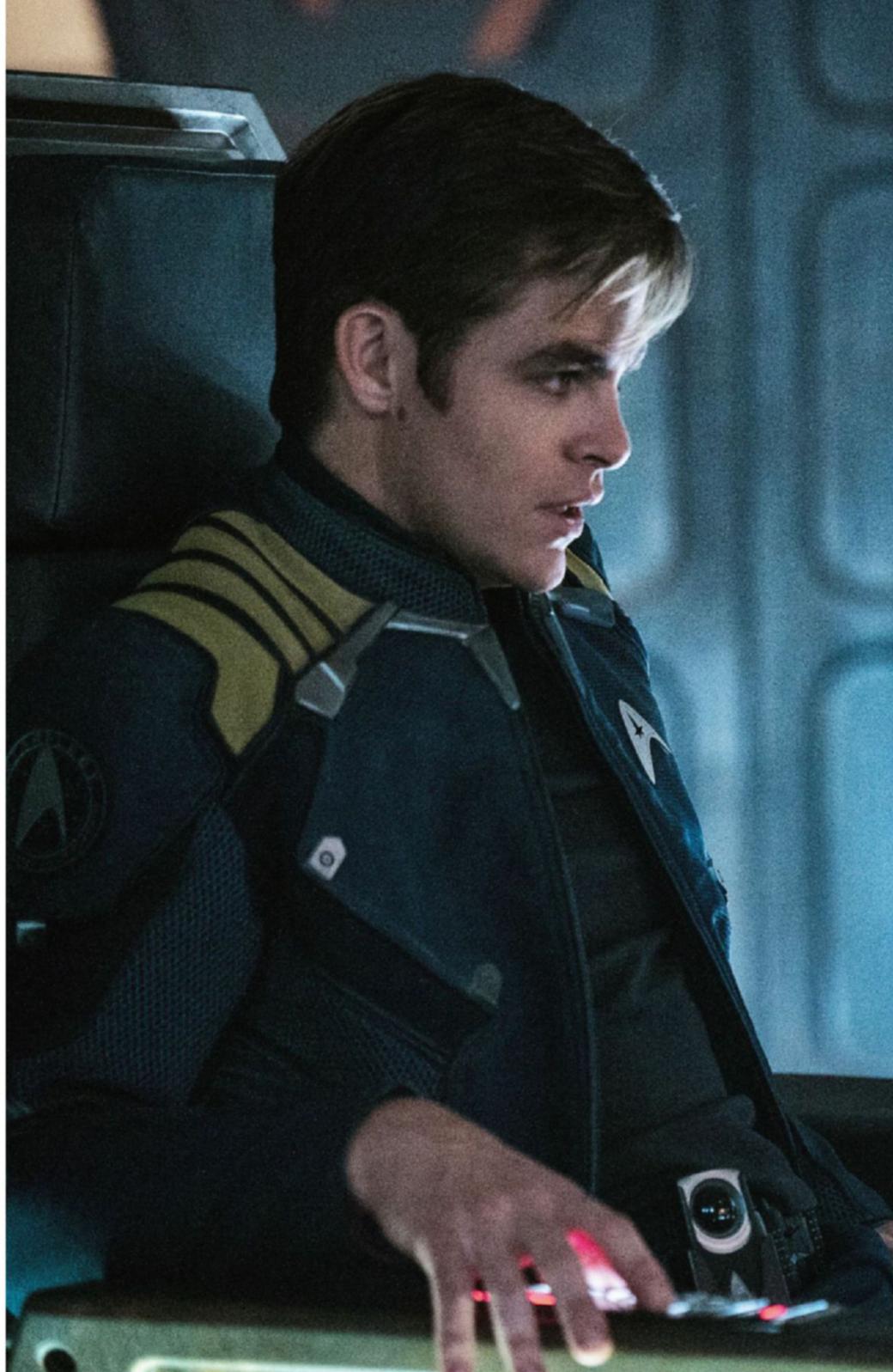


Nature, as a certain Vulcan once observed, abhors a vacuum.

So does Paramount Pictures. So when JJ Abrams – who rebooted the voyages of the starship Enterprise with 2009’s *Star Trek* and its 2013 sequel *Into Darkness* – warped to another franchise galaxy to direct *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, he needed to appoint a successor. When he ultimately chose Justin Lin, longtime *Trek* fans scratched their heads. Lin, they cried, was an action helmer, best known for the high-octane thrills he brought to four *Fast & Furious* movies. Sure, he could tell a well-paced story with an ensemble cast. But would he have what it takes to imbue the 50th anniversary adventure with *Trek*’s essential philosophical side? Could he offer food for thought as well as the eyes? Would Lin’s *Star Trek* go, well, *beyond*?

When *SFX* sits down to speak with Lin in a posh Beverly Hills hotel room, the morning after he’s finished editing *Star Trek Beyond*, any concerns we may have had slowly start to dissipate. Despite having just birthed a new cinematic baby, Lin – who is, unlike Abrams, a lifelong Trekker – immediately begins discussing his delivery, starting with the day he received a phone call from Abrams, asking him if he’d like to chart a new course for the Enterprise.

“It was a part of my life,” says Lin, “but I never thought I’d be *making Star Trek*. All these feelings were coming back. I was actually ready to go shoot another movie, and that call was a really fantastic detour. It was probably the best detour of my life. Because it took me back to



when I was a kid, watching *Star Trek* with my parents. So I just called my parents and said, ‘Can I have dinner with you?’ I went to their house and we hung out, and that’s when I thought, ‘I wanna see if I can contribute to the legacy of this franchise. It’s been around for 50 years and I want to see if I can help in hopefully building it for another 50 years.’

“I sat down with JJ and he said, ‘Look, I don’t want you just to make a movie. I want you to be bold and I want you to take this and make it your own.’ That meant a lot to me. It was →

“This job took me back to when I was a kid watching *Star Trek*”



New director Justin Lin points Chris Pine towards his next mission.

REVERSE THRUSTERS!

Justin Lin's three fave Original Series episodes



“THE CAGE”

✦ “I was eight years old. I didn't know they were reruns. So the one episode that always stuck with me was the original pilot with Pike. Because I'd watch it and be like, ‘Wait, what happened to Kirk?’ The scene with Bones and Kirk [in *Star Trek Beyond*] was inspired by the interaction of Pike and his doctor in that episode. That episode to me was always, ‘You can be an explorer, but at some point you're gonna question yourself, if everything is so vast and endless.’”



“THE ENTERPRISE INCIDENT”

✦ “That last line between Spock and the Romulan Commander [‘It was the only choice possible. You would not respect any other.']. I don't think I truly understood it when I was young. But as you get older, you see it again, and you're like, ‘Oh!’ That one I really love. Because there was so much humanity in the way Spock delivered that line.”



“THE CITY ON THE EDGE OF FOREVER”

✦ “Obviously everybody has this on their list, and I've got to put it in the top three for sure. You get older and hear the backstory for it. The idea that they were over budget. That to me is so awesome. People don't know if you spend a dollar or \$100m. It's ultimately what's on screen. There was a limitation in saying, ‘Hey, we have some props and wardrobe that you guys can use. Try to make it with this amount of money...’ And they ended up with a brilliant episode.”



Sofia Boutella's Jaylah is a new ingredient in the *Trek* recipe.



“THERE’S A LOT MORE MCCOY IN THIS MOVIE”

Karl Urban is back as Bones

You were a big fan of the original *Star Trek*. How thrilling is it to be in the 50th anniversary film?

“Obviously Simon and Justin were huge fans of *Star Trek* from long ago, and I had a long-standing deep appreciation for it. We wanted to make sure we got the balance right between paying respect and homage to what had come before and making it fresh. Delivering new material that new audiences can appreciate, and that *Star Trek* audiences hadn’t seen before.

How did you make Bones more dynamic?

“There’s a lot more McCoy in this movie than probably in the last two movies combined. My relationship with Captain Kirk is not inferred — it’s there, you see it. You see him being a supportive friend, a consigliere, even a psychologist in a way. Also, for a huge part of the film, I get to spend time with Spock, which is something new. To see these two characters, that traditionally don’t see eye to eye, thrown into great jeopardy and have to depend on each other to survive.

How does the tone of *Star Trek Beyond* compare to that of its predecessor?

“It’s a lot more fun. There’s a lot more humour, more character development and depth. It’s a few years into the mission, we’re all a bit older. Kirk is losing his hair. McCoy has prescribed him Propecia. It’s making him impotent, so McCoy’s had to treat him for his impotency [laughs]. There’s a wonderful subtext that Simon’s imbued in the script.

Joseph McCabe



Now *that’s* cheeky!



kind of the perfect fuel, to be able to have that kind of set up and that kind of respect.”

Lin met with Simon Pegg and Doug Jung, the film’s newly appointed writers who Abrams had enlisted to replace Roberto Orci, originally slated to write and direct *Star Trek Beyond*. The three were given only three and a half months to prep a script and enter pre-production before shooting began in Vancouver in June of 2015. Lin, Pegg, and Jung thought back to what made them first fall in love with the 23rd century, and decided the best way to honour *Star Trek* on its golden anniversary was to boldly go where no *Trek* film had gone before — into deconstruction.

“I felt like, ‘Okay, on the 50th anniversary, let’s really try to deconstruct *Star Trek*. On

“Hopefully by the end of the movie it will reaffirm why we love *Trek*”

whatever level. And hopefully by the end of the movie it will reaffirm why we love it... What was so great about *Star Trek* in the last 50 years was not only the characters, the sense of exploration, and these themes that connect to us as human beings, it also had the ultimate mission statement — which is to try new things. I think sometimes that gets lost. Let’s sometimes go to places where we’re not that comfortable. If anything, this is the one franchise where you can do that.

“Part of the deconstruction was that we needed to take the security blanket away, which is the Enterprise,” Lin continues. “That’s always been there and I felt like we should just take it away pretty early on. Not in a disrespectful way, but let’s find a way of



Idris Elba's Krall is a real pain in the neck.



The big question: will Simon Pegg give himself all the best lines?

doing it so that it launches our characters into their most uncomfortable places, without their ship.”

Though the tight schedule prevented the cast from seeing a finished script until two weeks before shooting, their relationships with their characters and each other allowed them to hit the ground running.

“One of the gifts from JJ was this all-star cast. By the time I got there, Zack had already crafted an amazing Spock with Leonard [Nimoy]. Chris [Pine] had Kirk... On a personal note, with Karl [Urban] I had so much fun. Because Bones was my favourite growing up. So to be able to re-engineer Bones, and to see where he is today but then at the same time how he would interact with new challenges and how that would shape who he is and evolve him... That was part of the joy.”

NEW FACES

The two significant additions to the cast are *Kingsman: The Secret Service* femme fatale Sofia Boutella as Jaylah – Kirk and co’s new alien ally – and the uber-hot Idris Elba as principal antagonist Krall. Each character belongs to an alien race heretofore unseen in *Star Trek*, just two of

the 50 included in the film; one for each year of *Trek*’s existence.

Though Lin can’t divulge the details of Boutella’s character, he refers to Jaylah when explaining the improvisation Pegg and Jung afforded the production.

“The scene in the trailer where Sofia sits in the Captain’s chair – that happened during rehearsal. It was not scripted. We hadn’t rehearsed it. The camera was set up, she came in and sat down, and she said, ‘This is my house.’ I looked at Simon and said, ‘This has to be the scene. Simon and Doug, let’s go.’ So we re-crafted it. But the cast was so great we were able to play it and we didn’t lose a beat, and now it’s one of my favourite moments in the movie.

“It was about creating an environment and embracing what we had,” says Lin of the spirit that permeated the film’s set. “In a perfect world we would have had more time. We had a script fully done and rehearsed, but we didn’t have that. So we could either complain about it

or say, ‘Hey, man, let’s go.’ I know everybody’s talented and they all are passionate. It’s my job to make sure that we play and we create the right environment for play.” →



“I HAD NEVER SEEN A TREK FILM BEFORE”

Sofia Boutella is Jaylah

How would you describe Jaylah?

➤ Jaylah is a survivor, and she is someone who thinks outside of the box. She’s an alien warrior, but her look is relatable to humans; her alien appearance in the film is not extreme. She has more in common with Kirk than anyone else in the film; they’re both very independent, and they’re both honest and direct in their approach. She makes her own weapons.

What attracted you to the role?

➤ I wanted to be part of this big franchise, which is a great opportunity for me. I was attracted to this character, because she’s an alien, and she’s a completely original character in the *Star Trek* universe, so I don’t have to compare myself with anyone who came before me. I am Jaylah.

What was the most challenging part of making the film?

➤ This is not a CG-created character; I spent four hours in make-up every morning, and when I put on the prosthetic, and saw myself in the mirror, it instantly put me into the character, this alien warrior, along with holding her main weapon, which looks like a stick and which she is very skilled with.

How familiar were you with *Star Trek* before you started work on the film?

➤ I had never seen a *Star Trek* film before. I watched them all after I was given the part. During the filming, I relied on Justin Lin, who knows everything about *Star Trek* and guided me through the series. This is why it’s so much fun to be creating an original character like Jaylah.

David Grove



Spock: a man you could trust with your PC.

As for the film's Big Bad, Lin explains why Elba was the perfect choice for Krall...

"When I talk about deconstructing the Federation, obviously a big part of that is to have an opposing view. So I wanted to create an antagonist that had not only that view but a valid view. Idris was my top choice by far. Because a lot of times antagonists don't really have a lot of screen time. So you need someone who can command a presence and be able to fully commit and carry that through very surgically. We had a great first conversation. But at the very end he paused. I was like, 'Aw, shit.' He goes, 'It's gonna be four hours of make-up every morning, right?' I said, 'Yup...' It was four hours every morning, and he was awesome. He's delivering a 100% every time."

BRAIN AND BRAWN

As to the challenge of balancing the cerebral spirit of *Trek* with the demands of today's blockbuster filmmaking, Lin says, "I knew why they came to me. They know I can make big-budget movies. But at the same time I had to find the appropriate journey for this movie. So yeah, there is a lot of action. But it can't be action for action's sake. In a very short amount of time I had to make sure that they understood that I know that that's where commerce and art collide. But it's my job to make sure that the action is appropriate, it's organic, it's something that can be embraced by people who like *Star Trek*."

"*Star Trek* is, I think, the only franchise that's been able to cross over from TV with a limited budget to mega-franchise. That's part of the DNA of *Star Trek*. So for Simon and Doug and I,

"Idris had four hours' make-up every morning, and he was awesome"

our challenge was to bring that. We know this is a big-budget movie, but at the same time let's not forget that we can have two characters in a room talking, and if we do our job right it's equally compelling. That's something that we definitely took to heart."

While a 50-year legacy might weigh heavily on the shoulders of most filmmakers, Lin says his time on Universal's *Fast & Furious* franchise prepared him for the demands of hardcore fans.

"I didn't know cars when I signed up for it," admits the director, "and I still don't know cars. I might know a little bit more. But one thing I wanted to make sure when I made those movies was that I was respecting people's passion. I have friends who are diehard *Trek* fans. If they saw the movie that I made and it wasn't up to their standards, they would let me know. I appreciate that."

"I had Simon and I had Doug and I had JJ," adds Lin. "It was a great team. But when it comes down to it, at the end of the day, if you watch a movie and you hate it, it's on me." ●

Star Trek Beyond opens on 22 July.



"I DIDN'T ASK FOR A SHIRTLESS SCENE!"

John Cho is steady at the helm as Sulu returns

You worked with Justin Lin on his early independent films. How did he take to the *Star Trek* universe?

✦ Bob Orci had written a script. [He and the studio] had gotten far along in the process and they decided to part ways. I understand it was amicable, but money had been spent, time had been burned, and Justin was under the gun. The release date was not moving. So he went into independent-director mode. It was time to get creative and to lean on his gut instincts. In a way he was very comfortable in that mode. I think it could lead to something special, because he was having to be mindful of what his instincts were.

As an actor who'd already worked with this cast twice, was Simon Pegg able to tailor his script for each cast member?

✦ Simon just knows the *Star Trek* universe very well. Then he knows us as people. He leaned into that knowledge of us as people, and our friendships, and tailored some moments to us as people. I think it enriched the process.

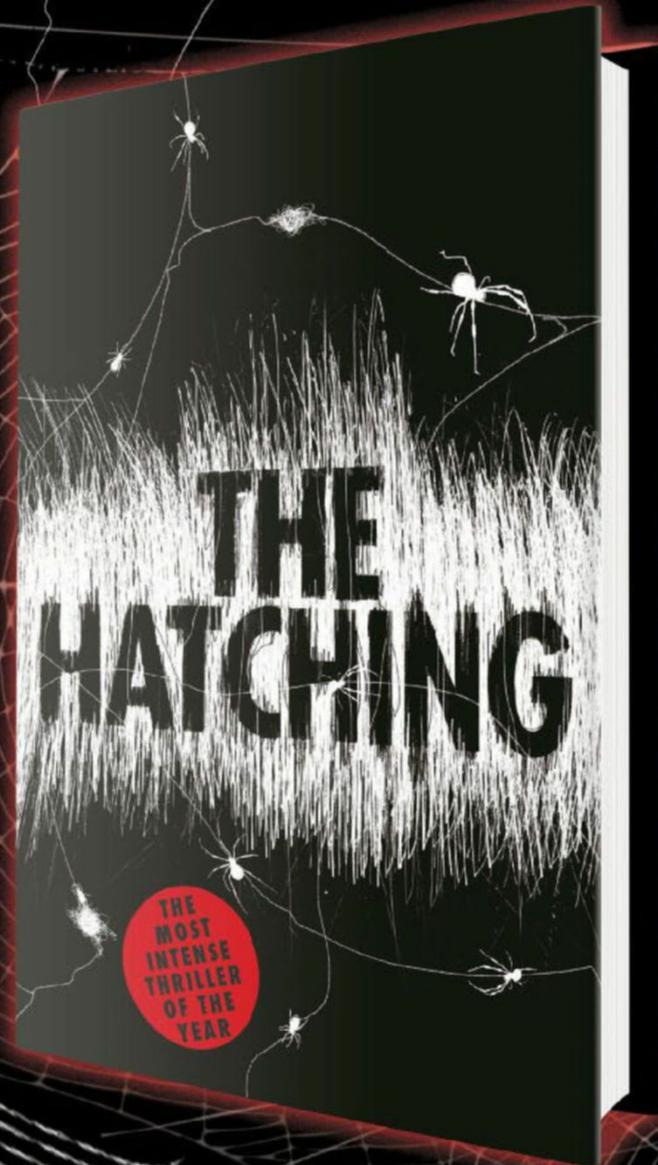
Apparently Simon asked the cast if they had any requests for their characters. What was your response?

✦ I wanted Sulu to advance emotionally.

We're told Sulu now has a daughter...

✦ Right. That complicates the mission in a weird way and makes it personal. Every character in this one, their belief system is challenged a little bit, and his family complicates his belief system as it relates to Starfleet... I didn't ask for a shirtless scene [laughs]. **Joseph McCabe**

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05.07.2016

COMMAND PERFORMANCE



CHRIS PINE
is back in the captain's
chair in *Star Trek Beyond*.
Nick Setchfield opens
hailing frequencies

Portrait by Michael Friberg





“Do I have a hole in my pants?” Chris Pine asks himself, mid-flow.

The master and commander of the Enterprise scrutinises his crotch for cosmic anomalies. Spotting a wormhole in his jeans he gives a tiny sigh of dismay. “That sucks...”

It’s a rare distracted moment for the young Californian. For all that he’s quick to laugh, he’s an intense, thoughtful presence when *SFX* meets him in a London hotel suite. There’s just enough residual, self-confessed shyness from his teen years to keep him dodging eye contact but when those blue eyes find you it’s like twin tractor beams locking on.

He’s here to talk James T Kirk, a part he originally never wanted – “I’m just not a sci-fi guy – I didn’t want to talk about phasers and thrusters and all that kind of stuff!” – but which he instantly owned, stamping it with hotshot swagger and James Dean cool. Now he’s back for a third big-screen mission in *Star Trek Beyond*, a film with the added responsibility of honouring 50 years of the final frontier.

“Everyone always talks about the pressure,” he shrugs. “I never felt one iota of pressure on this one at all. In fact it was the most fun we’ve had. Nine years in, it just gets easier...”

This is your third shot at playing Kirk. What did you want from him this time around?

▲ I told JJ a film ago that I wanted to go dark and rogue. There was an episode in the original series that I really liked when Kirk went evil. But that didn’t happen! What I really enjoy about this part of Kirk’s arc is that he’s relieved of all the onus of trying to live up to his father and the anger of never having met his father, all the stuff that drove the first couple of films.

Now he’s an older guy, not a young man anymore, necessarily. He’s a leader and his priorities and his motivations have changed. He’s thinking to himself, “Do I really want to do this? It seemed to make so much sense when I was trying to be as badass as my dad. Now that I don’t need that, what else is there?”

Audiences responded to his maverick side. Is it tough to balance his wildcard, maverick side with his growth as a commander?

▲ I think it was very important, especially for the first film, to have that version of the character. There were fans that were dismayed that he had so much bravado – but there’s no place for the character to go if you don’t start somewhere. As you say, it’s something that we all respond to, that iconoclast that is beholden

to his own sense of morality and not anybody else’s rules and regulations. And that guy is certainly still in there.

There was some serious turmoil in the development process this time around. Did that impact you?

▲ Not one bit. The actors are usually the last people to find out anything. We have no control. Given those two realities I decide to wait until they tell me when to show up.

Is it possible to feed off that kind of energy, creatively?

▲ One hundred per cent. They’re such behemoths, these films. You can bemoan the fact that you’re getting the script so late but I’ve now done enough of these to know that, strangely enough, the more money that’s put into a project the more free-form it can be.

How does that work?

▲ You can either dive headfirst into that or you can struggle against it. I decided to dive headfirst into it. Simon [Pegg] and Doug [Jung] had come up with a great story. And Justin [Lin] is a master navigator of these kind of big budget film waters, so I trusted those people. My job is just to bring it to life, to be open on the day for anything to happen.

What kind of vision does Justin bring to this movie?

▲ Ironically, given all his experience in the *Fast & Furious* movies he actually comes from a smaller film background. I always think that with big films what’s really necessary is the smaller engine – the story, the structure, caring about people. That’s more important than the effects. He got that intrinsically. He’s a quiet

In the chair...



“You can’t make a cerebral *Star Trek* in 2016. It wouldn’t work”

energy on set versus JJ’s very boisterous energy, which actually let him fit him into the group very easily – he was a collaborator. With Simon and Doug writing, and with this new energy directing, it almost felt like the kids took over the house for the weekend. We all had to build the story together. It was great.

It’s 50 years of *Star Trek*. How does *Star Trek Beyond* celebrate that anniversary?

▲ It’s a film about the Federation, which means it’s a film about the fundamental aspects of what *Trek* is: disparate peoples of different races, different colours, different genders, different species, coming together and working together. And it asks the big question, “Does this work? Does this mean something? Is it meaningful?” Which I think is great – it’s a large question to tackle, and there are many different avenues to explore. And stylistically there are nods to it – my haircut in the film is a bit ‘60s Kirkian!

You’re playing against Idris Elba. What sort of dynamic do you guys have on screen?

▲ God, Idris is like 6’ 3. He’s a huge guy. I’m not a small guy myself but Idris is a big dude, very charismatic. He came up with this really rather

extraordinary character. Let’s just say he’s an angry man and Kirk sees in him a lot of his own anger, just like Khan. It’s an interesting thing – I hadn’t ever really thought about that, but maybe the thing that ties all these antagonists together, from Nero to Khan to this new character, is their anger, obviously, but also how it’s reflected off Kirk’s own anger. And Kirk is learning to deal with his anger, whether he’s set off by it or whether he can be zen.

Could you see yourself working under a ton of prosthetics, like Idris?

▲ No. Seriously, never. I don’t ever want to do it. You’re not sleeping. You’re working 15, 16 hour days and you’re getting force-called every day, which means you’re finishing up at 6 or 7, getting home by 8 or 8.30, because we shot out of town. If you go to the gym you go to the gym then. You’re in bed by 10. You’re up at 3.30 or 4. Not an effing chance I’m doing that.

So it doesn’t feel like an acting challenge you want to take on?

▲ I like the idea of mo-cap, the idea of completely creating a Gollum – that’s really cool, because that incorporates the whole instrument. But with prosthetics you’re just dealing with your sheer force of will. You’ve got to take care of your acting, you’ve also got to take care of your body because you’re sweating so much. It’s an immense amount of concentration. And also, not to lose your shit... Sometimes they can’t even eat, so you have to have a straw... It’s fucking awful [laughs]!

This is a role that was defined by somebody else. Was there a point where you thought, “I actually own this now, I’m not just borrowing it from Shatner”?

▲ I felt that the whole time. I really did. Before we shot the first film we got a whole set of episodes, all the movies too. And watching Shatner there was simply no way I could see myself doing this part as any sort of imitation and succeeding. The movie would fail. It would become about people either liking or not liking my imitation of a man. My role is to disappear. It is about Kirk and Spock but it’s really about the story, so I’ve got to blend into the background enough to let Idris do his stuff. If I’m there doing Shatnerisms all over the place the movie’s a giant failure. It was fun in the first one to throw in little peppers of Shatner because he’s so fun. That makes people smile. But JJ never wanted that. He told me specifically not to do that.

I’m not even talking about the expectation of doing an impression of Shatner. More about having to step into a role another actor’s owned for so long...

▲ I just had to look at the script and say, “If this script was attached to no other iconography or mythology, how would I do it?” I’d just have to create the character that I was given. The guy that I was given was a real maverick, kind of a pain in the ass, a lot of fun... He’s the classic rogue. He had no attachment in my mind to any other character named Jim Kirk. He was just the guy in that particular script – which gave me a lot of freedom to do whatever I wanted.

There was talk that Shatner was actually going to be in this movie. How would you have felt sharing a scene with him?

▲ At this point there’s been so much built up about this potential portentous meeting between the two Kirks... Fuck the movie, it would just become about that. The movie can’t become about that. The movie has to be about whatever story we’re trying to tell. It’d be fun, it’d be kitschy, it’d be a great piece for you guys to talk about, and for late-night TV, but above and beyond that I don’t know what it serves for our storytelling purposes, you know?

Simon Pegg said Paramount wanted this to be an accessible *Trek*. How does *Star Trek* compete and still stay true to *Star Trek*?

▲ You can’t make a cerebral *Star Trek* in 2016. It just wouldn’t work in today’s marketplace. You can hide things in there – *Star Trek Into Darkness* has crazy, really demanding questions and themes, but you have to hide it under the guise of wham-bam explosions and planets blowing up. The question that our movie poses is “Does the Federation mean anything?” And in a world where everybody’s trying to kill one another all of the time, that’s an important thing. Is working together important? Should we all go our separate ways? Does being united against something mean anything?

There’s a new *Star Trek* TV show coming next year. Does that feel like competition?

▲ No [laughs].

If you get a fourth shot at this, how would you like to see the franchise evolve?

▲ I would like a slower film. That’d be kind of fun. Kirk and team land on a planet and go explore. It’s just not going to happen. But it would be fun to make the Merchant Ivory version, a slow, talky film.

When the previous cast got to do a fourth film it was a time travel comedy. Have you got a hunger to do something like that, to really break the mould?

▲ Pushing the boundaries would certainly be fun and I love doing comedy. If Simon’s behind it... The most fun I have on set is laughing so anytime we can do that I’m way, way into it. ●



Idris Elba suffered muchly for this role!



Arm-wrestling the Shat in 2011.



VERY EERIE, INDIANA

Get set to revisit the wonder and the terror of the '80s in **STRANGER THINGS**. Stephen Kelly heads back to the decade time never forgot...



DIGITAL REMOTE

POWER

VOLUME

CHANNEL

Matt Duffer, of writing duo **The Duffer Brothers**, is talking about why we just can't let the '80s go. "I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that the filmmakers putting out shows and movies now grew up then," he says. "Anyone our age, or a little older, grew up watching and loving those movies so there's a certain affection for it. And I think, when you're first watching and discovering movies, at that magic age of 8 to 12, they're very powerful. Those movies had a huge impact on a lot of us. It's a world we know and understand. We grew up there."

There's a reason we're speaking about the '80s. The Duffer Brothers' new eight-part series, Netflix's supernatural drama *Stranger Things*, is a huge, passionate love letter to the era — or rather, the version that Matt and his twin, Ross, grew up watching on screen. It's set during the early '80s, in a small town in Indiana, where dark forces are stirring. A 12-year-old boy has vanished into thin air, a monster stalks the streets, and a young girl with psychic powers has escaped from a top-secret government lab. And mixed up in it all is a loyal group of young friends, a worried, unravelling mother and a group of teens who just want to get laid.

The show's main touchstone is Steven Spielberg, that "sense of wonder and awe in a setting that is very relatable". You see his hand behind the *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*-style story of Winona Ryder's Joyce, the single mother who believes she can communicate with her missing son, Mike (*The 100*'s Finn Wolfhard), through lightbulbs. Spielberg's also there in the *ET*-esque story of Mike's three friends, a bike-riding Goonie gang whose quest to find their comrade results in them having to hide a supernaturally powerful little girl (Millie Bobby Brown). But where things get really interesting is in its second homage, John Carpenter. For this Spielbergian story is glossed →



If those charity callers rang the doorbell one more time they were in for a shock.

“I think limiting what you see, and using mood instead, is always scarier”

with a dark *Halloween*-style mood; one felt not only through its electronic soundtrack but through the slow, creeping horror of its monster, who hunts high school teenagers and lives in walls. As Ross explains, it goes together surprisingly well:

“When we were first pitching the series around we made a demo reel where we took all these different movies that have inspired us – the Carpenter stuff, the Spielberg stuff, and we put it all together and we scored it with John Carpenter music. And when we put the theme music over *ET*, not only did we realise that it worked but it gave it this exciting edge. We realised then that these three different storylines – the adults, the kids, the teenagers – can work together as one piece, despite being like three different movies. I think it’s because they all have that common DNA. I think that’s why it all works.”

OUT OF THE ORDINARY

The Duffer Brothers are relatively unknown, with their most notable credits being the 2015 post-apocalyptic thriller *Hidden*, and three episodes of M Night Shyamalan’s TV series *Wayward Pines*. They came of age in the suburbs of North Carolina in the early ’90s, where they would watch *The Goonies* “on rotation” and – just like the boys in the show – play *Dungeons & Dragons*.

“We started looking at these films and thinking what it was about them that made us



The radio’s not actually that big; the kids are really small.

love them so much,” says Matt, “and for us it was the juxtaposition of the ordinary and the extraordinary. We had very ordinary suburban lives, and these films tapped into that. They made us think, ‘Oh my god, maybe I’m going to find a treasure map in the attic’, or ‘what if we find an alien out in the woods?’ And these films – the best ones don’t feel ’80s, they feel timeless. You show a kid one now and nothing feels ’80s about it. That was something we were conscious of. It was important that nothing felt too kitschy about the show. Sure, there’s a Millennium Falcon toy there and an *Evil Dead* poster here but it would have been the same style and music if we were shooting a show in 2016 – that’s just our sensibilities.”

Of course, by the age the Duffer Brothers became movie obsessives, ’90s icon Winona Ryder – *Stranger Things*’s big casting coup –

was at the height of her fame. Working with her was “really special”, says Ross.

“She was an icon to me,” he says. “We grew up loving and watching her work. It was really exciting. She’s obviously incredibly experienced too – very precise. She knows exactly what she wants to get out of the scene. It was intense shooting her scenes, because they’re very emotional; her child’s missing, she’s in a very heightened state. It was, for her, emotionally draining. She’d go away for a few minutes to be alone, and then she’d come back on set and just bring it. It was awesome to watch.”

Ryder’s Joyce is the emotional heart of *Stranger Things*; the grieving mother coming to terms with the loss of her child, who may or may not have been abducted by a multi-dimensional monster. A monster who seems to be living in the walls of her house. It’s a slow-burning reveal; a building horror of mood and suspense, of sudden grabs from above, rather than cheap jump scares and gratuitous gore.

“*Halloween* was a big one,” says Matt, “*Jaws* was a big one, *Alien* was a big one. When you look back at this stuff, from what I’ve read, people got angry on *Alien* because they weren’t showing the monster, but that’s why it’s so scary. I think limiting what you see, and using mood instead, is always scarier. People think about *Halloween* as this big slasher film, but it’s more of a dread thing – the sense of this guy working in the shadows. It’s not about the kill.”

ADVENTURE TIME

Judging from the first three episodes, *Stranger Things* is set to take its characters to some dark places; with the Goonie gang’s search for their pal Mike, especially, not going the way you’d expect. Still, as Matt says, it’s all part of the grander mystery; the different puzzle pieces that will all come together in the last few episodes to form “what feels like a two-hour climax to a movie”. Plus, sad slowed-down version of David Bowie’s “Heroes” or not, it was important for *Stranger Things* to never lose sight of its ’80s optimism.

“There are moments where things get really dark and sad. But this is not a missing person story like *The Missing* or *Broadchurch*. We always kept the stakes high with the kid, but we always wanted to make sure there was a sense of adventure. The kids can still have humour, interactions, and there’s still fun there, but you never take away from the fact their friend is missing. I think *Poltergeist* is an example. There’s still fun and wonder in there even though Carol Anne is missing in another dimension. And of course, Spielberg never loses that sense of fun – and that’s really important to us.” ●

Stranger Things is on Netflix from 15 July.



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MEGAN FOX

April O'Neil returns to help the Turtles move Out Of The Shadows...

Words by Joseph McCabe // Photography by Steve Schofield

There aren't many actresses whose breakthrough movie role proved as memorable as that of Megan Fox in Michael Bay's 2007 *Transformers*. As photogenic gearhead Mikaela Banes, the girlfriend of Shia LaBeouf's klutzy Sam Witwicky, she emerged as a very 21st century icon of screen sexuality. With 2014's Bay-produced blockbuster reboot of the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* film universe, Fox got the chance to prove she could be more than just eye candy in big-budget franchises, taking on the central human role of the half-shell heroes' above-ground confidante and best friend, April O'Neil. Now back for the even bigger sequel – directed by *Return To Echo's* Dave Green and co-starring *Arrow's* Stephen Amell as romantic foil Casey Jones – Fox tells *SFX* she identifies more strongly than ever with the intrepid reporter...

How does it feel to be back in the Turtle-verse?

☉ I had an amazing experience on this one. This one was really easy and fun, and there was a lot of levity on set. I think it's got a lot of good energy.

What made it easy?

☉ They figured out the tone from making the first one. Because you have the comic book, which was very dark, you have the cartoon, which was made for children, and then you have the 1990 movie, which was sort of a blend of both, but more cartoony than dark. With the first one they didn't have a very clear idea of the exact tone; and they found it in editing. So going into this one they knew right away what kind of a movie they were gonna make.

Stephen Amell has said it's funnier than the first one.

☉ Their attempt is to make it funnier, and I believe they've succeeded. It's just more lighthearted, and it sort of winks throughout. It makes comments about what sort of movie it is, which I think is something we saw in *Guardians Of The Galaxy* and, in a much more adult way, *Deadpool*.

Has the world of the first film opened up?

☉ There are a lot of characters. To an outsider it's almost an overload when there's too many popular characters; you sort of lose the story. But I think they've done a really good job of maintaining the story, and it's sort of peppered with all these villains. It feels a lot bigger than the first one.

How satisfying is it to star in a superhero franchise that's anchored by a female character?

☉ It's still a female lead, though in the hands of an entirely male [production team]. All the way up to the top. This is a male-dominated industry, so it's still sort of coloured through the lens of how men view women in life. But I think it's definitely moving in a positive direction, and I think when we have more female filmmakers then we'll have more movies with female leads. But we also need more female writers. Because you need someone who understands the psychology of a woman to be able to write a woman well.

What was the dynamic like on set between you and Stephen Amell and Turtles veteran Will Arnett?

☉ I interact the most with the boys that play the Turtles. Because they're really charming and funny and I have a good time with them. Then Will of course comes in and he'll drop his one-liners and make everybody laugh. He's the comedic relief, obviously. He and Stephen got along really well. They have, like, a bro relationship and they talk about hockey. They're Canadian and all of that stuff. But I interact mostly with the boys. I have sort of a Wendy and the Lost Boys relationship with them, on camera and off.

So you're like their big sister?

☉ Kind of. I'm also the mischievous shit-starter too [laughs].

Judith Hoag, the April O'Neil from the 1990 Turtles movie, appears in *Out Of The Shadows*. Did you have any scenes with her?

☉ You never know what the edit of the movie's gonna bring, but I had a couple of scenes with her. She was really gracious.

Did you ever feel a pressure to live up to her portrayal?

☉ No. I mean there was a different April throughout those movies. I just try to do the best I can with what they write on those pages. And I felt no pressure at all. She was really friendly and I had a great time.

How has April grown since we last saw her?

☉ She's less focused on her career. The first movie was all about her being ambitious and trying to achieve. In this movie, she's much more relaxed, having a good time with these boys, and just sort of going about her own life at her own pace. It's not such a struggle to prove who I am to people. That was almost a commentary on how an outsider would perceive me as an actor, what was going on with April – "I want people to take me seriously! I don't want to jump on trampolines anymore [laughs]!" ●

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Out Of The Shadows is out now.

Biodata

Occupation

→ Actress

Born

→ 16 May 1986

From

→ Rockwood, Tennessee

Greatest Hits

→ *Hope & Faith*, *Transformers*, *Transformers: Revenge Of The Fallen*, *Jennifer's Body*, *Jonah Hex*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*

Random Fact

→ Fox expanded her repertoire of comic-book-based projects by providing the voice of Lois Lane in the *Robot Chicken: DC Comics Special*.

“YOU NEVER
KNOW WHAT
THE EDIT OF
THE MOVIE’S
GONNA BRING”





GHOST P

ROTOCOL

When *SFX* wanted to talk about the new
GHOSTBUSTERS,
who were we gonna call but director Paul Feig?
He tells Richard Edwards about rebooting
a classic, assembling a new team and
dealing with trolls...



f you're going to make a cover version of a classic record, there's no point doing something too similar. You're always going to be compared unfavourably with what's come before. Mess around with the arrangement, the singing style, do anything – just be bold and *don't* treat it like it's simple karaoke. There's a reason why Jimi Hendrix's "All Along The Watchtower", Soft Cell's "Tainted Love" and Madness's "It Must Be Love" are often considered

superior to the originals. And why Robson & Jerome's "Unchained Melody" is now regarded as torture for the ears and in contravention of the Geneva convention.

The same rule should apply to movies: the original *Ghostbusters* is such a once-in-a-lifetime collision of comedy, perfect performances and blockbuster spectacle that any identikit remake would be doomed to failure before it had clambered into its boiler suit. But radically play around with the formula – as *Bridesmaids*, *The Heat* and *Spy* director Paul Feig has with his female-focused, Bechdel Test-aceing new take on *Ghostbusters* – and you might just have a chance of making something memorable. For the *right* reasons.

"I thought, 'They're going to get someone to do *Ghostbusters* eventually, so if I had to do it, how could I be the most creatively fertile for it?'" says Feig, talking to *SFX* on the phone from LA with just a week and half to go until the movie's finished. "Well, what would be

really fun is to let all the funny women I work with be in this, because then it separates itself so much from the original movies – it's just so fraught with peril if you're going to hire four guys to play these roles, they're so going to get compared to the original guys. But if you get these funny women, it erases that straight comparison thing – or it did in my head at least! I thought that was the most respectful way to do it because it's not stepping on the originals. I thought, 'I can reboot *Ghostbusters* and make it its own thing for a new generation. That allows me to really establish four new characters and see them become this team.'"



**I LOVE THIS PLAN!
I'M EXCITED TO BE
A PART OF IT!**

Feig wasn't always enamoured with the idea of firing up the proton packs once more. A follow-up to 1989's *Ghostbusters 2* had been bouncing in and out of development hell for over a quarter of a century when Ivan Reitman, the original movies' director and one of the keepers of the franchise's spectral flame, initially got in touch with Feig. At that point he wanted to discuss giving Feig the reins on a threequel, a movie that would have seen the original 'Busters handing the keys of Ecto-1 over to a new team.

"I read the script and I thought it was really fun," Feig recalls, "but New York and the world had been through this ghost attack problem twice in the past and it'd been solved. So now if a new team was going to come together and be given all their weaponry from the old team... it kind of sounded better on paper than it did in reality. It didn't feel like it

would give a new cast the ability to plant a flag in these characters and in the franchise."

Feig had already "turned it down a couple of times" when he got a call from former Sony studio head and *Ghostbusters* producer Amy Pascal. "She said, 'Why don't any of you fucking comedy filmmaker guys want to do this?'" he laughs. "But she also planted in my head the idea that it's this amazing idea that's sitting there. *Ghostbusters* was one of these seminal moments in comedy that move the art form further, a huge step forward. The idea of a special effects-laden comedy hadn't really been done before. Funny people fighting the paranormal with technology is such a fun arena that it almost shouldn't just be contained by only two movies!"

Having signed up to make a movie based around four female *Ghostbusters*, and teamed up with his *The Heat* screenwriter Katie Dippold, Feig was back in that difficult cover version territory. Just how much can you play around with the pillars of the film and still be making, in essence, *Ghostbusters*?

"My very first thought was, 'Okay, we're just going to make everything different. Let's just completely clean the house, so we don't step on the original ones,'" Feig explains. "But Katie and I thought, being fans of the original one, what would we be bummed that we didn't see? Pretty quickly, you think yeah, you want to see an Ecto-1 and you want to see the proton packs and maybe you want to see Slimer. I just don't want people who love the original movie to be sitting there going, 'Nah, screw that – they've changed everything.' You want those little bits of nostalgia that allow you to enjoy it, but then we can twist it by going, 'Okay, here's where the Ecto-1 came from, and here's where the logo came from.' It just felt like the best way to let the audience have the most fun experience. And my only goal when I make a movie is for an audience to have fun. That's all I care about – I want them to laugh."



**BACK OFF, MAN.
THEY'RE SCIENTISTS.**

Arguably the movie's biggest challenge was creating a new foursome to rival the iconic Venkman, Stantz, Spengler and Zeddemore line-up. First order of business: not trying to ape the people we'd seen before. "I wanted to keep those little touchstones like the Ecto-1, but character-wise, it would have been death to just go like, 'Alright, who's going to be the female Venkman?'" Feig laughs.

Although Feig would ultimately use some of his regular players in the cast, he and Dippold opted to write the script and the characters first, with the intention of casting later.

"I wanted the story to dominate, to tell us which way to go," he explains. "So Katie and I



Paul Feig on set: seems everyone's auditioning for Bond these days.



Thor's Chris Hemsworth joins the team as secretary Kevin.

“My only goal when I make a movie is for an audience to have fun”

Whatever you do, don't cross the streams.

THEY AIN'T AFRAID OF NO GHOSTS

A who's who of the new Ghostbusters

The Ecto-1: one of the classic touches Feig was determined to include.



felt, 'Let's just write it.' We can invent four very different characters, and then once we have it, we can go, 'Who would be good in these characters?' And once we cast those people, we will adjust the script to them. All my comedy comes from finding the right people, writing to their strengths, and then letting them go when they're on set, and then just kind of guiding them, and coming up with new jokes. The role is them, basically.”

Unsurprisingly, one of the new Bustin' quartet is Melissa McCarthy, Feig's comedy muse and a veteran of his previous three movies. The other three members of the team, like Bill Murray and Dan Aykroyd in the original, are veterans of US comedy institution *Saturday* →



ABBY YATES

● A scientist whose research interests lie in the paranormal. A few years before the events of the new movie she co-authored a book that suggested ghosts were real.

PLAYED BY: MELISSA MCCARTHY

Since Feig helped turn her into the Oscar-nominated breakout star of *Bridesmaids*, she's become one of the most in-demand actors on the planet.



ERIN GILBERT

● Particle physicist and best friend of Abby Yates. Rumour has it she loses a prestigious position when her employers learn about the aforementioned ghost book she co-authored with Yates.

PLAYED BY: KRISTEN WIIG

A long-term *SNL* regular who's graduated to a successful movie career, featuring *Bridesmaids* (which she co-wrote), *The Martian* and *Zoolander 2*.



JILLIAN HOLTZMANN

● The nuclear engineer and munitions expert responsible for building the Ghostbusters' kit. Seems to be modelling her style on Egon Spengler in *The Real Ghostbusters*.

PLAYED BY: KATE MCKINNON

While a relative newcomer to movies, McKinnon's one of the hottest properties on *SNL*, and does very impressive impressions of Hillary Clinton and Justin Bieber.



PATTY TOLAN

● A New York City Subway worker who has a close encounter of the paranormal kind, and hooks up with Yates, Gilbert and Holtzmann to complete the new line-up.

PLAYED BY: LESLIE JONES

After a long career in stand-up, Jones joined *SNL*'s regular line-up in 2014, where she does very good angry. She's also had numerous supporting roles on big and small screens.



We're thinking hanging that painting up there was a bad idea.

Night Live: Leslie Jones, Kate McKinnon and Feig's *Bridesmaids* star/writer Kristen Wiig. Feig says the new line-up was selected over a two-month period of meetings and much deep thought about who'd work well together, until "I could call them all up and say, 'Okay, you're a Ghostbuster!'"

"Their chemistry onscreen is through the roof," Feig boasts. "Comedy is all about lightning from a bottle. That's the biggest thing I hope people realise and take away from this movie – or realise in order to get them to go see it. As great as an idea *Ghostbusters* is, that movie wouldn't have worked at all if it wasn't for that cast. On top of the story and the world you're in, they're just funny. Their chemistry is funny. The way they portray each one of those characters is funny, and that is what connects you to the movie. That's the only thing I tried to do with this – it's all about the cast. Then the context they're in and all the stuff around them, that's just icing on the cake."



All female; all funny.



GHOSTBUSTERS WHADDYA WANT?

All of which sounds great, except not everybody is excited about this *Ghostbusters* reboot. In fact, it's difficult to think of any recent blockbuster that has been subjected to such a barrage of pre-release abuse online. There have been some liberal-minded criticisms of casting the African-American Leslie Jones as the only non-scientist Ghostbuster – Feig has since said that the role was originally intended for McCarthy, while Jones took to Twitter to argue, "Why can't a regular person be a Ghostbuster? I'm confused. And why can't I be the one who plays them? I am a performer."

But far louder has been the vitriol thrown at the decision to make the Ghostbusters female.

The first trailer holds the record for the most dislikes on YouTube, while Feig's had all sorts of ludicrous accusations thrown at him, including the assertion that he's destroyed *Ghostbusters* fans' childhoods – and worse. Feig has been admirably willing to speak out against the trolls, but surely after a while that sort of abuse must start to get to you?

"You've just got to put it out of your mind," he says, taking it all in remarkably good humour. "Look, anybody in comedy is a people-pleaser. You don't go, 'I don't care.' You definitely read it and you take it to heart. Sometimes, it makes you kind of go, 'Oh man, that's a bummer.' At the same time, it's good to know what people are thinking. I like to hear what people's concerns are. But you also have to make the movie you're going to make because the thing with the internet is, there's so much information that people get so early that everybody assumes they know what you're doing. That's the only thing that's kind of a drag."

If the movie still has some work to do to convince less enlightened regions of the internet, it does at least have the approval of the original filmmakers. Reitman is a producer and has, Feig says, been involved all the way back to the script development process; *Ghostbusters* co-creator Dan Aykroyd has helped out with some of the "paranormal speak", and since we spoke to Feig, said on Facebook that the new movie "has more laughs and more scares than the first two films"; the

THERE'S SOMETHING YOU DON'T SEE EVERY DAY

Paul Feig explains where his spooks come from – and how he made them real

"I don't believe in ghosts, but I was like, okay, as a science head, where do I think ghosts would come from? It's not like there's a hard science on ghosts, but for me, it's like, 'What could I see as the most logical reason that ghosts could be pulled back or energised or brought into this world? How would that work?' That's the element we added. It wasn't as interesting to me personally to have it be 'the gods have sent something down'. The original *Ghostbusters* really planted a flag in that. You want to have ghosts in it, but we thought it would be fun to change their origins.

"[When it came to creating the ghosts in the movie] it was really important to me to have as many practical elements as I could, because for me it's all about the interaction of the actors with their environments. I worked as hard as I could to provide those practical elements, knowing we would either augment or replace them with CG.

"A lot of our ghosts are played by people because, you know, ghosts are dead people! And for any of the ghosts that were played by humans, we put this LED light rig on them. Pete Travers, my special effects supervisor, felt very much that the way to make them seem real was light interaction – if you have ghosts that are emitting this kind of light and you don't compensate for that with the environment, then it just looks like a cartoon piece popped into a shot."

wife of the late Harold Ramis has given the movie her blessing; and original stars Aykroyd, Ernie Hudson, Sigourney Weaver, Annie Potts and even the notoriously hard-to-pin-down Bill Murray all filmed cameo roles.

So, as Feig points out, it's not like he's making a guerilla, off-the-grid *Ghostbusters* movie to wind people up. "I think there's a feeling on the internet that I've gone wild," he laughs. "I don't know what was in those Sony hacks! When you're coming onto a project, any filmmaker wants to make sure they're not going to be micromanaged by the powers that be, but Dan and Ivan have given me my freedom. Ever since I came on, it's been nothing but a fantastic experience." And nobody ever said that about Robson & Jerome's "Unchained Melody"... ●

Ghostbusters opens on 15 July.

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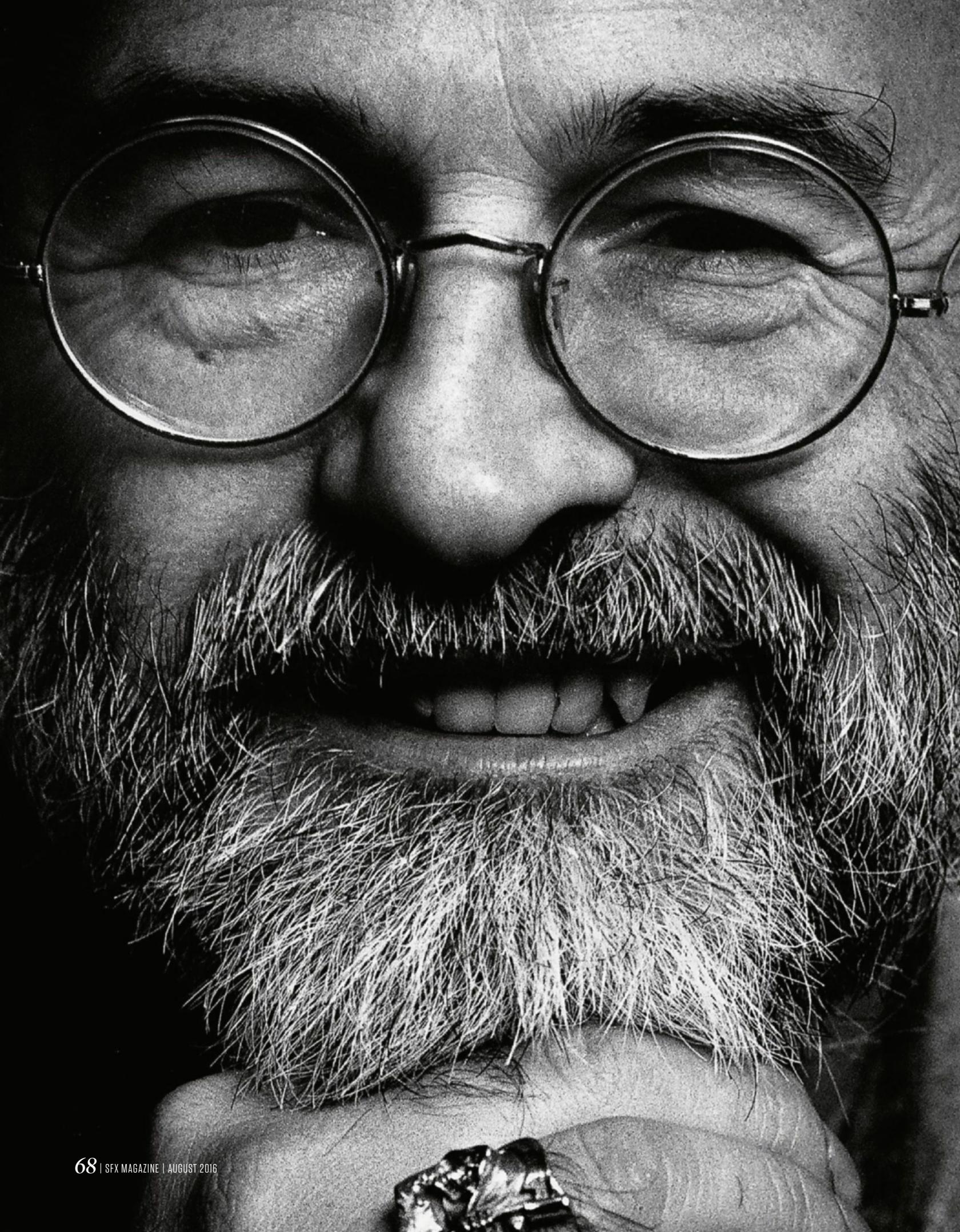
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LET

HIS NAME

BE

SPOKEN

TERRY PRATCHETT'S
creative legacy is in safe hands. Rob Wilkins,
his friend and business manager, gives Jonathan
Wright the lowdown on books, TV shows
and films in the pipeline...

Three hats hang on a stand in what used to be Sir Terry Pratchett's Wiltshire office. A bowler, a top hat and his signature fedora. A little over a year on from the writer's death, the black hats he would don to show he was in professional author mode are still important. "If I get invited to a convention or any public event, one step ahead of me will always be Terry, and I personify that [by taking] Terry's hat," explains Rob Wilkins, Pratchett's friend and business manager.

To judge by the number of Pratchett-related projects on the slate, the hats may be called

into action often in the years ahead. Books, TV shows and movies are all in the pipeline – and those are just the projects Wilkins is prepared to talk about publicly, the ones announced at April's glorious memorial at the Barbican.

Overseeing these projects is a huge responsibility and it's not one Wilkins takes lightly. It was, he says, an "epiphany" to one day wake up and realise the most important thing Narrativa, the TV and film company that holds the rights to Pratchett's books, can do is "to say 'no' and to say 'no' with conviction" when things aren't right.

In a similar vein, there really won't be any further Discworld books by other authors, although Wilkins has notes on 10 ideas for books that would have been written had Pratchett been granted more years – including *Clang!*, a tale of campanology and a city under siege.

Even that title is possibly more than Wilkins meant to reveal, so let's stick with what definitely lies ahead. As Pratchett wrote in *Going Postal*, "Do you not know that a man is not dead while his name is still spoken?" There's plenty to ensure his name continues to be spoken... →

TERRY PRATCHETT: THE BIOGRAPHY

In his final years, Pratchett began to write what he originally hoped would be an autobiography, but which will now be completed by Wilkins. Pratchett was able to work on the project despite the “embuggerance” of his Alzheimer’s because the condition affected his short-term memory far more badly than, for instance, his memories of childhood.

Wilkins’ voice will take over in “telling the story of the public Terry”, but he won’t commit to a date: “I don’t want to be constrained by ‘it’s going to be published this Christmas’, or even for next Easter. It’s got to be right above anything else because it’s Terry’s story and the family have entrusted me to tell that story.”

TERRY PRATCHETT: THE DOCUMENTARY

In addition to the print biography, the BBC will also tell the story of Pratchett’s life. Charlie Russell, who helmed the Pratchett-fronted films *Living With Alzheimer’s*, *Choosing To Die* and *Facing Extinction* is again directing. He filmed at the memorial event, he’s already interviewed Neil Gaiman, and there will be footage of Pratchett talking about his life. For Wilkins, it’s key that he trusts Russell, and so did Pratchett: “If you do something that makes you look an idiot, well, you’ve got to live with it but he’s not out to film that, he’s out to film the story.”

It may be an unconventional film: “I’ve got an idea it’s going to be slightly crazier than what we’ve achieved before...” Expect transmission early next year.

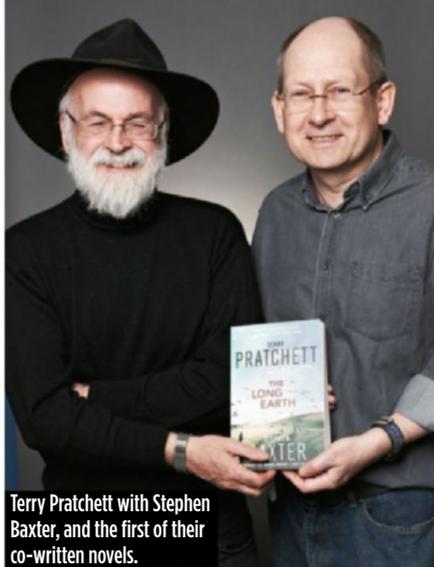
GOOD OMENS: THE TV SERIES

The multi-part adaptation of Pratchett’s best-loved non-Discworld novel, an *Omen*-esque comedy, is being written by – who else? – its co-author, Neil Gaiman. Not that Gaiman initially agreed to script the series. That’s essentially because both men always saw it as something they worked on together.

Gaiman’s agreement followed one of his final trips to Wiltshire to see Pratchett. Driving Gaiman back to the train station, Wilkins had a cheeky word: “Neil, *Good Omens* needs somebody who loves the book as much as you and Terry.” Gaiman’s initial response was, “I couldn’t do it, couldn’t do it, couldn’t do it.” Exchanges of emails followed and “eventually Neil said, ‘Do you know what, I’ll do it. I’ll do it for Terry’”. It’s going well. Wilkins: “I’m saying this to you as fanboy Rob, it’s awesome!”

THE WATCH: THE TV SERIES

Several years back, Terry Pratchett came to the *SFX* offices to announce that a police procedural featuring Commander Sam Vimes and the Ankh-Morpork City Watch was in



Terry Pratchett with Stephen Baxter, and the first of their co-written novels.



Sir Terry celebrating City Watch plans with producer Rod Brown.

“There’s a romance to this that is unavoidable, and it is going to be brilliant”

production. “He announced it because he wanted it to happen in his lifetime,” says Wilkins. “He wanted to have that red carpet moment or the big Saturday show.” Since then... nothing. Well, so it might seem.

In fact, says Wilkins, a series that mixes new material in with the story arc that begins with *Guards! Guards!* is still gradually taking shape. “The process is really slow, but then you talk to our lawyers and they say, ‘It’s TV, it takes four-to-eight years, relax, relax into this process.’”

THE WEE FREE MEN: THE MOVIE

There is going to be a big announcement about this project at San Diego Comic Con in July, but one thing we already know is that Pratchett’s daughter, Rhianna, has written the screenplay of a novel that tells of a young witch finding her place in the world.

“She gave the first treatment to Terry for what became his final father’s day present,” says Wilkins. “She wrapped it up in a ribbon and then read it to him cover-to-cover, humorous accents included, and then later she submitted the first draft of the script on what would have been his 68th birthday. There’s a romance to this that is unavoidable, and it is going to be brilliant, and to say that she wants to get it right is an understatement. She wants it to be more perfect than anybody else could’ve done it.”

MORT: THE MOVIE

Blame downing a Bloody Mary, but when Wilkins met *Mort* scriptwriter Terry Rossio (*Shrek*, *Pirates Of The Caribbean*) at an Italian restaurant in Hollywood, he took it upon himself to offer the writer some advice: the first few pages of *Mort*, the story of Death’s apprentice, tell you everything you need to know about the character, they weren’t to be messed with.

Wilkins: “He says, ‘Okay, Rob, but how about this?’ and as long as I live I will never forget this. Over the next five minutes, he plays directly into my head, how the opening sequence of *Mort* should be.” Rossio, says Wilkins, has captured the essence of these pages, but done it cinematically. “It was so perfect, so perfect the spaghetti’s falling off my fork. And he got to the end of it and he said, ‘How about that?’ Brilliant! The man is a genius and I never use that word lightly.”

THE LONG COSMOS

The final novel in the five-book parallel Earth sequence that began with *The Long Earth* is out in late June (and reviewed on p108). It’s based on a story arc Pratchett worked out with his co-author, Stephen Baxter, in conversation aided by “a lot of glugging”. Wilkins: “The mechanical writing by the end is Steve, but the ideas are still shared between them.”

And we really shouldn’t underestimate Baxter’s creative contribution. He would “dig his heels in” if he thought something didn’t work. “He and Terry got on very, very well. They had their moments, but the best thing about arguing with Terry was you’re not arguing about, ‘This cup of tea’s gone cold,’ or something like that, it’s not the inane stuff, it’s arguing about specific plot points. The stuff that really matters.”

THE DISCWORLD COLOURING BOOK

No, we weren’t that excited, and then Wilkins showed us proofs of a book created by Paul Kidby that recreates his illustrations. We were impressed. “The detail is phenomenal. Jonathan [*SFX*] is looking at [a line drawing of] the grumpy librarian sitting at his desk with the *Monster Fun Grimoire* in front of him – 60 hours converting that from colour. From what I gather, people are pre-ordering at least two copies; one to colour and one to keep pristine.”

THE DISCWORLD ENCYCLOPEDIA

Expect several volumes, probably beginning with one devoted to Death/death: “It’s what Terry wanted at the end of Discworld, thinking he would have retired from the novels. He never would have retired from the novels. I always said to him, ‘What do you think you might do in your retirement?’ He said, ‘Oh, I don’t know, people always say that everybody’s got a novel in them, I might tinker.’” ●



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INDEPENDENCE DAY:
RESURGENCE

APPETITE DESTROY

FOR UCTION

Lock up your landmarks! The invaders demand a rematch in **INDEPENDENCE DAY: RESURGENCE**. Nick Setchfield has a devastating conversation with director Roland Emmerich

HOW DO YOU DREAM?

It's a question *SFX* has always wanted to ask a Hollywood director. And who better than Roland Emmerich, master of cinematic shock and awe, a man with more devastation on his rap sheet than global warming and the Tunguska meteor combined. Surely his dreams are total nocturnal skull-rattlers, full of wreckage and rubble, IMAX fireballs and THX tidal waves?

"No, they're just normal," he laughs, disappointingly. "But when I finish a film I tend to rework it in the last three weeks so I have these panic attacks in the middle of the night. I break out in sweat and say, 'Oh my god, we're not going to make it... this is going to be a disaster!' You dream you're re-cutting a scene you don't even have in the movie!"

Panic! Disaster! At least Emmerich's vocabulary is consistent with his movies. And if expectation is measured in night sweats it may be time to change the sheets. This month he unleashes *Independence Day: Resurgence*, the long anticipated sequel to 1996's flag-waving, ET-punching blockbuster.

Given the original movie was officially king of '96, slaying box office records shattered by *Jurassic Park* three years before, you can only wonder why it's taken two whole decades to stage a rematch between Earth and the invaders. Surely there was studio pressure to greenlight a sequel while the remains of that nuked mothership were still smouldering?

"Yes, there was," shares Emmerich. "But I had no idea what to do with it. And I had so many other interesting projects I wanted to do. So I said no, I'm not doing it. And they were quite respectful and said, 'Okay, if you don't want to do it, don't do it.' And then later, because technology had advanced so much, I started talking with my people, and we said 'My god, what could we do with *Independence Day* now?' And that sparked something in my head. I'd think about it once in a while but there was always a new original project that I'd be more interested in."

Emmerich and longtime collaborator Dean Devlin took a crack at a script in the early noughties. By 2009 the plan called for two sequels. Emmerich courted Will Smith to reprise his role as hotshot flyboy Steven Hiller, Earth's cigar-chomping first line of defence. When Smith passed – either too pricey or burned out on the idea of sequels, depending



The feet of the mothership. Um, so that's quite big, then.



on which story you believe – Emmerich retooled his vision.

"It has totally changed," he tells *SFX*. "First we waited for Will and then Will opted out. Then I kind of opted out. I told a friend of mine what I wanted to do and they said, 'It's such a fantastic idea that you don't need Will – just find another way to do it.'"

"Maybe only one and a half years ago, just before we started shooting, I sat down with these two young writers I'd just found. I said, 'Let's give it one more try.' The real idea was to start a new generation, to make it a hand-off – which totally got me excited because it meant I could hire a young cast. And then we wrote the final draft, which got us a greenlight pretty much in four weeks."

NEW AND IMPROVED

Emmerich promises the sequel will bring something new, not just trade on pre-millennial nostalgia. "I think this will be a totally different experience from the first one, because there's so many other big blockbusters out there now that have the same feel. The studio said,

Trouble at sea?



Bill Pullman is back, and this time he's brought a beard.



“Spaceships? Yeah, we can fight spaceships. No big deal.”



“THAT WILL SMITH-SHAPED HOLE IS FILLED BY A NEW GENERATION OF PILOTS... THAT WORKS WELL”

“Twenty years is a long time – the movie has to work for a new audience.”

“I wanted to make the story itself a little more complex. We have a couple of elements in there that nobody knows about yet and we’re very proud that we keep hiding them! That’s really difficult in this day and age.”

Twenty years have also passed in movie time but the world of the sequel has been shaped by the aftershocks of that seismic Fourth of July. The ESD (Earth Space Defense) protects the planet, using tech looted from the fallen alien battle fleet. While Captain Steven Hiller engaged the enemy in an F/A-18 Hornet, his successors fly futuristic hybrid jets, retro-engineered from extra-terrestrial science. All of our moonbase dreams have also come true.

“It’s a very different world from ours,” Emmerich reveals. “The humans know they got very, very lucky. They also realised that they cannot recreate alien technology, but they

can harvest it. And then on top of that they detected this distress call, sent from the alien ships into deep space, and they said, ‘This means there are others out there.’ So the whole world stays united, because they have to, and they have to try and figure out how they can defend Earth.”

Is it mankind that’s resurgent? Or the invaders? “Both!” laughs Emmerich. “These two young writers came up with that title. As a German it had to be explained to me what resurgence means! But I really liked it, because it’s not a definite term. Resurgence can be a lot of things, and I liked it because of that.”

While the tentacled aggressors remained a nameless, enigmatic threat first time around, Emmerich’s expanded their backstory in the sequel. “We opened up the universe. We have to do that. There’s another race out there that we learn about. There’s a bigger story going on.”

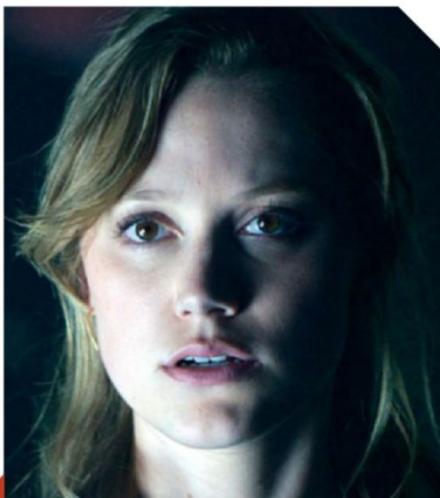
That Will Smith-shaped hole, meanwhile, is filled by a new generation of pilots. “We kind of replaced Will with a whole group of people,” says Emmerich. “We said to ourselves, ‘How can anybody replace Will Smith?’ So we have four or five younger characters to take over the Will Smith part, in a way. That actually works quite well.”

Top Gunning it against the alien menace are *The Hunger Games’* Liam Hemsworth, *It Follows’* Maika Monroe – playing the daughter of President Whitmore – and Jessie Usher as Dylan, stepson of planetary hero Steven Hiller.

“It helps to have young faces and see what their problems are. Don’t forget the Will Smith character was like 26 in the first film, so he was quite young.”

Resurgence also reunites the ensemble cast of *ID4*, from Jeff Goldblum, recreating his turn as David Levinson, now promoted to director of ESD, to Vivica A Fox, Brent Spiner and a Biblically-bearded Bill Pullman. Emmerich says they recaptured their ’90s alchemy effortlessly.

“Someone like Judd Hirsch, who’s now 82, was immediately exactly in his part again. The same thing happened with Brent Spiner or Jeff Goldblum. They were immediately into their old personas. They knew their characters really well. We involved Jeff a lot when we wrote the first script. We sat down with him and asked →



THE NEXT GENERATION

“THERE’S A
BIT OF REVENGE
IN HER”

MAIKA MONROE
is Patricia Whitmore

You’re playing the President’s daughter. How did the war of ‘96 shape your generation?

● It changed everything. I lost my mom and that affects Patricia very deeply, especially at that age. But it makes her tougher. There’s a bit of revenge in her, so that was kind of fun to play with.

You began in indie films. How much of a culture shock is it coming onto a film of this scale?

● I don’t think it could be more opposite. It was quite bizarre having all this time and the stages and the greenscreen... At first it was a bit intimidating, but then you start really liking it. There’s something quite fun about the greenscreen and having to act everything out like a play.

Who made you laugh most on set?

● I’m going to have to go with Jeff. You are constantly entertained with him. Some days you’re shooting for 18 hours and most people would be getting kinda cranky and tired, but Jeff would just keep the energy so high.

You did two horror movies in succession. Now you’ve done two alien invasion films. Are you wary of being pigeonholed?

● It happened by chance that *The Guest* and *It Follows* came out back to back. I want to do scripts that I love and if they end up being in the same genre then that’s that. I don’t feel too pigeonholed.

Do you think there’s life beyond this planet?

● I think there has to be. I don’t think it can just be us. I think they would be friendly.

Can you back that up with science?

● I can’t! I’m going with my gut here!

Nick Setchfield

Liam Hemsworth plays Jake Morrison, an ace fighter pilot.



him a lot of questions about what he felt, and he had very good notes.”

BIGGER AND BETTER

As Goldblum’s character so knowingly says in the trailer, *Resurgence* is “definitely bigger than the last one”. And that’s quite the feat, given *Independence Day* established a new paradigm for multiplex apocalypse. How do you possibly top the end of the world? Just how many White Houses can you blow up?

“On the first film I had roughly 450 FX shots,” Emmerich shares. “This time I had nearly 2,000! It’s just enormous. It’s hard to work on these films because you only see bluescreen at first, and then you see really bad backgrounds... You have to cut it, you have to test it. And then at the end, when it’s finally finished, everybody says, ‘Oh my god!’ You have to have the imagination that it will all turn out well. You’ve got to believe.

“The movie had to look modern. It couldn’t look like 20 years ago.”

While the new film delivers state-of-the-art destruct-o-porn, courtesy of an alien gravity weapon that sucks cars into the sky and upends oceans, Emmerich still claims inspiration from a couple of stone cold ‘70s classics.

“For me there were two seminal movies,” he tells *SFX*, happy to slip into movie geek mode. “I was in my first year of film school when *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind* were released in Europe. I saw these two movies and they both told me exactly what I wanted to do. I was always a science fiction fan but *Close Encounters* influenced me more because it was about a regular person, an electrician who has a truck, and a family. And he’s one of the guys who goes into the spaceship at the end. I was like, ‘Oh, that’s a whole new way to make movies...’ And when

London is evacuated as national landmarks collide in this concept art.



Artwork showing the CGI alien mothership, set to start some serious gravitational problems.



you look at my movies they’re all a bit like that. Something incredible always happens to quite regular people.”

Suddenly it seems so obvious. That’s the original *Independence Day*, isn’t it? A mash of *Close Encounters* and *Star Wars*, motherships and dogfights, first contact and final reel heroics...



That Apple PowerBook isn't going to save you this time, Jeff.

“I HAD THIS TONE THAT EVERYONE TRIES TO HIT – AN IRREVERENCE, BUT WITH A SERIOUSNESS TO IT”

“Maybe!” laughs Emmerich. “I don’t know. It was also very influenced by ’70s disaster films. I’m a big fan of them. Dean and I really studied *Towering Inferno!*”

Emmerich’s love of widescreen disaster runs through his screen CV like a tectonic faultline, from *Godzilla* to *The Day After Tomorrow* to *2012*. It’s easy to see him as Irwin Allen with digital firepower, all about the show-stopping moment, the visual wow, the cinematic high. But every actor *SFX* speaks to praises Emmerich as a collaborative, character-focused director. Does it frustrate him that he’s seen purely as a master of spectacle?

“Yes,” he laughs again, rather more wistfully. “It totally bugs me because they think I’m only about destruction. But I’m not only about destruction. It’s not who I really am. I love people and I love actors. I did movies like *Anonymous* and *The Patriot* too. But I have to say, because of *Independence Day* I’ve found a way to combine genres. It’s an alien invasion movie in the form of a disaster film and that had quite an impact on the film industry.”

Emmerich’s not bashful when it comes to stressing his influence on the modern blockbuster landscape. And given the sheer amount of rubble routinely cluttering our

screens these days he may have a valid point. “When you look at all the Marvel movies they’re always about destruction, they’re always about invading. There’s a lot of alien invasion going on in the Marvel Universe and I think they got that from *Independence Day*. I also had this tone everybody tries to hit – an irreverence, but with a seriousness to it. It’s very hard to hit that kind of tone.”

Will we have to wait another 20 years for *Independence Day 3*?

“Oh, I don’t know,” says Emmerich, and given this is his first sequel in a 35-year career it feels like genuine uncertainty, not interview gameplay. “It’s set up for a sequel. I had to do that for the studio, to make them excited. There is the possibility for a sequel but let’s see how it does first.

“I have two or three projects that I want to do. They’re all original and I always tend more toward doing something original than a sequel. I could never do what Michael Bay does, like five *Transformers* movies... I would go crazy!”

Independence Day: Resurgence opens on 23 June. Concept art is from *The Art And Making Of Independence Day: Resurgence*, out 21 June from Titan Books.



THE NEXT GENERATION

“I WENT FULL ACTION HERO IN THIS!”

JESSIE USHER is Dylan Hiller

Is Dylan in the shadow of Steven Hiller?

● My dad was a war hero. He wasn’t just a war hero of the country, he was a war hero of the world. Dylan grew up in the limelight of his father and had to deal with this enormous amount of popularity and stardom. He joined the military, so he’s got the pressure of what his dad did 20 years ago hovering over him. But at the same time it doesn’t necessarily bother him. He’s proud to be taking the torch.

And do you feel in the shadow of Will Smith?

● Absolutely. You know, Will Smith is a powerhouse of an actor and there’s a little bit of the passing of the torch there too. I wish I’d had a chance to speak with Will and get a little pep talk but hopefully that’ll come one day!

Does anything in your performance echo Will’s?

● Very, very loosely. There are very subtle things... I don’t know how closely people will be paying attention but I actually wear the watch that he wore in the original film. But we wanted to make sure that he’s his own person.

Roland’s got a reputation as a master of spectacle, but what does he give to his actors?

● From the day that I met Roland up until the day I wrapped on the film he was so heavily invested in the relationships between the characters. His films are such huge spectacles that it’d be easy for characters to get lost in all that.

Do you get to go full *Top Gun*?

● Yeah, pretty much! There’s a lot of crazy flying sequences, running, screaming, climbing, shooting, everything... I went full action hero in this. It was great!

Nick Setchfield

Welcome To The Jungle

With a new **TARZAN** movie about to swing into cinemas, Luke Dormehl explores the history of the Lord of the Apes

Edgar Rice Burroughs was a failure. Or that was how it must have felt – and, to outsiders, looked – when he submitted his first piece of writing to pulp magazine *The All-Story* in 1911. Burroughs was in his mid-thirties and desperate. He had a wife and two children, with a third on the way. His other stabs at attempted careers (cowboy, shopkeeper, railroad policeman, gold prosecutor) had fallen at the first hurdle. The closest thing to writing on his CV was a job working as a wholesaler of pencil sharpeners.

And yet Burroughs didn't remain a failure. The following year, he was the published author of several stories, including one – *Tarzan Of The Apes* – which introduced the world to a character it would soon be very familiar with. *Tarzan Of The Apes* tells the story of John Clayton, an English child born to members of the aristocracy, who is raised by apes after his own parents are killed. With a combination of animal agility and fierce human intelligence, the renamed “Tarzan” (ape-speak, apparently, for “white skin”) becomes ruler and protector of the African jungle.

The character was an immediate smash hit. By the time Edgar Rice Burroughs died as a

wealthy 74-year-old in 1950, Tarzan had transcended pulp novels and made his way to radio, comics (first illustrated by Hal Foster, creator of Prince Valiant), Broadway plays and a string of Hollywood movies. Next month, yet another is added to the pile in the form of *The Legend Of Tarzan*, starring Alexander Skarsgård as the vine-swinging hero.

“Right from the start, Edgar Rice Burroughs understood that he wasn't just selling a single novel, but an entire world,” says Arvid Nelson, the writer of Dynamite's Tarzan comic book series *Lord Of The Jungle*. “When you go to Hollywood production meetings, people today talk about franchises and merchandising. Edgar Rice Burroughs was the first person to realise that. You could even buy Tarzan-branded ice cream!”

By thinking big, Edgar Rice Burroughs created a template which has since been used by everyone from Walt Disney to Marvel Comics. →

Alexander Skarsgård becomes the latest Tarzan actor this year.

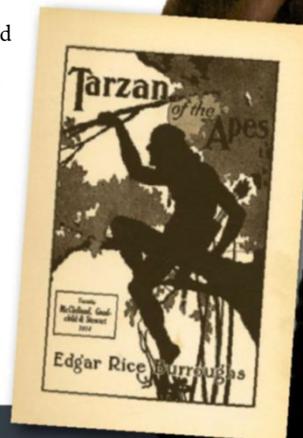




ILLUSTRATION BY JOE JUSKO

dusko
12



Tarzan in the Earth's core (where else?), as illustrated by Joe Jusko.

“Burroughs came of age when mass media was exploding,” says John Taliaferro, author of the book *Tarzan Forever: The Life Of Edgar Rice Burroughs*. “There were newspapers, pulp novels, radio, movies. Everything was moving at an incredibly fast pace. You could say that it was a case of being in the right place at the right time, but he seized on what was happening. He was the first author to incorporate himself and his franchise. He took control of the financial side of his character, and turned it into a global business.”

THE WORLD'S FIRST SUPERHERO

Of course, no amount of marketing talent could have transformed Tarzan into a lasting iconic character if he hadn't resonated with the public. Just as Burroughs did with creating a franchise model for his creation, so Tarzan established a formula which would explode in popularity over the coming decades.

“In my opinion, Tarzan is the world's first superhero,” says Nelson. “Like Sherlock Holmes he's got superhuman intelligence, but Burroughs added to that by giving him virtually superhuman strength as well. Tarzan is the template for every superhero after him.”

One example of a person influenced by Tarzan? None other than Superman co-creator Jerry Siegel, who borrowed aspects of the character for his own mega hit. “When I was 20, I happened to be visiting my cousins in the LA area and decided to call Burroughs Inc to show them my art,” says Thomas Yeates, a Tarzan comic artist and writer, whose new book *Tarzan: The Beckoning* is out this year. Before he knew what had happened, Yeates found himself as a late arrival at a banquet dinner in honour of Edgar Rice Burroughs, sitting next to Siegel. “Jerry said he and his partner artist Joe Shuster were inspired by Tarzan to create Superman,” Yeates says. “Many, many young creative people of that era

were enthralled and influenced by the writings of Burroughs and the Tarzan newspaper strip.”

At least in the books, Tarzan wasn't just a hulking brute, though. He also possessed a superhuman intelligence which may come as a surprise for anyone only familiar with the “Me Tarzan, you Jane” characterisation of the movies (a line which, incidentally, is never actually said). In the books, Tarzan speaks 25 human languages, in addition to being able to communicate with the animals around him: a sort of bodybuilding Dr Dolittle.

It is this combination of animal strength and human intelligence that makes him so fascinating. “[The appeal of Tarzan is the] duality of feral animal and aristocratic gentleman that can instinctively switch places in the blink of an eye,” says Joe Jusko, a painter who has illustrated the character in photo-realistic style many times over the years.

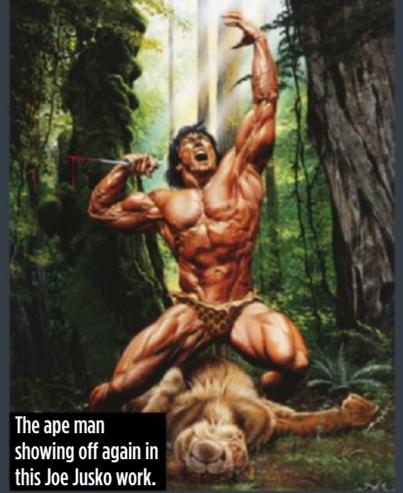
TARZAN'S WEIRDEST ENCOUNTERS

It's not just Tarzan's status as a prototype superhero that makes him qualify for the *SFX* treatment, however. Tarzan's history is full of more offbeat tales firmly rooted in the fantasy and sci-fi genres. One Burroughs story entitled *Tarzan At The Earth's Core* features Tarzan... well, travelling to the Earth's core (a place called Pellucidar), where he encounters cave men and women and battles evil telepathic pterodactyls. In fact, Pellucidar was an early example of a franchise crossover, since Burroughs had previously created the hollow Earth concept for a series of novels involving the character of mining heir David Innes.

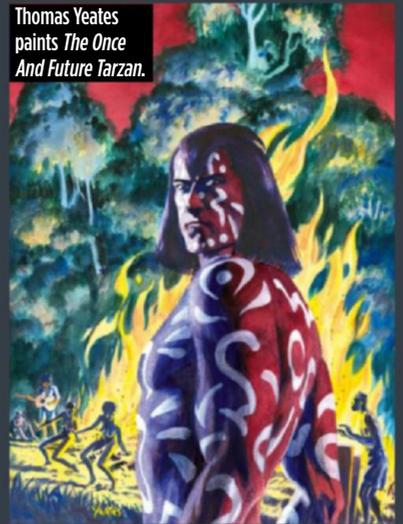
It is often these more sideways takes on the character which have resonated with creators. Joe Jusko, for instance, says that despite his “rabid obsession” with Tarzan these days, he was less than impressed by the old Hollywood films which first exposed him to the character. Then he picked up Burroughs' novels and found them to be a revelation. “La and the Beast Men of Opar! Pellucidar! Dinosaurs! Where were all these things in those old movies?” he says. “Of course, I realised that budgetary and technological restraints had prevented anything like the books from being produced on film, but I was now a totally converted Edgar Rice Burroughs fanatic. I quickly sought out everything I could find by him and was astounded by the breadth and depth of his imagination.”

Others have continued this theme. In the Dark Horse comic *The Once And Future Tarzan*, artist and co-writer Thomas Yeates hurls Tarzan into a futuristic flooded London – in which the least of his problems is the lack of jungle vines to swing from!

Continuing in the tradition of Tarzan crossovers, other creators have similarly paired



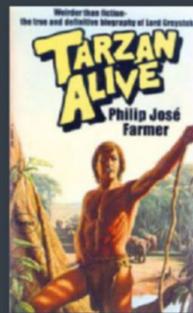
The ape man showing off again in this Joe Jusko work.



Thomas Yeates paints *The Once And Future Tarzan*.

THE METEORITE STUFF!

Keep it in the family



In 1972, award-winning sci-fi author and massive Tarzan fanboy Philip José Farmer released an incredibly ambitious book entitled *Tarzan Alive*, which detailed Tarzan's “definitive biography” of Tarzan as though he were a real

person. Farmer's most intriguing concept was what he called the Wold Newton family: an extended family tree covering dozens of “superhuman” literary characters including (among others) Sherlock Holmes, Doc Savage, James Bond – and Tarzan. According to Farmer, the existence of such characters could be traced to a meteorite which landed in Yorkshire in 1795: imbuing passers-by with a variety of genetic mutations. These included extreme intelligence and strength, plus a penchant for heroic or villainous goals. It's all utterly mad stuff – but so, so worth checking out!



She Jane, him... tired? 2016's *The Legend Of Tarzan*.



Tarzan's Desert Mystery: giant spider invasion!

HERE'S JOHNNY!

The screen's definitive Tarzan

Tarzan has been portrayed on-screen by dozens of actors. However, the most famous remains Johnny Weissmuller (below), a Hungarian-born American swimmer who capitalised on winning five Olympic gold medals by taking on the role of Burroughs' lord of the jungle. From 1932-1948, Weissmuller played Tarzan 12 times. His best? 1934's *Tarzan And His Mate* for action or 1942's *Tarzan's New York Adventure* for a more comedic take on the character. Best avoided? Even at a svelte 68 minutes, Weissmuller's last Tarzan outing, *Tarzan And The Mermaids*, is rubbish. 1943's *Tarzan's Desert Mystery* is worth watching purely for the scene in which he encounters a giant spider.



Disney's 1999 sports dude take on the character.



the character up with everyone from Edgar Rice Burroughs' own John Carter of Mars to Frankenstein's Monster, Sherlock Holmes, Superman, Batman and Predator.

"*Tarzan Versus Predator: At The Earth's Core* really happened because Dark Horse obtained the comics rights to both the Tarzan and the Predator properties simultaneously," writer Walter Simonson tells *SFX*. "I don't know whose idea it was to combine them, but I got a call out of the blue asking me if I'd like to write it. I'd written a Tarzan story a few years earlier, and had read a lot of the Tarzan novels when I was young, so I was delighted to give it a shot!"

THE VINES ARE A'CHANGIN'

Ultimately, as with any character that has endured in the public imagination, Tarzan's real strength has been his ability to change over time. "Tarzan has always adapted to mirror the times," says Taliaferro. "If you look at the animated Disney film from 1999, for example, he's virtually skateboarding down some of the trees in a nod to the popularity of extreme sports at the time."

Not all of the transitions have been quite so straightforward. "The biggest problem that I had with Tarzan is that the character as originally conceived is explicitly a justification of colonialism and racist attitudes," says Nelson. "The theme of the original book is that a white European left alone in the jungle would, by dint of their natural superiority, rise up to become master of everything around him."

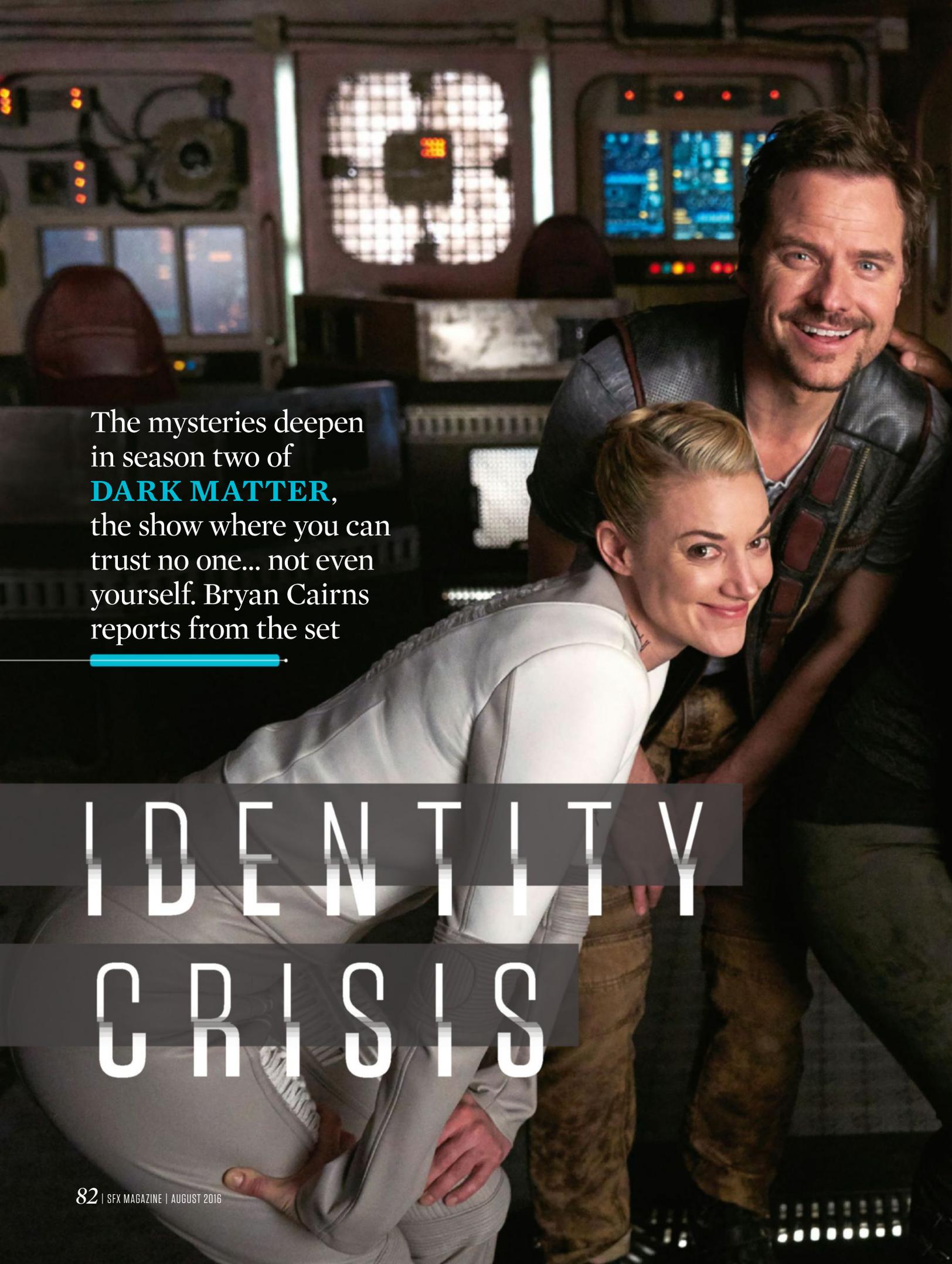
When Nelson was given the job of retelling the Edgar Rice Burroughs Tarzan story with his fantastic *Lord Of The Jungle* series, he attempted something very challenging: to go back to the original stories, while stripping the character of some of its less palatable elements. "I tried to look at the character from a different direction: that a person raised by apes in the jungle wouldn't have their mind poisoned by racist attitudes," he continues. "It makes him an innocent, as well as being more noble and heroic. It also adds a tragic element because he's someone who doesn't truly fit in anywhere."

With so many versions of Tarzan – ranging from 1918's silent film *Tarzan And The Apes* to this year's *The Legend Of Tarzan* – and appearances in books, comics, TV shows, films and even videogames, it's clear that Tarzan today is far bigger than any one creator. But isn't that part of the fun? "The reason that you're able to change characters like Tarzan is because the audience are so familiar with the original story and they'll accept derivations of it as a result," Nelson continues. "It's like playing variations on the same jazz riff!"

Here's to Tarzan's next successful century! ●

The Legend Of Tarzan opens on 8 July. For more Joe Jusko art see <http://www.joejusko.com>.

KOBAL (3)



The mysteries deepen in season two of **DARK MATTER**, the show where you can trust no one... not even yourself. Bryan Cairns reports from the set

IDENTITY CRISIS

Fun and games behind-the-scenes on *Dark Matter*.

ON SET
EXCLUSIVE!

De careful what you wish for” could be the mission statement of *Dark Matter*. Based on the Dark Horse Comics graphic novel of the same name, the debut season of the Syfy show found six crew members awakening from stasis with no recollection of who they were – and no idea how they ended up on a derelict spaceship named Raza. Their only names were the numbers allotted to them in the order they woke up. Searching for their true identities, the group quickly discovered they were mercenaries with blood on their hands – and that somebody had been pulling their strings...

“One of the things that I loved about the show, when we first envisioned it, was these characters are all sort of a *tabula rasa*,” executive producer Joseph Mallozzi tells *SFX*. “They basically don’t know who they are or how they got on board this ship. They start off at the same level as the audience. The characters are finding out about themselves at the same pace as the audience. At the beginning, people were like, ‘Well, this character seems kind of flat. This character is too much like this.’ As the season progressed, you begin to add depth to the characters.

“The best example is the character of Three, played by Anthony Lemke, who really came off as an asshole in

the first episode,” says Mallozzi. “I was actually surprised by how many people hated him. ‘Maybe we made him too unlikeable?’ Then, as the season progresses and we find out about his backstory, his relationship and the woman he left behind, we humanise the character. Now he’s a fan favourite.”

It’s a sunny April morning when *SFX* visits the *Dark Matter* set, which used to serve as home base for now-finished succubus drama *Lost Girl*. The Toronto soundstage has been transformed into various sections of the Raza. There’s the bridge, infirmary, cargo hold, escape pods and endless corridors. In another area stands the Marauder, the shuttle employed to transport the crew from space to their landing destination.

Today, nobody is blasting guns, delivering a beating or even raising their voice. Instead, it’s a quieter sequence involving Three, the Android (Zoie Palmer) and newcomer Nyx (Melanie Liburd). The duo are escorting the Android to the charging platform. For some unknown reason, the Android has opted to go offline for the greater good. That decision doesn’t sit well with Nyx, while Three seems to have accepted her fate. It’s just one of many hard knocks the team will be forced to weather in season two. →

“SHE’S SEEKING ANSWERS...”

MELISSA O’NEIL is TWO



How does Two react to being locked up in a maximum security prison?

► When Two first wakes up, her mindset is “What the hell is going on?” and “Let’s get a game plan going!” For the most part, Two is trying to get a handle on things. “Let’s rally the troops. Where is everyone? How do we get going?” Revenge is not at the top of her list. She’s seeking answers and wants people to be held accountable.

How concerned is Two about discovering she isn’t entirely human?

► I would imagine we will explore that a little bit more. We know she isn’t exactly human. However, if we were to open her up, she’s got blood, she’s got guts, a heart and a brain. She has these nanites going through her. She’s been bioengineered. There’s something a little bit different about her, but it doesn’t make her any less organic than anyone else.

Two was your first action role. Are the writers pushing you further this season?

► Now that we know what I’m good at – and not so good at – they gear things a certain way. They play to my strengths. I asked, “Can I play with more weapons?” I have some crazy stuff coming up.



We all know it’s impossible to walk normally when people are watching.

“Essentially, I do have a five-year plan. I know where each year will end”

Case in point: when *Dark Matter* returns, the gang is going to require Wentworth Miller’s assistance in staging a prison break. The season one finale threw a major curveball when Six (Roger Cross) was revealed to be a traitor in their midst. For unknown reasons, he turned them over to the Galactic Authority and they are currently under lockdown.

“We open in this maximum security prison, Hyperion 8,” explains Mallozzi. “We focus on what they are going to do. Can they escape? If they can escape, can they do it alone? Must they rely on other individuals inside the prison? If they are successful, what then? How do they feel about Six? Is he still part of the crew?”

Not if Five (Jodelle Ferland) has her way. The youngest crew member developed a special sister/older brother relationship with Six. She trusted him, so it’s understandable that Five is struggling with forgiving his betrayal.

“She actually reacts in a very visceral, physical fashion when she sees him,” acknowledges Mallozzi. “We are going to

establish it’s a Supermax (prison), so essentially there is an area for the worst of the worst. Those are individuals like Two, Three and Four. Then there’s a minimum security wing for individuals like Five or One, so we see how they navigate those waters.”

ADDING CHARACTER

An intergalactic prison provides a wealth of complicated characters who can be either friend or foe. When the crew eventually escapes from their confinement, a few new faces tag along for the ride.

“There’s the character Nyx, who is an incredibly accomplished fighter to the point where you’re wondering, ‘What the hell is going on?’” says Mallozzi. “She can actually go toe-to-toe with Two (Melissa O’Neil), and no normal human being can go toe-to-toe with Two. She has a mystery of her own.

“Devin (Shaun Sipos), a medic in the prison, is the one character who can actually make a

THE TRIP

Our competition winner on the *Dark Matter* set

► Back in March we teamed up with Syfy for a very exciting competition: the chance to visit the set of *Dark Matter* season two. The lucky winner, Andy Etherton has now returned from outer space (sorry, Toronto in Canada), and says he enjoyed his adventure on the final frontier. “By far the best thing of the trip, by a long margin, was just how friendly everyone was,” he tells *SFX*.





"Wait, why are we laughing again?"
"I have no idea..."



The guy at the back is really bad at selfies.

vast contribution given his medical know-how. We have an android, but not a trained doctor. It turns out before he ended up in prison, he was actually a surgeon. We explore his downfall and he has a dark side.

"Then there's the character of Arax Nero (Mike Dopud), who is a prison boss with all the connections," Mallozzi adds. "He's a tough guy and muscles his way in as well."

Viewers can also expect Wil Wheaton's Alexander Rook and David Hewlett's Talbor Calchek to resurface. Other episodes tackle cloning, alternate universes with evil doppelgangers and elaborate heists. And, with the stakes higher than ever, no one is safe. More than one character could end up dead. And, despite *Dark Matter's* heavy mythology and serialised nature, Mallozzi promises audiences will not have to wait years for answers.

"One thing that drives me nuts about certain mystery shows is that they hold on to the mystery for so long or they never resolve the mystery in a satisfactory manner," says

Mallozzi. "That's one of the things I wanted. The series premiere ended with a 'holy crap' moment, where we find out these people we've been following for these 43 minutes are actually the worst of the worst. A lot of the critics said, 'Ah, they should have saved that for the end of the season reveal.' I suppose I could have, but I wanted to accelerate the story.

"I've been sitting on this show and the ideas for so long, for years and years, so one of the benefits was it allowed me to really think things through and come up with a solid backstory," Mallozzi concludes. "Essentially, I do have a five-year plan. I know where each year will end. Ultimately, the story is about redemption. Are people born bad or are they a product of their environment? It's the whole nature-versus-nurture debate. I like that we are exploring it through seven very different characters. It's not going to be a happy ending for everyone, though." ●

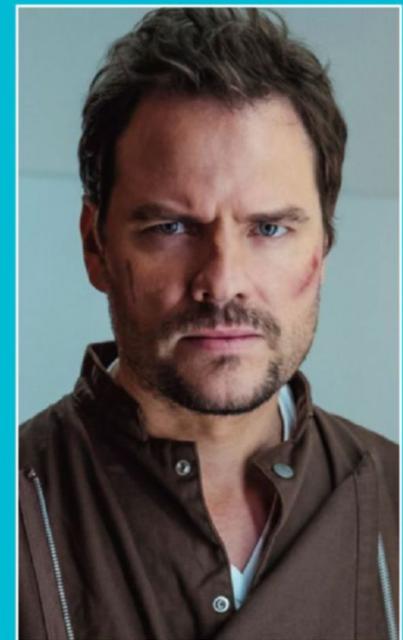
Dark Matter is on Syfy on 4 July.

"Everybody was kind, patient, humorous and genuinely interested in *The British Guy*. It really made me want to move to Canada immediately and I felt quite emotional having to say goodbye to all the lovely people I met."

It was also something of a learning experience. "Without a doubt my biggest surprise was how long the day's shooting was and how little would end up being used," says Andy. "I was collected at 06.30 from my hotel and walked back in at 23.30 that night! I was told that from all of that work the team would expect to use around seven minutes in the actual episode. I'll certainly be watching the episode I participated in with a lot more interest and, possibly, a more critical eye."

"HE HAS A
VERY SIMPLE
WORLD VIEW"

ANTHONY LEMKE is THREE



A lot of the characters are seeking redemption. How does that apply to Three? Does he even care about that?

► In season one, he doesn't. It's that simple. As you know, he has a backstory with Sarah. There's an element of good within him. In season one, he's just a survival-of-the-fittest kind of guy. "Whatever I need to do to survive, I will do." It's a very simple moral code. It's almost amoral. "If I survive at the end of the day, then I have won." In season two, you are going to start seeing hints at why he may be the way he is. That is what's joyful about Three. He has a very simple world view. It's not about going out and being bad, although there's a certain pleasure that comes with it.

What's the coolest weapon Three gets to wield?

► Bubba is the most fun because it's a character. It's not that it only shoots, but it also doesn't shoot. It bounces people off walls. The batteries run out. It's a lot of fun to interact with, while the rest of them (the guns) just make people die. Bubba is not that simple, kind of like Three himself.



Brought



To Book

JASON ARNOPP

Don't be so sure... The author tells us why it's best to keep an open mind

Words by Jonathan Wright // Photography by Joe Branston

In a world where Katie Hopkins makes a living as a columnist, it's fair to say that being firm in one's opinions is having a moment. As Jason Arnopp reflects, this isn't necessarily great for our wider culture. "When was the last time you saw someone on Twitter say, 'Actually, I don't know what to think about this issue now, let me get back to you?'" he says, a rhetorical question that's also posed in his new novel, *The Last Days Of Jack Sparks*.

The book, he says, was born when the idea of someone becoming obsessed with a YouTube video, and setting out to find its makers, collided with thinking about the sheer amount of certainty you find displayed on social media. "Everyone has a firm opinion on everything, every minute of every day," says Arnopp. "Perhaps because the world is steadily becoming more chaotic, I think we respond by clinging to certainty all the more, which most likely means clinging to extremes."

Which brings us to Jack Sparks. Arnopp's creation is a self-serving journalist, broadcaster ("even though no one really knows what broadcaster means"), and the author of such books as *Jack Sparks On A Pogo Stick* and *Jack Sparks On Drugs*. An outspoken atheist with a love of excess, Sparks is "a kind of cross between Richard Dawkins, Louis Theroux and Hunter S Thompson".

THE EXORCISM FACTOR

In the novel, he's a man on a mission to "debunk the supernatural". "This gave me the perfect excuse to include some of my most cherished ghostly behaviour, and exorcism really seemed to fit the bill," says Arnopp, a man who knows his 1970s horror movies. "Perhaps because it ties so well into the theme of certainty, or the lack of certainty. Exorcism is a great example of not knowing what's going on in someone else's head. So the sceptic Jack attends the exorcism of a 13-year-old girl, practically having decided what he's going to write before he gets there. When he bursts out laughing during the rite, certain parties are displeased..."

The title of the novel offers some clues as to what ensues. But there's a risk with such a plot: this is a supernatural thriller that could easily have come across as trying too hard to locate the pop culture zeitgeist. Praise for the novel from the likes of Mike Carey, Sarah Lotz, Christopher Brookmyre and Chuck Wendig suggests this hasn't occurred. Alan Moore, no less, has called the book "a magnificent millennial nightmare".

"I still haven't quite got my head around that," says Arnopp, who has also given a copy of the book to the comedian Stewart Lee after one of his gigs. "God knows if

he'll ever even read it, but just as I felt with Alan Moore, I'll be happy if the book ends its days propping up a wonky table in his home."

LEAP OF FAITH

If this Sparks-like awareness of the value of famous people praising your book suggests Arnopp understands how the media game works, that's certainly not coincidental. (Full disclosure: Arnopp is a former *SFX* contributor.) He started his writing career as a rock journalist.

"I had a great time, jetting around the place, drinking booze and interviewing rock stars," he says. "I worked my way from freelancer to acting editor of *Kerrang!*, before ultimately realising that what I really wanted to do was dive into the ridiculous waters of fiction. That was a big, painful decision, not taken lightly. From that point on, I earned quite a bit less money, but was generally happier."

His first novel, the franchise offering *Friday The 13th: Hate-Kill-Repeat* (Black Flame) was published in 2005. "God only knows how well that book reads these days, but I do know I went all-out with the gore and the body count," he says. "That thing now sells for stupidly high sums online, because it never saw a reprint." Subsequently, Arnopp also "wheedled" his way into *Doctor Who* tie-in fiction for BBC Audio and Big Finish, "which was tremendous fun for this lifelong *Who* fanboy and nice for the CV", but he always wanted to create work set in his own fictional worlds.

Working with film director Dan Turner was key here, as the duo collaborated on two short films and a supernatural horror feature, *Stormhouse* (2011). "We lived in a Suffolk military base," says Arnopp, recalling the shoot. "Every night, I slept on an airbed on the floor of one character's office. It was utterly remote and pitch black at night, with hardly any phone reception. Great for the actors, because it really did feel like a genuinely haunted military base."

Arnopp also went down the route of self-publishing his fiction, including "A Sincere Warning About The Entity In Your Home", "a short story which is set in the home of whoever reads it". All this activity attracted the attention of literary agent Oli Munson, who also represents Lauren Beukes, and a two-book deal with Orbit was the result.

Arnopp is working on the second book now. Jack Sparks doesn't feature, "because he's dead", but the idea of eldritch happenings is again to the fore. Arnopp: "It once again bounces around inside the supernatural thriller zone, but in a completely different way." ●

The Last Days Of Jack Sparks is published by Orbit.

Biodata

Occupation

→ Novelist

Born

→ 1 June 1977

From

→ Lowestoft, Suffolk

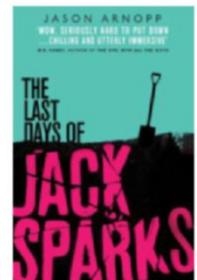
Greatest Hits

→ *Jack Sparks*

is Arnopp's first original novel for a major publisher. Find out more about Sparks at: www.jacksparks.co.uk

Random Fact

→ Arnopp was once held at gunpoint by security guards in Vatican City, after he and a photographer took black metal band Cradle Of Filth there for a photo shoot.





**“EVERYONE
HAS A FIRM
OPINION ON
EVERYTHING,
EVERY MINUTE
OF EVERY DAY”**

The Prisoner

“I am not a number, I am a free man!”
Robert Fairclough revisits Patrick McGoohan’s
timeless revolutionary classic

Imagine Peter Capaldi being given millions of pounds to make his own TV series. It’s partly his idea, he’s going to star in it, write some of the episodes, direct several and he’s also the executive producer: artistically, what he says goes. It’s all been decided on a handshake – no contracts – and Capaldi has absolute carte blanche to do what he wants.

Unlikely? In the regimented TV industry of the 21st century most probably, but in 1966 that’s exactly what happened. At that time, one of UK TV’s most popular stars was Patrick McGoohan, a compelling Irish-American performer, with acting credentials as varied as Henrik Ibsen’s gravely philosophical play *Brand* and the tough movie thriller *Hell Drivers* (1957). By the mid-’60s McGoohan, along with Roger Moore in *The Saint*, was the top international export of the Independent Television Company (the international arm of ITV’s London and Midlands network, Associated TeleVision). McGoohan starred as John Drake, the laconic spy hero of ITC’s film series *Danger Man*, which had made \$8.25 million for the company in worldwide sales.

Unsurprisingly, McGoohan had a lot of clout with ITC. When he told his flamboyant boss Lew Grade he wanted to leave *Danger Man* to diversify into other areas of television, with his own series and production company Everyman Films, the ITC chairman listened. Considering McGoohan’s new idea “so crazy it might just work”, Grade indeed gave his protégé the go-ahead and funding on the strength of a handshake.

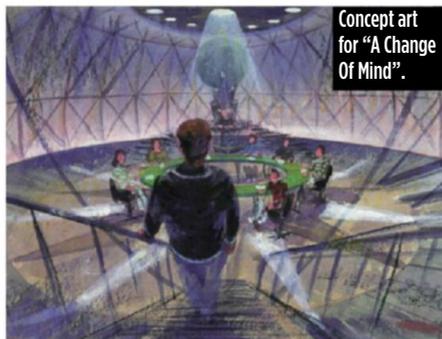
“The cost was £75,000 an episode – £1.2 million in today’s terms”



McGoohan’s concept had been in his head for a long time. “Since maybe about seven years old,” he revealed in the 1983 documentary *Six Into One: The Prisoner File*. He was fascinated by “The individual against the establishment, the individual against bureaucracy, the individual against so many laws that were all confining.” McGoohan’s social observations were given a structured context by George Markstein, the journalist and writer the actor had employed to help him develop his own projects. With a detailed knowledge of espionage, Markstein knew of a World War II holding facility for spies who were a security risk, Inverlair Lodge in Scotland. This became the basis for the new series and gave the show its title – *The Prisoner*.

If McGoohan’s creative freedom was a television first for an actor, the series boasted several others. *The Prisoner* was given a striking visual look by a six-week location shoot in the North Wales coastal village of Portmeirion, an enchanting architectural folly founded by Sir Clough Williams-Ellis in 1925. A colourful, disorientating mixture of buildings that had represented China, Italy, the Middle East and Switzerland was ideal for a stylised open prison that could be anywhere in the world. Add to that the construction of futuristic interior sets at MGM’s film studios in Borehamwood and it’s easy to believe that *The Prisoner* was the most expensive British television series made in the 1960s. The average cost was £75,000 an episode – over a staggering £1.2 million in today’s terms.

The series’ most significant innovation was its deliberate ambiguity. While enigmatic, surreal dramas like *Twin Peaks*, *Lost* and *Life On Mars* are familiar today, in the 1960s such an approach was usually the preserve of the occasional TV play, avant-garde cinema or literature. →



Concept art for “A Change Of Mind”.

© REX/ITC (2)



Patrick McGooan played his cards right in creating a television masterwork.

An unnamed ex-spy held among a population of people with numbers instead of names – McGoohan's character was given the designation Number 6 – pitched against a hi-tech prison state called “the Village” whose controllers remained unknown, had more in common with Franz Kafka and George Orwell's persecuted antiheroes Josef K and Winston Smith than TV action men; like his literary predecessors, Number 6 often wouldn't win.

The content of the stories was no less challenging. For *The Prisoner's* writers, the blank canvas of the Village was an allegorical playground for different aspects of 1960s' society. The Cold War between the capitalist West and the communist East, political satire, education, hallucinogenic drugs, popular psychology, consumerism, modern art and pop music – none other than The Beatles – all featured prominently. Together with *The Avengers*, *The Prisoner* was also one of the first TV series to be self-aware, with quoted influences as diverse as chess, Westerns and, notably, Shakespeare. “There was room in *The Prisoner* for drawing on other sources as it wasn't into profound reality or hard-edged modern realism,” observed Roger Parkes, writer of the episode “A Change Of Mind”. “It was a fantasy, and fantasies do that all the time.”



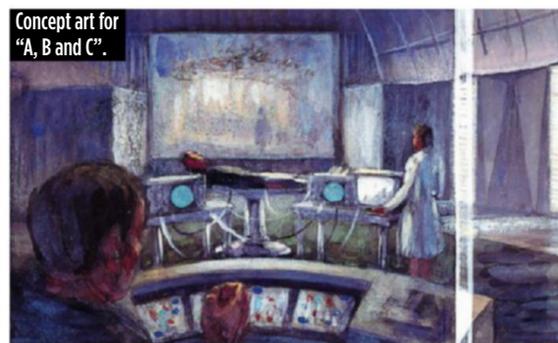
At a time when computers were almost exclusively in the hands of governments or corporations, new technology was central to the ahead-of-its-time, 24-hour surveillance culture of the Village, reinforcing the sense of paranoia emerging in the 1960s about society being controlled by hidden forces. The concealed cameras, streamlined security control room, bubble-like Rover guardian and experiments in the hospital also reflected the sense of unease in contemporary sci-fi, from *Doctor Who's* Cybermen to HAL 9000 in *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), about the direction in which science was heading.

If there was huge potential in *The Prisoner's* format, McGoohan was concerned that stretching it to ITC's usual package of 26 episodes would exhaust the concept (and him). Originally favouring a seven-part miniseries, he apparently compromised on 17; unfortunately, this increased workload is where problems began. Don Chaffey, the director McGoohan worked with on the initial Portmeirion filming, left after a disagreement. Two others, Roy Rossoti and Robert Lynn, were sacked by McGoohan, while Robert Asher, a third director who was let go, was allowed to keep his credit. McGoohan replaced three of them, adding to the pressure he was under.

There was also tension with Markstein. The script editor was



McGoohan multi-tasking on final episode “Fall Out”.



Concept art for “A, B and C”.



McGoohan shoots his two minutes of footage for the “Do Not Forsake Me...” episode.

THE PRISONER 2009

Village life revisited

→ In November 2009, a revival of *The Prisoner* co-produced by ITV and AMC began transmission. The eminent cast was led by Jim Caviezel as 6 and Ian McKellen as 2.

Reviews were mixed. Arguably, the revival would have been better received if it hadn't been designed as a sequel. This was most obvious in the character of 93, an old man clearly meant to be McGoohan's character (9 - 3 = 6). *The Prisoner's* co-creator was offered the small role, but as 93 was described as “a drunk” with “Stage Seven mental unwellness”, perhaps it's not surprising that he declined.



privately aggrieved at his lack of credit on the series he'd co-created, as well as McGoohan's rejection of two scripts he'd approved. Unhappy with the bizarre direction in which, he felt, McGoohan was steering *The Prisoner*, Markstein left after the first production block of 13 episodes. “McGoohan became a prisoner of the series and it's never nice to see that happen to a human being,” he said in 1983. “The combination of ambition, frustration, wanting to be a writer, director, actor... It did something to him that wasn't very good and it was reflected in the series.”

Markstein was specifically talking about the final story “Fall Out”, which brought *The Prisoner* to an end in the most extreme episode yet. Writing and directing a psychedelic trial, McGoohan fused fact with fiction: the revelation that the Village controller Number 1 was the insane alter ego of Number 6 and therefore the ultimate gaoler – “Get rid of Number 1 and we are free,” as McGoohan put it – was a clear parallel with his position as the series' now sole, exhausted creative force. A profound statement for a family TV series to make, “Fall Out” left viewers baffled, angry or both – the ATV switchboard was jammed with complaining phone calls – and a subdued

© REX/ITC (5)



Sunny day in Wales shocker! Location shooting in Portmeirion.



Never work with children or Rovers...



THE LAUGHING PRISONER

Down The Tube

→ The most memorable *Prisoner* spoof was originally shown in April 1987 as part of the Channel 4 music programme *The Tube*. Presenter Jools Holland resigned and woke up in the Village as Number 7, accompanied by Number 2 (Stephen Fry), Number 3 (nonsense-speaking Stanley Unwin) and, thanks to clips from *The Prisoner*, Number 6 himself.

Co-written by enthusiasts Holland and Fry, *The Laughing Prisoner* was filmed on location in Portmeirion in a cold January 1987. Popular bands of the day Magnum, Siouxsie and the Banshees and XTC were seen performing at landmarks such as the Bristol Colonnade (the bandstand in *The Prisoner*).

interest in vintage television and, in 1983, *The Prisoner* was broadcast again by Channel 4. At the same time, the series' anti-establishment message and striking imagery has been referenced and spoofed by everyone from punk band The Clash to car maker Renault.

Crucially, *The Prisoner's* most enduring legacy

is that its mix of the intellectual – serious themes like freedom, identity and the ethics of science – and the populist – action sequences – is now a staple of modern fantasy TV series like *Colony* and *Orphan Black*.

Interest in reviving the series has never really gone away. After years of false starts, a flawed TV resurrection took place in 2009 (see left), and, on the eve of *The Prisoner's* 50th anniversary, director Ridley Scott has expressed interest in (another) potential big-screen remake.

But the quality of the original is what keeps people coming back, as is evident from a new series of audio plays set in the '60s Village. When *The Prisoner* was first shown, *A Clockwork Orange's* writer Anthony Burgess defined the appeal of the series when he observed: "It is Orwellianism transferred to the world of the [TV] commercial in which machines work beautifully, everybody is on a kind of holiday and wears a blazer with a redcoat number... and the interrogators are as jolly as the commercial priests of the washing machine or wrapped cheddar." ●

Further information on Patrick McGoohan and *The Prisoner* can be found at www.theunmutual.co.uk.

“ A profound statement for a family TV series, the final episode left viewers baffled and angry ”

McGoohan departed for Los Angeles and career as a guest star in movies and TV. Apart from 1973's musical feature film *Catch My Soul* (which also had a lukewarm critical reception) he would never have such control over a project again. A year later, Everyman Films' short career finished in the bankruptcy courts with debts of over £60,000.

Time, however, has proved McGoohan's instincts right. *The Prisoner* was also ahead of its time as one of the first British TV series to be made in colour; the ITV networks changed to the colour system at the beginning of the 1970s and when late-night repeats of the series began in the middle of the decade, they led in 1977 to the establishment of one of the UK's earliest and longest-running TV-based fan organisations, Six of One, which since then has helped keep interest in the series alive. The 1980s saw a boom in

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AUGUST
2016

edited by Ian Berriman

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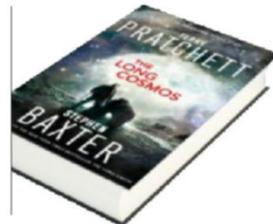
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THE CONJURING 2: THE ENFIELD CASE

→ The Warrens come to Blighty.



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KILLJOYS SEASON ONE

→ There's sexual tension aplenty in this Canadian space opera show.



108
THE LONG COSMOS

→ Terry Pratchett's last credit concludes the *Long Earth* series.

→ RATINGS EXPLAINED ★★★★★ SUPERB ★★★★★ GOOD ★★★★★ AVERAGE ★★★ POOR ★★ TERRIBLE

CINEMA

THE CONJURING 2: THE ENFIELD CASE

An American Exorcist In London



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

15 | 134 minutes

▶ Director **James Wan**

▶ Cast **Patrick Wilson, Vera Farmiga, Frances O'Connor, Madison Wolfe**

“I like to hear them scream,” gurgles the ghoul plaguing the poor old Hodgson family in *The Conjuring 2*, a sentiment that director James Wan clearly shares. Despite declaring that he was finished with horror after 2013’s *Insidious: Chapter 2* and *The Conjuring*, this sequel sees him return to the genre where he cut his teeth with a film as packed with jump scares and grinning demons as any of his others.

If you saw the first *Conjuring*, you’ll know what to expect. A family is being terrorised by an unquiet spirit, so the ghostbusting Warrens, Ed (Patrick Wilson) and Lorraine (Vera Farmiga), come to the rescue. All of the ingredients that made the first film so satisfyingly spooky are present

and correct: a creepy house, a horde of cute wide-eyed moppets, a soundtrack laced with loud bangs, and a smorgasbord of malevolent ghosts. The main difference this time is the location, as the Warrens are dragged across the Atlantic to a grimy council house in north London.

There, 11-year-old Janet Hodgson (Madison Wolfe) has started talking in the voice of a crotchety 73-year-old man and levitating around her bedroom. Her brother Billy (Benjamin Haigh) is also being harassed by things that go bump in the night, while the rest of the family has to put up with chairs and tables scooting around of their own accord.

As hauntings go, it’s pretty standard, and it should be an easy win for the Warrens, but they’ve got other problems to worry about: Lorraine’s having visions of Ed’s death, while he’s struggling to cope with the negative press they’ve received after their involvement with the Amityville hoax.



Every time she turned her back, another cross appeared.



“So if you just sign here, we can start your PPI claim.”

Plenty of drama there, then, and the whopping two-and-a-quarter hour runtime means there’s time to deal with everyone’s personal demons as well as the actual ones. Even relatively minor characters, like British investigator Maurice Gross (Simon McBurney), get space to share their stories. But while all that heartfelt stuff does add some colour, it tends not to advance the plot. Instead, it slows down the action, making the film unwieldy and bloated; the pace screeches to more than one frustrating halt before really getting down to business.

“A miasma of déjà vu hangs over the whole thing”

What’s more annoying is that Wan has recycled some of the best scares from the first film. They still work, just nowhere near as well as they did the first time. There’s a miasma of déjà vu hanging over the



whole thing, because the story of the Enfield poltergeist is so well known. Wan's version changes things slightly, most notably by ramping up the stakes of the final showdown, but it's not enough to make the fate of the Hodgsons feel fresh or interesting.

Not that that necessarily matters, because it's the Warrens we're really supposed to care about here, not their poor tormented clients. Patrick Wilson has worked with Wan on four horror films to date, and it's clear why he keeps coming back: he gets all the big action scenes, as well as the best

jokes and juiciest emotional moments. Farmiga, too, gives it all she's got, switching gears effortlessly from adoring wife to terrified mother to kickass demon hunter. The two of them make a convincing couple, and their partnership of equals – makes for a nice contrast with all the hell that's breaking loose around them.

That sweetness does occasionally tip over into schmaltziness, unfortunately, and there are a couple of moments that are more cringeworthy than heartwarming. At its best, *The*

Conjuring 2 manages to be both scary and sweet; at its worst, well, it feels kind of tired. Though all of the same ingredients that made up the first film can be found here, they're definitely starting to taste a little bit stale. James Wan's unerring instinct for scares means there'll be no shortage of screams at the cinema, but after this outing, will anyone really be screaming for more? Maybe this ought to be the last time anyone tries to dust off the Warrens' casebook. **Sarah Dobbs**

i Composer Joseph Bishara appears briefly as a demon. He also played the demon in *Insidious* and the witch in *The Conjuring*.

MIND
PROBE

FRANCES O'CONNOR

Peggy Hodgson in
The Conjuring 2



How did you approach playing a real-life character?

→ The Peggy in the script is quite different from the real Peggy. When you hear her in interviews, she's very level-headed and seems like she was never scared, so that didn't serve the story well!

What scares you?

→ The dark! Sometimes I'll be in the shower and my son will turn the lights off as a joke – I hate that!

Ever had a supernatural experience?

→ I did this road trip with my husband once, and we stopped at Oxford, Mississippi. There was just one dodgy hotel, so we stayed there. When I walked into the room I got a horrible feeling. We went to sleep and I dreamed there was this guy in a Confederate uniform. He was reading my tarot cards and was all smiley, and I got the worst feeling... I woke up and I could feel my husband behind me, but I opened my eyes and he was on the opposite side of the bed. I woke my husband and said, "There's someone in the bed!" So we turned the lights on and there was nothing. Next morning we went for a walk and a plaque outside said it was built on the site of a Civil War battle... **Rosie Fletcher**

GETTY

CINEMA



"Two Force Awakens tickets please. The 2D version."

GODS OF EGYPT

Horus show



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

12A | 127 minutes

▶ Director Alex Proyas

▶ Cast Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, Brenton Thwaites, Elodie Yung, Gerard Butler

◆ **It must have seemed a good idea on papyrus.** Take a *Game Of Thrones* star, pit him against the lead of *300*, add a love resurrection subplot to remind everyone the same director made *The Crow*, then sit back and count the gold. Unfortunately, the only gold *Gods Of Egypt's* going to be associated with will be on multiple Razzies.

The plot is... familiar. Before King Osiris (Bryan Brown) has the chance to coronate his successor – son Horus (Nikolaj Coster-Waldau) – evil uncle Set (Gerard Butler) stages a coup. Horus banishes himself, before teaming with a fantasy trope named Bek

(Brenton Thwaites) to fight his way back. It's basically *The Lion King*, but less realistic.

An unoriginal plot is far from the only problem. The CGI is overwhelming, constant and distracting. When Butler does one of his shouty speeches, it's tough to take seriously cos there's a giant cartoon scarab attached to a chariot fidgeting in the background. And the performances are all terrible. Elodie Yung somehow makes lines like "Don't keep the Queen of Egypt waiting" sound unconvincing.

Alex Proyas attacked US critics for *Egypt's* bad reviews, but we have no idea where his passion comes from. It's embarrassing to watch, let alone have your name on. Avoid like the Ten Plagues.

Sam Ashurst

i *Gods Of Egypt* shares over 200 cast and crew members with *Mad Max: Fury Road*. If only it had the same director.

THE NEON DEMON

Supermodel Superficial



▶ **RELEASED 8 JULY**

18 | TBC minutes

▶ Director Nicolas Winding Refn

▶ Cast Elle Fanning, Karl Glusman, Jena Malone, Bella Heathcote

◆ **"Beauty isn't everything, it's the only thing,"** says a designer in Nicolas Winding Refn's latest, a horror movie set in the LA fashion industry that features home invasion, cannibalism and lesbian necrophilia. It's a philosophy that informs the film itself, which is every bit as fabulous-looking and empty as the world it depicts.

Jesse (Elle Fanning) is the latest

small-town girl attracted by the bright lights of LA. Staying in a ratty motel run by the lecherous Hank (Keanu Reeves, surprisingly effective), she approaches a modelling agency and is told she has what it takes to be "great". The agency's top snapper agrees to shoot Jesse; he of course looks like a vampire who might puncture her neck with his cheekbones. Such attention is enough to get models Gigi (Bella Heathcote) and Sarah (Abbey Lee) accentuating their pouts. Jeopardy, it seems, is everywhere she turns. But Jesse warns that she is stronger than she looks, and as her dreams cement into reality, she hardens...

Image after image wows. It's the high-end style of *Drive* and *Only God Forgives* taken to the nth degree, and there's an argument that in *The Neon Demon*, form is content – vivid exteriors, vapid interiors.

Some games of dominoes can get quite violent.



It's a persuasive theory but also rather lets Refn off the hook.

That hollow heart would be more tolerable if *The Neon Demon* disturbed as much as it dazzles. There's nothing here to match the soul-shaking terror of Bergman's *Persona* or the foreboding of Lynch's *Mulholland Drive*, key influences both. Still, at least Refn elicits nervous laughter where he

can't score genuine scares. When the graphic scenes do finally arrive, you just know that the arch prankster is giggling behind the camera. Crucially, we laugh with him, the OTT gore and puerility of his palpable glee in smashing taboos proving infectious. **Jamie Graham**

i While filming, Fanning discovered she likes the taste of movie blood. "It's very cough syrupy. I want to put it on pancakes."

“Image after image wows”

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES: OUT OF THE SHADOWS

Pizza the action



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

12A | 111 minutes

▶ Director **Dave Green**

▶ Cast **Megan Fox, Stephen Amell, Alan Ritchson, Will Arnett**

▶ **Pizza is the ultimate comfort food.** Easy to make, even easier to consume, there's a reason it's such a popular dish. That said, there is room to go wrong. There's an almost infinite amount of toppings you can sprinkle on top – mess up the combination, and your pie will be inedible. Which brings us to *Out Of The Shadows*, a pizza with a lot of toppings.

It contains live-action debuts for alien warlord Krang and his robot-shaped transport device,

mad scientist Baxter Stockman, thugs Bebop and Rocksteady – all iconic characters, much-loved by fans of the '80s cartoon. There's a new take on vigilante Casey Jones, alongside a returning Shredder and his Foot clan. Reporter April O'Neil and her cameraman Vern are back. Oh, and those four titular turtles (and their rat dad Splinter) also feature in a scene or two.

It's a lot to cram into two hours, but director Dave Green (mostly) manages it – even if the base sags a bit in the squeeze to make it all fit. The story's the first thing to melt, with character motivations sacrificed to make everything connect. The Turtles want acceptance, Casey Jones wants Bebop and Rocksteady, Krang

wants to invade Earth, Shredder wants to help. Everyone non-green is interchangeable, the Foot can't fight civilians (let alone the Turtles), and nothing really makes sense.

Performance-wise, Megan Fox must have looked the wrong way when the wind changed, freezing her in a permanent pout. Bebop and Rocksteady are cartoons before they mutate. Stephen Amell's Casey is earnest, but doesn't have much to do. The Turtles are the best thespians, with CGI geniuses throwing some neat details into their performances.

There are a lot of nostalgic nods,

“If you're feeling lazy, the film's fun to watch”

mostly in the form of background Easter eggs, including a couple of key music cues. The unexpectedly faithful renditions of the new guys probably also count as fan-service – it's as close to the source material as a Michael Bay production gets. Meanwhile, the action setpieces are so goofy you probably won't be shocked to find out that Green blocked some of them by smashing official action figures together (seriously, he did).

One word of warning: if you're thinking of taking young children, there are a couple of surprisingly scary scenes, including a mutation that could have appeared in *An American Werewolf In London*.

If you're feeling lazy, the film's fun and uncomplicated – just like pizza. Neither's good for you though. **Sam Ashurst**

i Judith Hoag, who played April O'Neil in 1990's *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, shot a cameo, but it was cut.



“Good lord, it's Janette Krankie!”

THE DARKNESS



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

15 | 93 minutes

▶ **A family come home from a trip to the Grand Canyon with more than they bargained for in this latest Blumhouse horror – a supernatural curse.**

A greater commitment to exploring the family tension exacerbated by the son's autism and daughter's bulimia might have helped make up for the unimaginative scare tactics, but these potentially interesting themes are dropped entirely for generic mumbo-jumbo about ancient civilisations and inter-dimensional demons (that the filmmakers take far too seriously). **Stephen Puddicombe**

ALSO+OUT



Three movies to quickly tell you about which we didn't manage to see before going to press. The big one is 20-years-later *ID4* follow-up **INDEPENDENCE DAY: RESURGENCE** (23 June). On 15 July Blumhouse Productions horror franchise *The Purge* returns, with a Presidential front-runner vowing to eliminate the annual 12-hour murder-thon in **THE PURGE: ELECTION YEAR**. Finally, internet misogynists will need their comfort blankies on the same date, as a new all-female **GHOSTBUSTERS** line-up destroys the very foundations of their belief system.



The dentists' new advert wasn't universally loved.

THE WITCH

A Fairytale Of New England

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** 18 JULY (Blu-ray/
DVD)/4 JULY (download)

2016 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD/download

▶ Director Robert Eggers

▶ Cast Anya Taylor-Joy, Ralph Ineson,
Kate Dickie, Harvey Scrimshaw

❖ **When was the last time** you were remotely disturbed or disquieted by the idea of a witch? Decades of comical representation in popular culture, with all the associated paraphernalia of broomsticks and pointy Halloween hats, has thoroughly diminished their threat – no one wakes up screaming thinking of Grotbags, do they? Well, writer/director Robert Eggers' near-perfect debut might just rebalance the scales.

It unfolds in a time period explored surprisingly rarely by horror: the 17th century. Ralph Ineson plays William, father of a family who, after being cast out of a Puritan settlement in New England, must make their own way in the world, and who make the fateful decision to build a farm close to some sinister woods.

It's a family that believes devoutly and unquestioningly in sin, evil and the wrath of God, and over the next hour and a half their faith is tested to the limit as they're beset by catastrophe after catastrophe. First their baby boy disappears, impossibly snatched

away in the space of a second by some unseen force. Then young Caleb gets lost in the woods, beguiled by a buxom beauty. Then there are the twins, whose talk of communicating with the family goat, Black Phillip, may be more than just a childish game...

It's a dark fairytale, essentially – as the film's subtitle, *A New-England Folktale*, acknowledges. But it's one which feels utterly authentic. That's largely down to Eggers' script, which takes great pains to make the characters speak as the people of the time would have, with Biblical allusions left hanging in the air, and much of the dialogue drawn from journals, diaries and court records. You would have thought all the resultant "thy", "thee" and "thou"-ing would be offputting. Anything but. After a while you adjust to the olde worlde register – just as people do to, say, the urban demotic of *The Wire* – and it achieves a sort of rough-hewn musicality.

The Witch looks stunning too. Eggers and cinematographer Jarin Blaschke present us with painterly compositions that are remarkably unshowy; often scenes are shown straight-on, symmetrically balanced, with a Kubrickian stateliness. They eschew flashy cutting – at times it's almost as if the film is trying to stare you out.



"I hate predictive text!"



The turnout for the annual barn dance was disappointing.

The characters are regularly dwarfed by oppressive vistas of gloomy clouds and densely tangled branches. And nature's menace is magnified by Mark Korven's haunting score, heavily reminiscent of the work of Polish modernist composer Krzysztof Penderecki, whose walls of discordant violin shrieks were such an essential component of the success of *The Shining*. It's as if the sensation of rising panic has been transcribed in musical notation.

Performances are excellent all round, in particular from Anya Taylor-Joy as teenage daughter

“It's a dark fairytale that feels utterly authentic”

Thomasin, a girl on the verge of womanhood whose habitual scapegoating by her parents eventually threatens to have fatal consequences, and Ralph Ineson as the prideful patriarch struggling



to keep his family from disintegrating. Though Ineson has achieved a slightly higher profile of late thanks to roles in *Harry Potter* and *Game Of Thrones*, he remains for most people one of those television faces/voice-over artists whose beaky features and rockery of Yorkshire vowels are instantly recognisable, but whose name is always just out of reach. Here he's a revelation. You'll never think of him as Finchy from *The Office* again.

True, there's nothing staggeringly original about *The Witch*. It doesn't reinvent or

revolutionise the genre. But neither does it crank out old clichés. When Caleb returns, naked and babbling like someone possessed, you brace yourselves for half an hour of *Exorcist* homage – but thankfully, it never comes. There are no corpses suddenly dropping into shot, no sinister shapes flitting across the front of frame and – until the very final scene – no flashy visual effects... just fear of the unknown, and a heart-squeezing, constantly escalating, crushing sense of looming disaster, as a family is torn apart by their paranoid terror and

the power of pure evil. The best horror film of 2016? It's difficult to imagine a better one coming along.

➤ **Extras** It's not often that bonus features drop off on their journey across the Atlantic, but disappointingly this is one case where they have. Buy the region one and you get director's commentary, a short featurette, a screening Q&A and a gallery of designs. The UK release, we're assured, has nothing. A curse upon those responsible! **Ian Berriman**

i The production design team built the farm using the same tools and techniques they would've had in the 17th century.

17TH CENTURY SHOCKS

More Puritanism-period productions



WITCHFINDER GENERAL

• Michael Reeves' bleak film – shockingly violent for the time (1968) – follows witchhunter Matthew Hopkins' reign of terror in East Anglia during the English Civil War. Vincent Price dialled down the camp for once in the starring role.

BLOOD ON SATAN'S CLAW

• The ploughing-up of a strange skull leads to an outbreak of pagan sacrifice and sexual violence among the young folk of a nearby village in Piers Haggard's sublime 1971 folk horror.

TWINS OF EVIL

• Hammer Films' 1971 production stars Peter Cushing as the stern leader of a brotherhood of puritan witch-hunters, who eventually has to decapitate his own niece after she's turned into a vampire. Bummer.

A FIELD IN ENGLAND

• Ben Wheatley melded historical drama, hallucinatory psychedelia and black comedy in this black-and-white 2013 release, in which five men digging for buried treasure turn against one another.





For some reason, *Passport Control* wasn't keen on letting them through.

DRINKING GAME

Knock back a beverage of your choice every time...

- 🍷 Luke Macfarlane's D'avin has his shirt off.
- 🍷 Two of the three leads share an uncomfortable moment of sexual tension or rivalry.
- 🍷 D'avin has a traumatic flashback to his military past.
- 🍷 Dutch's sinister former mentor Khylen suddenly pops up out of nowhere.
- 🍷 A character makes a religious reference to "the trees" or "the woods".
- 🍷 The characters have a drink themselves, in the "Old Town" bar.

KILLJOYS Season One

More fun than it sounds

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

▶ 2015 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Creator Michelle Lovretta

▶ Cast Hannah John-Kamen, Luke Macfarlane, Aaron Ashmore

🔗 **This Canadian-made space opera** is a very pleasant surprise, overcoming its financial limitations and silly name to deliver a smart, engaging show. Its greatest asset is its central trio of "Killjoy" bounty hunters – one kickass woman and two very different brothers, both with conflicted feelings for her. Together, they motor a strong series arc, intriguing worldbuilding, and a show with adult depths behind the fights and amusing one-liners.

It takes place in a planetary system where all the characters are spacefaring "humans" (though so far it's unclear if they actually came from Earth). Much of the show takes place around two moons. Westerley is a Dredd-ish urban setting of filthy alleys, dark bars and violent cops. Leith is a green farming environment, but with its own hidden violence under the pastoral surface.

The Killjoys are given specific missions, from mundane deliveries to terminating fugitives, and they're supposedly independent of the authoritarian "Company" which rules this part of space. The show starts with two Killjoys, Dutch (Hannah John-Kamen), a highly capable fighter, and John (Aaron Ashmore), an ex-thief

turned hacker who has a platonic, brotherly rapport with her. That gets disrupted when the two run across D'avin (Luke Macfarlane), John's long-lost, estranged and hunky brother, who's haunted by his spell in the army. After initial tensions, D'avin teams up with them, but issues arise – we doubt you need a diagram... Meanwhile, Dutch is haunted by her own personal ghost: an urbanely sinister guru called Khylen who taught her to kill.

Killjoys has blatant budget issues, with sets often looking like barely-redressed buildings; the Dredd-ish city looks more grotty than dystopian. But in fairness, the action also moves to more appealing locations, such as the palatial mansions of the show's

aristocrats. Another exterior looks like a *Doctor Who* gravel pit, but still proves effective in a strong episode about gutsy hunted women.

Less good is a fight in the first episode, where Dutch theoretically shows off her hand-to-hand prowess. It looks embarrassingly feeble, and the slow-mo and pop backing track reek of cheese. But the fights improve, leading up to a savage episode for the trio where things get horribly personal and believably threatening.

Generally, the stories are interesting and sometimes impressive in going to dark or surprising places to advance the characters (and often not in healthy ways). Notably, it's a show about sexual dysfunction, with heroes who fear intimacy with anyone they actually care about. Or as a sisterly Dutch scolds John, "Stop being friends with everyone you see with – it's just weird."

🔗 **Extras None.** **Andrew Osmond**

i If you missed season one when it first aired, better catch up quick: season two starts airing on Syfy on 1 July in the US.

Beryl's raincoat was both too large and too rigid.



THE FOREST

Going barking mad

★★★★☆ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2016 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD/download

▶ Director Jason Zada

▶ Cast Natalie Dormer, Taylor Kinney, Yukiyoishi Ozawa, Eoin Macken

◆ **Once again, the siren call** of cheap locations has drawn horror filmmakers back into the woods. This unimaginatively titled effort does at least have an interesting cultural phenomenon to draw upon: the enduring popularity of a Japanese forest called Aokigahara as a suicide spot.

Natalie Dormer plays two roles – both Sara, in search of her missing twin, and troubled sibling Jess – and makes a decent fist of distinguishing them. Debutant director Jason Zada has an eye for sinister details: close-ups of fungi, snails and gnarled roots. And for a while the script keeps us guessing

as to whether Aiden (Taylor Kinney), the travel journalist she hooks up with en route, is all he claims to be, or whether the yurei (angry ghosts) of the forest are causing paranoid delusions. (The filmmakers do rather botch this, though – guys, no journalist ever records an interview with a dictaphone while *standing 10 feet away* from the subject.)

There are four or five decent jump scares, and a lovely moment where they manage to make an old View-Master toy sinister. But what with its mysteriously snapping twigs and *Blair Witch*-esque geographical confusion, there's just too much that feels familiar.

◆ **Extras** An eight-minute featurette; a storyboard sequence; stills gallery; trailer. **Ian Berriman**

i This isn't the first horror film set in Aokigahara: see *Forest Of The Living Dead* (2010) and *Grave Halloween* (2013).

EVOLUTION

Nightmare of la mère et la mer

★★★★☆ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2016 | 15 | DVD

▶ Director Lucile Hadžihalilović

▶ Cast Max Brebant, Roxane Duran, Julie-Marie Parmentier, Nissim Renard

◆ **Occasionally a film comes** along which seems less suited to cinemas and more to being projected on a wall in an art gallery. French director Lucile Hadžihalilović's latest is just such a film: crying out to be appraised in reverent silence while stroking your chin in contemplation.

On an island somewhere, sometime, young Nicholas sees the dead body of another boy while swimming in the ocean – but his mother is dismissive. Soon he and other boys are being taken to a gloomy hospital for injections, followed by mysterious operations. Mysteries abound: why are there

no adult men to be seen? And what, exactly, is it that the women do at night when they head off to the coastline?

It's an enigmatic, oneiric film which seems pregnant with significance but never actually gives birth to it. Instead, there's just a general sense that Hadžihalilović is picking at the scabs of taboos concerning reproduction, child sexuality and the boundaries between species. Hadžihalilović has explained that, "Sometimes when you dream, the images are neutral, but they have a real emotional charge that doesn't seem to fit. That's what I'm trying to capture." She's also spoken of never really knowing what one of her films is about when she commences making it. It seems we are watching the results of her exploration without a map.

Those results are certainly

"Yes, I can confirm that this is your hand."



strikingly eerie. Hadžihalilović makes good use of the stunning Lanzarote locations for shots of waves pounding against the rocks and underwater photography of swimming figures and sinisterly swaying fronds, while her blank-faced nurses are quietly creepy. The frustration is that there are other directors – David Cronenberg, for example, or

Jonathan Glazer (whose *Under The Skin* feels positively chatty in comparison, but which has a similarly unnerving tone) – capable of providing just such visual poetry while delivering a satisfying story at the same time.

◆ **Extras** None. **Ian Berriman**

i Hadžihalilović is married to director Gaspar Noé. She edited *Seul Contre Tous*, and helped write *Enter The Void*.

HOME ENTERTAINMENT

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES

Gore on Bennet!

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★☆☆

▶ **RELEASED 27 JUNE**

2016 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD/VOD/download

▶ Director Burr Steers

▶ Cast Lily James, Sam Riley, Sally Phillips, Matt Smith

❗ **If the existence of this silly** supernatural adaptation of her most famous book caused Jane Austen to turn over in her grave, well, that'd only be appropriate. The plot of *Pride And Prejudice And Zombies* is self-explanatory: it's the familiar story of the headstrong but penniless Lizzy Bennet (Lily James) falling in love with stern gentleman Mr Darcy (Sam Riley), except this time they

have to battle the living dead while they're at it. Surprisingly, it just about works.

Mostly that's because writer/director Burr Steers has a solid understanding of both the themes of the original novel and the appeal of Seth Grahame-Smith's zombified version. His film makes significant changes to both – the final act is completely new – but Austen's social satire is intact, as is Grahame-Smith's wacky zombie carnage. The Bennet sisters retain their original personalities, but gain advanced combat skills.

There's cleverness underscoring the dopey concept, and Steers wisely focuses on the complicated

relationships between the characters instead of the comparatively straightforward zombie slaying. Rather than replacing the emotional conflict, the physical violence heightens it, often to comic effect.

The film has a lot of fun juxtaposing period details with zombie movie clichés, too. The image of a primly dressed woman turning around to reveal the rotting face beneath her bonnet never stops being brilliantly jarring, no matter how many times it happens. And there's something irresistible about the way the Bennets produce scary-looking daggers from underneath their demure dresses. But despite the inherent absurdity of the concept, it's all played pretty straight, the actors somehow managing to deliver Austen's dialogue with straight faces even when they're chopping up the undead at the same time.

It's a shame that the horror side of things is never entirely convincing, and the climactic zombie battle is by far the least interesting part of the film. Zombies are more effective when they're wreaking havoc in stately homes than when they're swarming across the battlefield. Stapling a big action movie finale onto a comedy of manners was never going to work, though, so perhaps it's enough that the fighting eventually pushes all the characters towards their happy endings, weddings and all.

In the end, Jane Austen can rest in peace. Underneath its greying, brain-hungry exterior, *Pride And Prejudice And Zombies* is actually pretty respectful of her work. Oddly, that means Regency literature buffs will get as much (or more!) out of this madcap genre mashup as horror fans will. **Extras** Seven deleted scenes (nine minutes); four featurettes; a "mash-up" of Mr Collins's best lines; a gag reel. **Sarah Dobbs**

i Stunt choreographers made sure to give each zombie-killing Bennet sister her own distinct fighting style.



Mandy's Monday moods never changed.

BASKIN

Turkish, but no delight

★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 24 JUNE**

2016 | 18 | VOD only

▶ Director Can Evrenol

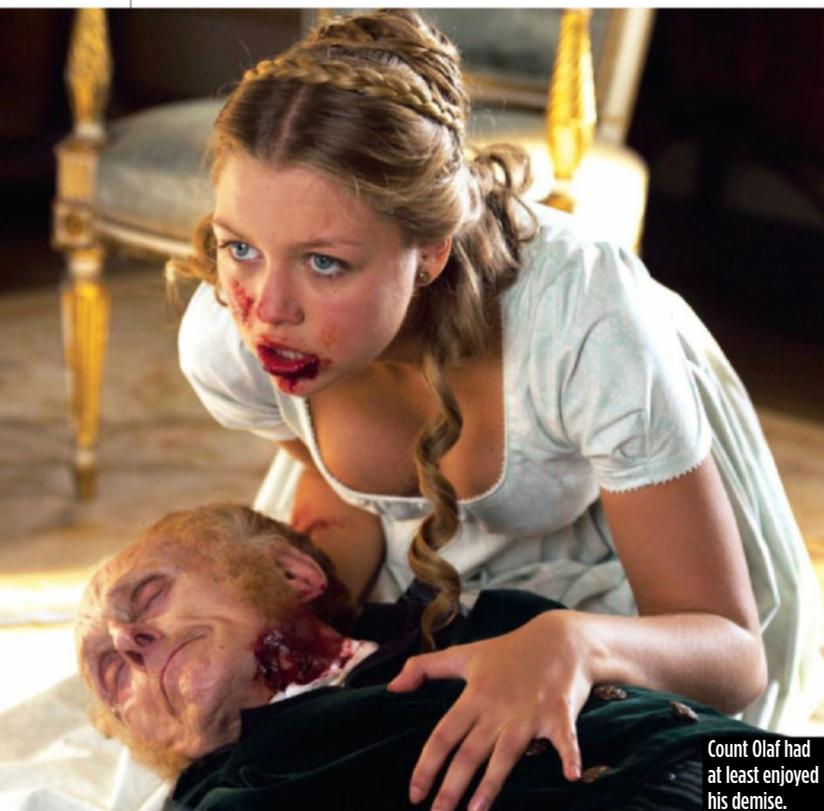
▶ Cast Gorkem Kasal, Ergun Kuyucu, Murharrem Bayrak

❗ **"Not everything has an answer,"** police chief Remzi (Ergun Kuyucu) sagely advises new recruit Arda (Gorkem Kasal), about an hour into this Turkish horror. And that's about as much of an explanation of its plot as *Baskin* is willing to offer. What begins as a story about aggressive cops bullying the locals in a backwoods community turns into something far creepier as the unit apparently descends into hell. Not a metaphorical hell, either – actual hell, complete with demons, rituals and S&M torture orgies.

But is any of it real? Contradictions and ambiguities abound, right from the opening scene, where a younger Arda eavesdrops on his parents having sex only to be confronted by a monster. It's all a dream, except maybe it isn't; either way, it sets the tone for the flood of freaky juxtapositions of sex and horror that follows.

Visually, it's great: the gore is stomach-churning, while the trippy Mario Bava-esque lighting tinges even the tamer moments with dread. Sadly, *Baskin's* wilful incoherence is its undoing. Nightmarish in the truest sense, it might seem wet-your-pants scary in the moment, but its terrors quickly evaporate in the cold light of day. **Sarah Dobbs**

i *Baskin* is based on a 2013 short of the same name. Watch it here: <http://canevrenol.com/baskin>.



Count Olaf had at least enjoyed his demise.

COCOON



Ron Howard's classic science-fiction masterpiece about a group of elderly friends who find their youth returning after encountering an Alien species

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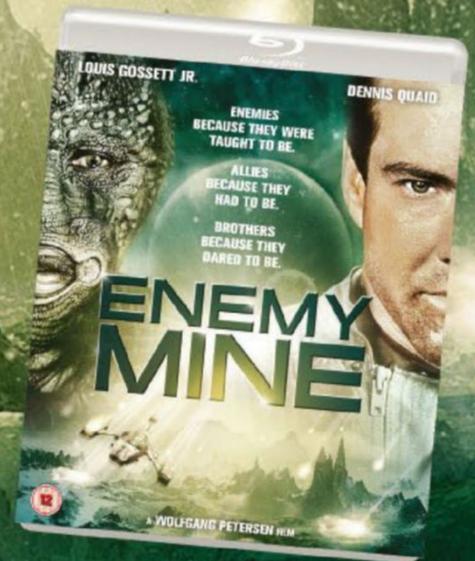
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ENEMY MINE



Dennis Quaid and Louis Gossett, Jr. star as two enemies thrown together in a hostile world where to survive they must become allies.

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HOME ENTERTAINMENT

ENEMY MINE

Give Peace A Chance

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

1985 | 12 | Blu-ray

▶ Director **Wolfgang Petersen**

▶ Cast **Dennis Quaid, Louis Gossett Jr., Bumper Robinson, Brion James**

⚡ **It's 2092 and Earth is engaged** in an interstellar war with reptilian race the Dracs. After fighter pilot Davidge (Dennis Quaid) has a dogfight with Jeriba Shigan (Louis Gossett Jr) the pair crash-land on an alien world. Initially at odds, they learn that co-operation is better, but events soon test their new bond...

The plot's been done before, both in war movies (*None But The Brave*, *Hell In The Pacific*) and in TV sci-fi (*UFO*, *Galactica 1980*) and its peaceable symbolism is clear. In *Enemy Mine* the antagonistic duo get along quickly (too quickly, perhaps), and Jeriba

picks up English at remarkable speed. These factors make it much more approachable than director Wolfgang Petersen's *Das Boot*, then, but it's not as floaty as his *NeverEnding Story*. Moments of early humour – a monster that devours a critter belches – give way to sentiment later on.

Besides the saccharine touches, the latter stages invest heavily in bombast and melodrama, and '80s action tropes fly around. Subtlety is jettisoned. We've had our fun, though, and perhaps learnt a few lessons in humanity for that war that's going to kick off in around 70 years or so...

⚡ **Extras** Just the trailer and a grainy extended scene (with German audio and English subtitles). **Russell Lewin**

i Original director Richard Loncraine was removed after several weeks' filming, with Wolfgang Petersen starting from scratch.

"You got a purty mouth, boy."



Rachel was unfaithful with her hand.

VISIONS

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2015 | 15 | DVD/download

⚡ **After a traumatic accident**, Eveleigh (Isla Fisher) moves to the country to run a vineyard. But despite her idyllic surroundings, she's having disturbing visions. Her house isn't haunted, but she's sure something worse than PTSD is going on...

Visions' impressive cast (Jim Parsons, John de Lancie, Eva Longoria) is wasted on a mystery so clumsily written it'd make Dan Brown cringe. By the time the villain's identity is revealed, you'll be cheering them on just to get it over with.

⚡ **Extras** None. **Sarah Dobbs**



Frank's home brewing was going well.

TERMINUS

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2015 | 15 | DVD

⚡ **There's not a lot that's** original about Marc Furmie's Australian-made but American-set indie about a meteorite with mysterious healing properties, but there's enough promise here to mark the writer/director out as one to keep an eye on.

Furmie crafts an absorbingly doom-laden atmosphere, and the script is admirably high-minded, but *Terminus* unfortunately feels overwhelmed by its ambitions. Still, if you ignore the cribs and cliché, it's worth a punt.

⚡ **Extras** None. **Steve O'Brien**



Bob was a nightmare at mealtimes.

HE NEVER DIED

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2015 | 18 | DVD

⚡ **He Never Died** has one brilliant idea: it casts punk rock legend Henry Rollins as Jack, an immortal cannibal just trying to get on in the world. Unfortunately it hasn't got any ideas beyond that.

The plot's a paper-thin revenge deal, as Jack first meets his estranged teenage daughter and then has to rescue her from gangsters, but more of the runtime is spent watching Rollins grumpily drinking tea or playing bingo than actually cannibalising anyone. What a waste.

⚡ **Extras** None. **Sarah Dobbs**



"Not wearing day-glo colours? Die!"

ELECTRA WOMAN & DYNA GIRL

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 4 JULY**

2016 | 15 | DVD

⚡ **This reboot of a '70s TV** show has far more heart and humour than you'd have any right to expect. *Electra Woman and Dyna Girl* are non-powered superheroes whose attempt to hit the big time threatens to drive them apart. Both characters and storyline are predictable, but they still work well and there's a warmth and energy here that means you can't help but root for the pals.

⚡ **Extras** Commentary; Comic-Con panel; Making Of; eight short bits. **Rhian Drinkwater**

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HOME ENTERTAINMENT



Gaiman: you'll never see him in yellow.

NEIL GAIMAN: DREAM DANGEROUSLY

Signing off



▶ **RELEASED 8 JULY**

2016 | N/A | Vimeo exclusive

▶ Director Patrick Meaney

▶ Interviewees Neil Gaiman, Terry Pratchett, Bill Hader, Lenny Henry

On 28 August 2013 in Inverness, Neil Gaiman completed what he's insisted will be his final signing tour. The public author has become a writer again, a man free to do what he's always loved: to "make shit up" and then scribble it down. Patrick Meaney and Jordan Rennert's entertaining documentary, filmed over the course of the tour, hunts for clues as to why Gaiman is so driven to do this.

Don't expect too many firm answers. That's not to say Gaiman is evasive. He's not, he's genial, happy to offer insights into his writing. It's more that, rather like the young Shaun Ryder (of all people), he has a near-uncanny ability to be direct while somehow keeping something of himself back.

That's more observation than criticism by the way, especially as the sections of the doc that deal with Gaiman's biography are genuinely insightful. You realise anew just how much of a trailblazer Gaiman has been. *Sandman*, remember, brought a new female readership to comics, in the process opening debates about the form that are still raging today. **Jonathan Wright**

i Be careful around Gaiman. According to wife Amanda Palmer, "Neil mines ideas out of human beings."



"Next time, hire a decorator."

HIGH-RISE Tower struggle



▶ **RELEASED 18 JULY**

2016 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Director Ben Wheatley

▶ Cast Tom Hiddleston, Luke Evans, Sienna Miller, Jeremy Irons

Is the sharpest satire strictly of its time – or just ahead of it? JG Ballard's 1975 novel *High-Rise* tackled the fast-souring '60s dream of towerblock living, but its tale of civil war between the floors also anticipated today's world of one-percenters and social media. It's a pertinent time to bring it to the screen.

Ben Wheatley roots the fable in the '70s but gives all that brutalist architecture a golden modernist glow, locating it in "A future that had already taken place".

The upper classes live in shaggpiled splendour, listening to Abba performed by string quartets.

“Fine black comedy and a waspish screenplay”

The lower levels live in sulky desperation, coveting the swimming pool. Everyone has the kind of no-strings sex that powered the letters pages of '70s *Penthouse*. Enter Tom Hiddleston, oozing English repression and incipient psychosis, an outsider poised between these two worlds.

There's some fine black comedy – a pet dog's leg on a spit – and a waspish screenplay ("Like all poor people she's obsessed with money," laments one of the overlords). But ironically when it all kicks off the film starts to leak energy, lose focus. You miss the tension of the first half, coiled like the sense of potential violence beneath Hiddleston's immaculate kick-flare suit.

Extras "Bringing Ballard To The Screen" is a limp three-minute promo soufflé. The DVD also offers interviews with Hiddleston, Miller, Evans and Irons, while the Blu-ray adds 16 more talking heads. Ben Wheatley, Hiddleston and producer Jeremy Thomas offer an insightful audio commentary on both formats. **Nick Setchfield**

i An Easter egg features Hiddleston and Evans dancing. Find it on the menu: highlight "extras", press up, then enter.



The spray tanning machine went crazy.

THE ANGRY RED PLANET

Martian monster mayhem



▶ **RELEASED 4 JULY**

1959 | PG | DVD

▶ Director Ib Melchior

▶ Cast Gerald Mohr, Nora Hayden, Les Tremayne, Jack Kruschen

Mars movies were much more fun before scientific plausibility was a concern. Which would you rather watch: a man growing spuds in his own poo, or astronauts legging it from rampaging monsters?

The bonkers bestiary is the main reason to watch this: a giant Venus flytrap; a 40-foot high rat/bat/spider mash-up; the gigantic amoeba, topped with a single constantly rotating eye, whose touch leaves you with a bad case of Swarfega-arm. Another is the decision to shoot the Mars surface scenes with a lurid red tint using a process called Cinemagic, designed to make the live-action better match background drawings of Martian cityscape and jungle by Hanna-Barbera/comics artist Alex Toth. The results are quite trippy.

Shame about the dreary bookending sequences, where traumatised biologist/perving target Iris recounts the journey. But thanks to some corny characterisation – especially that of the mission Commander, who spends half his time doing that "proprietary hand on the wall" thing with Iris, shirt gaping open for a mating display of chest hair – even these have their amusements.

Extras Trailer. **Ian Berriman**

i For the Cinemagic sequences, the cast wore white clown make-up, with black lips and black make-up in their nostrils.



"Get me some Colgate – quick!"

PARASYTE: THE MAXIM Collection One

Talk to the hand

★★★★★ EXTRAS
 ▶ **RELEASED 27 JUNE** ★★★★★
 2014 | 15 | Blu-ray & DVD (dual format)/Blu-ray/DVD
 ▶ Director Kenichi Shimizu
 ▶ Cast Aya Hirano, Nobunaga Shimazaki, Kana Hanazawa

◆ **The recent line of classy** horror anime serials continues with *Parasyte: The Maxim*, in which mysterious worm-like creatures burrow into sleeping humans, take over their bodies (à la *Invasion Of The Body Snatchers*), then turn those bodies into grotesque head-chomping monsters (à la *The Thing*). The focus, though, is on a schoolboy who ends up co-existing with a supercilious parasite embedded in his hand. The shocked lad starts learning about the nature of the parasites and their agenda, before the invasion turns personal...

Based on a venerable manga first published in the West back in the '90s, this is still a great story, riffing on familiar horror film staples but giving them an intriguing anime slant. The animation is good if not great, but the story and characters carry the action. We have other gripes, like Tokyo citizens reacting with absurd unconcern to the parasites' splatter killings, but it's still a splendid show.

◆ **Extras** Clean opening/closing animation. The pricey deluxe dual-format edition comes with a figure of Migi (the parasite), a screen wipe and a tattoo set. **Andrew Osmond**

i Label Animate also recently released a live-action version of the same story (called just *Parasyte*) in two parts.



The new gay bar had fetching decor.

HERE COMES MR JORDAN

A fight for life

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★
 ▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**
 1941 | U | Blu-ray
 ▶ Director Alexander Hall
 ▶ Cast Robert Montgomery, Claude Rains, Evelyn Keyes, Rita Johnson

◆ **Think of it as a Roosevelt-era** *Quantum Leap*: Robert Montgomery is Joe Pendleton, a prizefighter with a lucky saxophone and "a heart as big as a house". When his soul's snatched from a fatal plane crash by an angelic interloper he finds himself in a brand new body, mixed up in murder and romance.

Arriving on Blu-ray with a crisp new 2K digital restoration, it's a fine early example of Hollywood Celestial, the folksy, fantastical subgenre that also gave us *It's A Wonderful Life* and *I Married An Angel* (Powell and Pressburger lifted its vision of heaven as an aviator's bureaucracy for *A Matter Of Life And Death*).

You wish there was more monochrome otherworldliness, but the wiseguy '40s comedy

schtick is deathless. With *Casablanca*'s Claude Rains memorably twinkly as the cosmic Mr Jordan, it's a film that's earned its own afterlife.

◆ **Extras** It's a Criterion Collection release, so there's a decent selection of cinephile-pleasing special features: "Comedy And Afterlife" (32 minutes) is a conversation between critic Michael Sragow and indie filmmaker Michael Schlesinger, talking about the movie's history and impact. From 1991, there's an 80-minute audio interview with actress Elizabeth Montgomery, talking about both her father and her own career (she was Samantha in *Bewitched*, so supernatural whimsy was clearly in her blood). There's also an essay by the *New York Post*'s Farran Smith Nehme, a trailer, and, best of all, the 1942 Lux Radio Theatre adaptation of the movie, with Cary Grant – original pick for the role of Joe Pendleton. **Nick Setchfield**

i The film has been remade as a vehicle for Warren Beatty (1978's *Heaven Can Wait*), and Chris Rock (2001's *Down To Earth*).

(ROUND UP)



No longer required to adapt the 1996 movie at unnecessary length, the ten episodes of **FROM DUSK TILL DAWN** SEASON TWO (DVD/download, 27 June) separate the Gecko brothers, deliver backstory for the Titty Twister's Santanico Pandemonium and introduce Danny Trejo as supernatural bad guy the Regulator. Expect blood and guts aplenty, pulpy dialogue, and a frustrating lack of narrative focus. Michael Bay's global pandemic action series continues to impress in **THE LAST SHIP** SEASON TWO (Blu-ray/DVD, 13 June). This year it's naturally-immune fanatics with terrible Irish accents rather than Russkies causing trouble for the crew of the Nathan James. The ship vs submarine battles are thrilling, and the pitch black twists continue unabated. Just brace yourselves for more in-your-face jingoism. Toon adaptation **JEM AND THE HOLOGRAMS** (DVD, out now) drops most of the SF elements of the '80s original, aside from Synergy – super-computer then, a cutesy robot now. What's left is a generic tale of a rising star pulled in opposing directions by fame and family, given a YouTube-era upgrade with "everyone is special" syrup ladled on top. Finally, absurdist Czech comedy-drama **THE INVISIBLES** (VOD, out now) concerns a race of water-breathers living secretly among humanity, threatened with exposure by one of their kind. It's lightly amusing froth, with plenty of quirky details to the world-building of the "Nixes" underground society. All 13 episodes are streaming for free via All 4's Walter Presents strand.



THE LONG COSMOS

Bringing It All Back Home



▶ **RELEASED 30 JUNE**

385 pages | Hardback/ebook

▶ Authors Terry Pratchett and

Stephen Baxter

▶ Publisher Doubleday

◉ **So here's how the story ends.**

And, considering this is the final new novel that will ever have the Terry Pratchett moniker emblazoned on its cover, a pause for reflection is probably in order. Okay, done that. Now, down to the nitty gritty, because this is also the final book in the five-volume sequence that began with *The Long Earth*, a sequence that's proved to be one of the unexpected delights of the later Pratchett career for those that have paid attention.

For those that haven't, the story runs as follows. Pre-Discworld success, when he still harboured dreams of being a famous SF writer, Pratchett came up with the idea of a story about people stepping across a chain of parallel worlds. Circa 2010 he returned to the idea and developed it with Stephen Baxter.

With each successive novel, the scope has grown larger. While the first book was essentially about the disruption stepping would cause to human society, the fourth novel, *The Long Utopia*, found humanity – and various other clever apes – confronting an existential threat.

This idea of the universe being a dangerous place also underpins *The Long Cosmos*. Here, though, the plot doesn't riff off imminent disaster, but its *possibility*, as the inhabitants of the Long Earth receive a message from the stars: "JOIN US". But who's out there getting in touch? Are they friendly? Or is this the prelude to a meeting that will end badly?

Some of those grappling with these questions will be familiar to

“ Comes across as a love letter to SF itself ”

fans. Here's Joshua Valiente, a man who travels the Long Earth almost as easily as if he were popping down the shops and whom we first met as a youngster, facing up to his own mortality as a sixtysomething. Here's Lobsang, or at least a facet of him, a machine intelligence convinced he's the reincarnation of a Tibetan motorcycle repairman. Here's Nelson Azikiwe, a priest and Lobsang's sometime travel companion.

Others are less familiar, notably the troll (a kind of ape) Sancho, who bears at least a passing resemblance to a certain Librarian. We also meet again with the super-intelligent Next, who can't help but regard humanity as hopelessly slow.

Which isn't to say this is a book about difference. Rather, this is a novel more concerned with what traits different kinds of intelligent life might share. Without giving too much away, it's also (although there's room for doubt) a glass-half-full view of first contact.

It's a subject that Baxter – who wrote most of the book, to an outline agreed with Pratchett – is eminently qualified to tackle. He is, after all, one of the undisputed Big Brains of hard SF. Yet, and this seems in keeping with the spirit of a project that's been about realising and then building upon Pratchett's original vision, he turns to another author for help.

Not only does this book feature a spacecraft called Uncle Arthur, but there are nods to *Rama* and *2001*. The result is a novel that comes across as a love letter to science fiction itself, one suffused with a Clarke-like optimism about the future. Baxter, you'd guess, is saluting two old friends here.

This seems entirely appropriate. When Pratchett first discussed *The Long Earth* with *SFX*, he thanked us and looked pleased when we put forward the idea that writing SF again was like coming home. And now, in Baxter's capable hands, the story of the Long Earth has – for all that it's outward-looking and expansive – in some sense made it home too. Another small pause for reflection is probably merited. **Jonathan Wright**

i Stephen Baxter will be discussing HG Wells during the BBC Proms performance of *The Planets Suite*, when it airs on 6 August.



ESCAPOLOGY

Shock to the system



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

368 pages | Paperback/ebook

▶ Author Ren Warom

▶ Publisher Titan Books

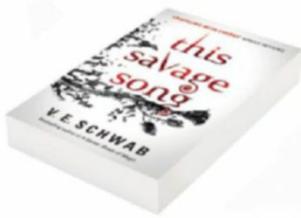
◉ **For quite a while, the most**

notable thing about *Escapology* is how it intersperses the standard cyberpunk features – hacking, drugs, Japanese stuff, futuristic slang, ordinary nouns given Capital Initials – with the odd scene set on a “land-ship”.

The rest of it follows two participants in the criminal underworld, Shock and Amiga, as they go about their grimy, dystopian business and complain about the food. Initially it feels like it's not adding up to much, though some of author Ren Warom's concepts are terrific (the hopelessly infected viral marketing stooges are a stand-out).

It helps if you read it quickly. The detail is dense – almost alienatingly so – and it's easy to lose your grip on who's who and what various things mean in this world. And although at first glance it seems to be populated by the kind of psychopaths and cool, emotionally distant loners we're used to seeing in this type of fiction, Warom opens them up as the book goes on. After about a hundred pages, the plot coheres and it becomes clear where all this is going – and from there on, its heist narrative plays out in a satisfyingly unpredictable fashion. **Eddie Robson**

i Ren Warom's favourite movie is *Tremors*: “I have watched it a billion times and will watch it a billion more!”



THIS SAVAGE SONG

Two for the road



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

407 pages | Paperback/ebook

▶ Author V.E. Schwab

▶ Publisher Titan Books

❖ *This Savage Song* ends better than it begins, which is a good thing, because to begin with it gives the impression of being yet another “hot, rebellious and supernatural students” story.

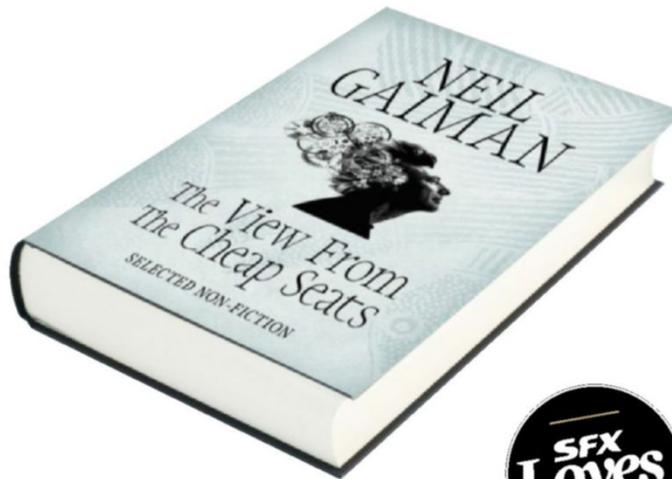
August Flynn, adopted son of the leader of one half of a city, and Kate Harker, daughter of the leader of the other half, end up at the same college. However, soon the two are forced to flee for their lives as conspirators try to use them to force the two halves of the city into conflict. The fact that August is a monster just complicates things.

There's not actually enough exposition in the first part of the novel (and it's not often you'll hear us complaining of that). As annoying as exposition can be, V.E. Schwab has created three unique monster types – Corsai, Malchai and Sunai – that arise from acts of violence, and a little explanation earlier on would have helped quite a bit. Possibly the lack of explanation is there to create tension and a sense of mystery, as the basic plot is standard fare and the villains easy to identify.

At the end of the day, Schwab has created an interesting world, but not a story that does justice to it, which is a shame.

Miriam McDonald

i V.E. Schwab's *A Darker Shade Of Magic* is being adapted for television, and Schwab herself is writing the script.



THE VIEW FROM THE CHEAP SEATS

Dream collection



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

532 pages | Hardback/ebook

▶ Author Neil Gaiman

▶ Publisher Headline

❖ **Neil Gaiman has never been** just one type of writer. From his early journalism career, to the comics that made his name, to novels and short stories and screenplays and picture books, to the all-popular blog and Tumblr and Twitter accounts, there are many ways to read his words. And this is for the best, for words are something he is very good at.

The View From The Cheap Seats is a collection of more than 80 non-fiction writings from the last 30 years. It's a broad church: there are book introductions, speeches, newspaper articles and liner notes, discussing everything from the state of the comics industry to his favourite musicians and childhood

“You're in for a real treat”

love of a travelling bookshop. If you're a Gaiman fan, you will almost certainly have read a lot of them before, but the joy of such a large collection is that there will just as certainly be new treats here to enjoy.

Highlights include a lecture on the boundaries between children's and adult fiction, as well as a 1993 speech comparing the then-current boom in the comics industry to 17th century tulipomania in Holland. There's also a great introduction to a 2003 *Doctor Who* novella (*Eye Of The Tyger* by Paul McCauley), written before the series came back, where he talks about the effect the show had on his perception of reality.

With a selection as varied as this it doesn't really matter if you're a genre, music or literature fan – the constant here is Gaiman's distinctive authorial voice, filled with love and wisdom and understanding. If you've read it before you'll recognise it instantly; if not, then get reading, you're in for a treat. **Rhian Drinkwater**

i The collection takes its name from an essay on attending the Oscars – where Gaiman wasn't allowed near the Important People.



THE POWER OF DARK

Harbouring a grudge



▶ **RELEASED 30 JUNE**

255 pages | Paperback/ebook

▶ Author Robin Jarvis

▶ Publisher Egmont

❖ **Home to a dramatic** ruined abbey, weathered clifftop gravestones and a full-time Dracula industry, Whitby has long been a magnet for goths and weekend Wiccans looking to replenish their stocks of amethyst and charm bracelets.

It's an association seasoned fantasy writer Robin Jarvis puts to good use in this first of a new YA series, in which the Yorkshire harbour town becomes the backdrop to the final battle in a 400-year-old feud between a wronged witch and her warlock lover.

Teenage misfits Verne and Lily (the latter the mortified daughter of a pair of cosplaying occultists – think *Ab Fab*'s Saffy in black velvet) are the combatants' unwitting vessels, while the titular Mister Dark, a hanged man taken from the gallows and revived as the “knot-necked servant” to a Jacobean diabolist, makes for a suitably nightmarish villain.

The early chapters read like a classic children's TV drama – the sort of spooky fare HTV made back in the day – while the climactic battle between the walking dead and a junkshop steampunk army is more akin to the final reel of a modern Hollywood blockbuster. It's a formula that's sure to work its magic on readers. **Paul Kirkley**

i Jarvis wrote a trilogy set in Whitby. He first visited when studying graphic design at Newcastle Polytechnic.

BOOKS



THE SOMNAMBULIST AND THE PSYCHIC THIEF

Gas lamps and ectoplasm



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

416 pages | Paperback/ebook

▶ Author **Lisa Tuttle**

▶ Publisher **Jo Fletcher Books**

It's not often you can describe a detective story set in foggy, gas-lit 1890s London as an ideal summer holiday read, and yet somehow Lisa Tuttle has managed it. Her latest novel is a hugely enjoyable confection of back-alley cutpurses, society séances, dastardly villainy, and just the faintest hint of will-they-won't-they between the two main characters, narrator Aphrodite "Di" Lane, and her partner in detecting, Jasper Jesperson.

Di fetches up in London in need of a new job. She soon becomes the Watson to Jesperson's Sherlock, and together they drink a lot of tea and investigate cases grounded firmly in the fascinations and taboos of the time.

Lane and Jesperson have an appealing dynamic, one of both

mutual respect and a degree of creative friction. Importantly, while Di may be a woman in late Victorian England, neither her partner nor the plot expect her to play second fiddle. As part of a wider emphasis on genuinely rich, thoughtful worldbuilding, Tuttle surrounds Di with women in a variety of roles – not simply the types of so much historical fiction cliché, but also skilled operators in the fledgling telephone exchange, unscrupulous paranormal researchers, and mediums.

It all makes for smart and entertaining fiction that has fun with the touchstones of Victorian literature – Wilkie Collins and Arthur Conan Doyle are both name-checked, and have clearly influenced Tuttle's atmosphere and characterisation – while also exploring, in a light-hearted, light-touch way, what lies behind the curtain. **Nic Clarke**

i Fans of séances believed spirits manifested via ectoplasm, but it was generally cheesecloth regurgitated by the medium.



DUSKFALL

Game Of Moans



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

560 pages | Paperback/ebook

▶ Author **Christopher Husberg**

▶ Publisher **Titan Books**

This opening entry in the *Chaos Queen* quintet begins with its lead character pulled from the sea, suffering long-term amnesia. Knot is basically Bourne via Wolverine – unable to remember his life outside of an instinctual ability to beat anyone up, but able to recall intricate histories of locations he visits. It seems inconsistent, but makes sense in a decent final twist.

It's a long road to those final few strong moments, though. Knot makes friends, then abandons them, inspiring vague quests where it's never clear what anyone is looking for. Extreme coincidence drives the narrative, with prophecy and fate replacing smart plotting.

We meet Winter, a elfin drug addict. Her friend Lian, two religious zealots Cinzia and Jane, and a vampire named Astrid join Knot on the path to the finale. Each character is as unlikeable as the last.

We'll endure dark leads if the narrative's compelling, but little happens in *Duskfall*. It's also bleak, and without the intellectual heft/linguistic fun of, say, *Game Of Thrones*, *Duskfall's* adult tone isn't earned. A book containing fewer significant events than a chapter of George RR Martin doesn't bode well for the opener of a five-installment series. **Sam Ashurst**

i *Duskfall* began life as a project for Brandon Sanderson's "How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy" course.

BULLET TIME

A BOOK IN BULLET POINTS



STAR TREK: REDSHIRT'S LITTLE BOOK OF DOOM

▶ **RELEASED 7 JULY**

64 pages | Hardback

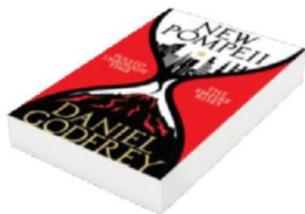
▶ Author **Robb Pearlman**

▶ Publisher **Michael O'Mara Books**

- A mildly amusing *Star Trek* gift book!
- Features 55 different single-image cartoons, drawn by Austrian self-confessed nerd Anna-Maria Jung.
- They follow the daily disasters and misfortunes of a hapless redshirt.
- Maybe this is bloodthirsty of us, but it's a bit disappointing they don't all end in a violent death...
- Most of the mishaps are much more low-key, like putting a red shirt in your whites wash, or forgetting to lock the shower door.
- Writer Robb Pearlman clearly knows his *Trek*, but some of the topical gags (like one about hipsters) are a bit wince-inducing.
- Best bit: repeated appearances by a cutsey cartoon Gorn. Give him his own spin-off book!



Reviews



NEW POMPEII

Restored Romans



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

432 pages | Paperback/ebook

▶ Author Daniel Godfrey

▶ Publisher Titan Books

◉ **The publicity material** describes author Daniel Godfrey's debut as "*Jurassic Park* meets *Gladiator*", which is pithy but misleading. A fearsomely powerful company learns how to snatch people out of the past into the present. To avoid changing history it focuses on transporting the victims of disasters (an idea also used in the 1989 film *Millennium*). The company's biggest project is to save the Roman victims of the volcanic destruction of Pompeii, bringing them into a copy of the city for study – and other reasons.

It's not an action-heavy novel, instead playing up the conspiracy/mystery angle, with a subplot about a woman sliding helplessly through time in a Cambridge college. The historical detail is impressive, the mystery is interesting, and there's a chewy time-travel puzzle for fans of the genre.

However, the characters aren't vivid enough to make the story emotionally gripping: in particular the hero, a nervous research student who ventures into New Pompeii, is only adequate. Perhaps it would have been better to tell more of the story through the eyes of the time-transported Romans, who are having a far bigger adventure. Additionally, some of the final plot revelations are B-movie bonkers. **Andrew Osmond**

i In 1958 horror *Curse Of The Faceless Man*, the skull-crushing monster is a petrified gladiator found at Pompeii.



NINEFOX GAMBIT

Land Of Confusion



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

384 pages | Paperback/ebook

▶ Author Yoon Ha Lee

▶ Publisher Solaris

◉ **One of the traditional** publishing routes for SF writers is building a reputation with short fiction before moving onto novels. Korean-American writer Yoon Ha Lee is the latest example of this trend, following up an acclaimed run of stories with the first in a new space opera trilogy. Sadly his debut novel never quite matches its conceptual wildness with a comprehensible narrative.

The story follows Captain Kel Cheri, a disgraced officer in a far-future war being fought across the galaxy via weaponised mathematics. She's given a chance to redeem herself by conquering the heretical Fortress of the Scattered Needles, but her plan involves being mentally connected to an undead tactician who's also a psychotic mass-murderer...

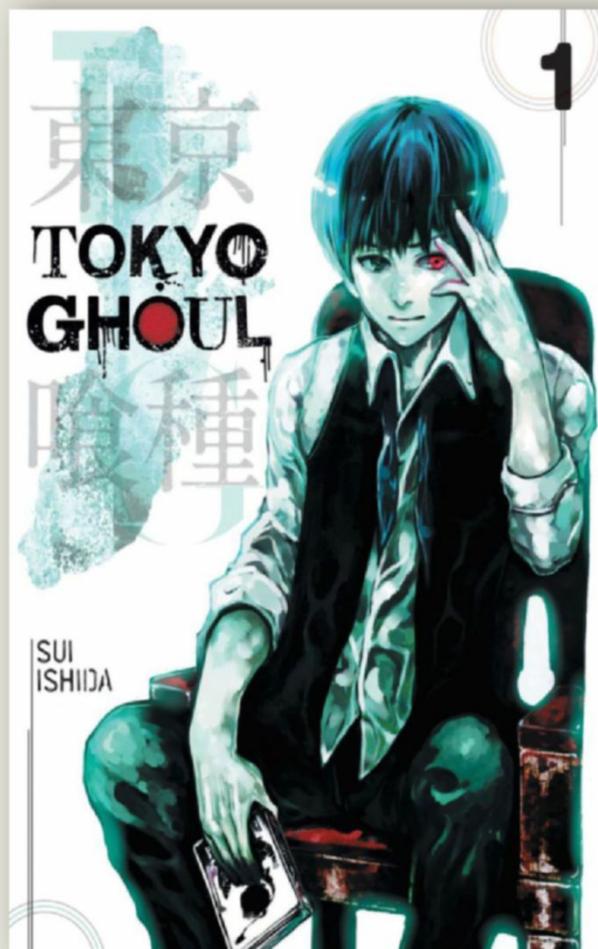
Lee has pulled off an unusual spin on the traditional military SF subgenre, one which showcases an impressive imagination. Unfortunately, his approach to world-building is both frustrating and confusing, as the book avoids direct exposition to the extent that the story's central concepts are barely explained at all. Combine this with fussy characterisation, and what could have been a fascinating SF novel has ended up as a colourful but befuddling experience. **Saxon Bullock**

i Strictly speaking this isn't Lee's first novel. That was "terrible Ninja Turtles fanfic", written aged 11/12.

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BOOKS

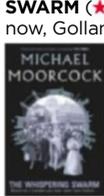
REISSUES

The pick of this month's paperbacks? Perhaps Neal Stephenson's **SEVENEVES** (★★★★, out now, The Borough Press). Set over a



period of thousands of years, it follows what happens after the disintegration of the Moon

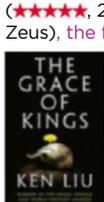
obliterates civilisation on Earth, with humanity subsequently splitting into seven distinct races. We said: "Delights in playing with and confounding our expectations of what will occur in certain kinds of familiar SF stories... a fine novel that functions both as an adventure story, and a meditation on life and how to live it." Or maybe it's **THE WHISPERING SWARM** (★★★★, out now, Gollancz). Michael



Moorcock's first major novel in a decade, it fuses auto-biography and fantasy,

with characters from history and fiction meeting in a magical realm hidden in the centre of London – a realm that Moorcock himself (the novel's protagonist) can access. We said:

"Ludicrously ambitious and fantastically entertaining." But then again it could be **THE GRACE OF KINGS** (★★★★, 2 June, Head of Zeus), the first in a new



epic fantasy series by Ken Liu (translator of Chinese Hugo winner *The Three-Body Problem*).

Taking place in a Chinese-inspired setting, it follows the lives of two boys – one a commoner, one the last son of a noble house – who become close after rebellion breaks out. We said: "Seamlessly blends philosophy and politics with tense battles and compelling action... Sad, funny, poignant and addictive." Look, just work it out for yourself, okay?



THE WOLF ROAD

Into The Woods

★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 30 JUNE**

400 pages | Hardback/ebook

▶ Author **Beth Lewis**

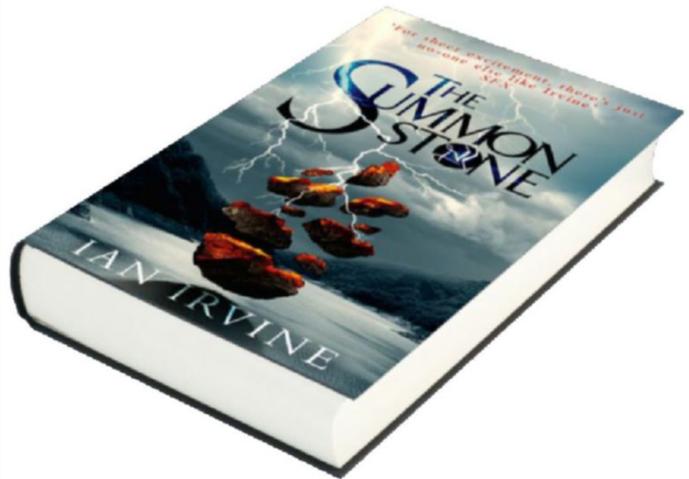
▶ Publisher **The Borough Press**

❖ **How well can you truly** know someone? It's a question everyone faces at one time or another, but most aren't confronted with it in the same extreme circumstances as Elka... Rescued at a young age by a surly survivalist known as Trapper, she grows up tough and capable – if isolated from the rest of the world. Then, 10 years later, she discovers that Trapper is wanted for a string of murders and so flees into the wilderness to look for her family, dodging bears and a persistent tenacious sheriff along the way.

Beth Lewis's debut feels more concerned with place more than plot, and she succeeds in evoking a vivid and believable future Canada. The world has been depopulated by a cataclysm which has caused terrible storms and soured the land with lakes of poison, but those endless forests remain. That said, the decision to tell the story in Elka's Western dialect is only partially successful. You get used to it, but it never fully convinces.

Still, Elka is a resourceful and mostly likeable hero, even when it becomes apparent that she has inherited Trapper's ruthlessness. And while the story is a little thin, it builds to a satisfyingly nuanced and ambiguous finale. **Will Salmon**

i Lewis's next book is set in the '70s; it's about four kids who discover a body and decide to investigate.



THE SUMMON STONE

Return to the Three Worlds

★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

575 pages | Paperback/ebook

▶ Author **Ian Irvine**

▶ Publisher **Orbit Books**

❖ **Ian Irvine's "Three Worlds"** fantasy cycle commenced with 1998's *A Shadow On The Glass*, with numerous books following. *The Summon Stone* takes place midway through the cycle, a decade after *The Way Between The Worlds*, and brings back Karan and Llian, the heroes of the earlier books.

After a tumultuous war between human species from different worlds, Karan and Llian's planet Santhenar is enjoying a hard-won peace – although the couple weren't rewarded for their part in bringing it about. On the contrary, Llian, formerly a great "Chronicler" of history, is barred from his trade. Then Karan and Llian's young daughter Sulien has nightmare visions of a new race of brutal otherworld invaders, about

to break through to Santhenar – and for some reason they're hellbent on killing Sulien. A narcissistic Santhenar lord, obsessed with Llian's storytelling genius, begins his own campaign of conquest. And a malefic drumming, like an alien heartbeat, echoes through the land, driving people to madness and murder...

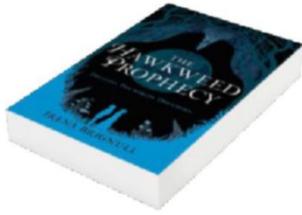
Irvine plunges into the action, with a commendable sense of high stakes and danger for our heroes. Karan and Llian may be wife and husband, but their relationship is strained from the outset, particularly when an old female acquaintance of Llian enters the frame. Plenty of new characters are introduced, including a callow boy archetype, two gifted siblings who are far too close to each other for comfort, and – the standout – a Bond-esque obsessive villain, who yearns for the perfect collection of masterworks and is willing to burn the world to secure it.

Later setpieces are often protracted and unconvincing. The invaders' origins also seem daft. The writing feels far from literary, and the ending's a total cliffhanger. But for all that, this is an above-average epic fantasy. **Andrew Osmond**

“Later setpieces are often protracted”

i You can read the first two chapters of *The Summon Stone* online at Ian Irvine's website: <http://bit.ly/summonstone>.

Reviews



THE HAWKWEED PROPHECY

Won't cast a spell on you



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

426 pages | Paperback/ebook

▶ Author **Irena Brignull**

▶ Publisher **Orchard Books**

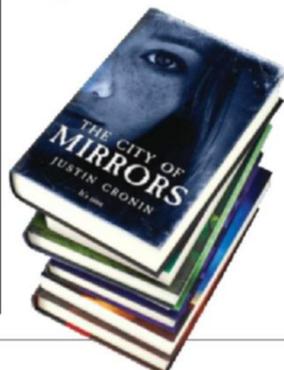
So you're a powerful witch and you're miffed because it looks as though your little sister is about to give birth to a baby who will one day become Queen – when you want your own, not very gifted daughter to nab the crown instead. What do you do? You cast a secret spell to swap your sister's sprog for a human one, of course. Years later, the two oblivious girls meet as teenagers and worlds collide... and the addition of a handsome young man confuses matters.

It's not the most original of premises, but we could overlook that if only the writing wasn't so stuffed full of unnecessary, flowery verbiage. For instance, there's rarely a "she said" – on one sample page we get "she snapped", "invoked", "huffed", "spat" and even "sparked". Talk about distracting. Occasionally the same scene is written twice, from different POVs, when there's absolutely no need for it. Plus, after a promising start, the book slides into a mess of gooey romantic nonsense. After another sister gets involved we end up with *three* teenagers in love with one bloke, so it's hard to care who ends up with him: you just want them all to get a grip. Sometimes less really is more. **Jayne Nelson**

Irena Brignull co-wrote the screenplay to *The Boxtrolls* and script-edited *Shakespeare In Love*.

ALSO OUT

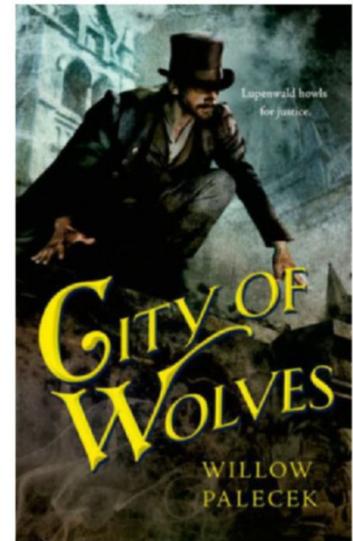
Our teetering books pile approached life-threateningly unstable proportions this month! Justin Cronin's **THE CITY OF MIRRORS** (out now, Orion) pulls off the neat trick of being both origin story and a conclusion to his epic vampire trilogy *The Passage*. Also bowing out is Naomi Novik's Napoleonic-Wars-with-added-dragons series *Temeraire*. Book nine, **LEAGUE OF DRAGONS** (out now, Harper Voyager) sees Boney promising dragons worldwide new rights if they fight under his banner. However, Charles Stross's *Laundry Files* series is continuing the Bond-meets-Lovecraft shenanigans. **THE NIGHTMARE STACKS** (out now, Orbit) introduces new protagonist Alex Schwartz, who's younger and also happens to be a vampire... As for books kicking off new series? **EMPEROR OF THE EIGHT ISLANDS** (out now, Picador), by Lian Hearn, looks intriguing: it's set in a mythical medieval Japan of warriors and assassins, ghosts and guardian spirits. Finally, two non-fiction titles. Compact paperback **FASCINATION: THE CELLULOID DREAMS OF JEAN ROLLIN** (out now, Headpress) takes a film-by-film look at the work of the French director behind cult items such as *The Nude Vampire*, while **THE WORLDS OF GERRY AND SYLVIA ANDERSON** (out now, Fonthill Media) sees the editor of the Anderson fan club mag do something similar for the likes of *Thunderbirds* and *Space: 1999*. Phew!



The Ghoul King

"Entertaining and exciting but very dark. If grimdark is your thing, then this is a great read for you."

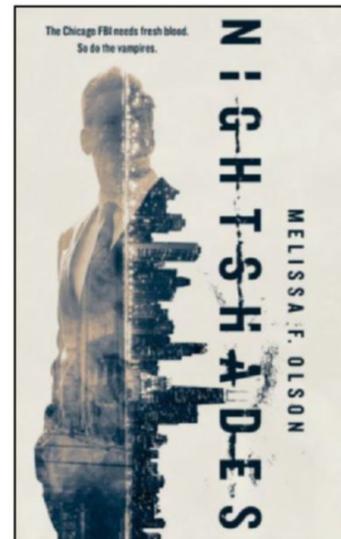
—The Exploding Spaceship.



City of Wolves

"A tantalizing glimpse of an interesting imagined world."

—Publishers Weekly



Nightshades

"Melissa F. Olson writes with razorblades made of moonlight, cutting through shadows to share with us the beating heart of her characters and story. My only problem with being immersed in Nightshades is that I had to keep coming up for air. If I could breathe words, they'd be hers."

—Charles de Lint

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NEW POMPEII *by Daniel Godfrey*

A stunning sci-fi thriller, in which energy company Novus Particles has developed the technology to pull people forward through time...

Historian Nick Houghton has arrived in New Pompeii, a replica of the Roman town now populated with real Romans, saved just before the eruption of Vesuvius.

The room was dominated by row upon row of video screens. Their glare was sufficient to plunge the rest of the room into relative gloom, and it took a few moments for Nick's eyes to adjust but, once they did, he realised that the screens were showing security-camera feeds.

This was his first glimpse of New Pompeii.

Nick felt his breath grow shallow. Each screen showed a different view of town life. And there they were. The people of Pompeii, moving around the streets of their new home. Eating. Drinking. Buying bread. Rolling dice. Just going about their daily lives.

"You like my town?"

Maggie, Noah and Whelan were standing next to a tall, thin man. He was completely bald, with a satisfied smile on his face. And from the look of the video feeds, his smugness was entirely deserved.

"Yes," said Nick, his throat dry. "I can't wait to visit."

"Well, it's a few hours by horse. Have you ridden before, Mr...?"

"This is Nick Houghton," cut in Whelan, stepping forward. "Nick, meet Robert Astridge, our project architect."

Nick nodded in acknowledgement, and offered his hand.

The architect shot a glance at Whelan, his grin turning sardonic. "I take it you're here to replace Professor Samson?"

Replace. That word again. Nick glanced at Maggie. She'd been given a longer, female version of his own tunic. A heavy shawl covered her shoulders.

"Yes," he said.

"Well, I don't see your role as being that relevant, to be honest.

Samson's work was almost complete – you can't keep on advising about the historical details of a town when the buildings are occupied, can you?" Astridge let out a short bellow of laughter.

Maggie gave an impatient sigh. "At least you look a bit more human today, Dr Houghton."

"Thank you. But you can drop the doctor part... it's still something of a work in progress."

"I see. It seems odd to have replaced an eminent professor with a student, doesn't it?"

Nick swallowed, not knowing what to say. Certainly Whelan the operations chief didn't appear to want to cut in and justify his appointment. He needed to change the subject. Quickly. "Someone mentioned something about a briefing?"

"So, Nick," said Whelan, "what do you think the most important thing is, in making all of this work?"

Nick's mind cycled quickly, trying to find an



The Author

→ Daniel Godfrey lives and works in Derbyshire. He studied geography at Cambridge University, before gaining an MSc at Leeds, and now works in transport planning. He has had several short stories published in *My Weekly* and *Writers' Forum*. Unsurprisingly, he has visited the real Pompeii quite a lot. *New Pompeii* is his first novel.

answer that wouldn't make him look stupid. The buildings? The logistics? The technology?

No.

The people.

It always boiled down to people. He looked back at the screens. Thought about what this all meant from their perspective. "You brought them here just before they were about to die," he said, letting his thoughts click into place. "They would have seen the eruption. Felt the earthquakes in the days leading up to it. Maybe seen the ash fall. So when they woke up here, they would all want to know what had happened."

"Spot on," replied Whelan, smiling. "It's all about the story. Anybody going into and out of New Pompeii has to remember it, and stick to it. We've tried to keep it simple. The people here think they're still in Pompeii. A good three-quarters of the town is physically similar; the eruption and tremors account for the changed landscape

beyond the walls."

"So no volcano?"

"And no sea either – we're inland."

Nick felt his eyebrows rise. The strangeness of the town map suddenly made sense. Pompeii had been a trading port. But there was plenty of evidence that Pompeii and the neighbouring town of Herculaneum had experienced their fair share of sea-level changes. So it wasn't entirely implausible...

"The Italian peninsula is in chaos," Whelan continued. "Travel between towns is prohibited. They have to stay in the town and make the best of it." Whelan's voice rose, as if

taken in by the story himself. “By order of the Emperor.”

Nick nodded. He already had about a dozen questions, but they would probably be best answered when he got to the town.

“The good news is that the populace were so shell-shocked they believed the story straight away,” said Astridge. “We’ve got them all settled into their new homes. And most people are in similar standards of accommodation to that to which they were accustomed.”

“How’s the economy working?”

Whelan turned to Astridge. “You see, Robert? I knew our new historical advisor would get to the nub of the issue.” He turned back to Nick. “We’re getting there,” he said. “Pompeii seems to have made its money mainly from wine.”

“And garum. Fish sauce.”

“Yes. Quite. But once the vineyards and olive groves are up and running, we can take their wine and oil, and in return give them anything they want. But we’re supporting the economy externally for the time being.”

“What about us?”

“We have a house at the centre of town.”

“The House of McMahon? I saw it on the map.”

“Yes. It looks Roman on the ground floor, but is in fact a central control station similar to this villa.”

“Great,” said Nick. “But, again, with due respect... you said all the population is from Pompeii. But *we’re* not. What’s our story?”

Whelan smiled. “We’re their saviours, Nick.”

“What?”

Astridge chuckled. “Sent by the god-emperor himself, Augustus Caesar.”

The wagon meandered through the bottom of a shallow valley towards the town. On either side, more villas had started to appear. Many looked occupied, and each had a small patch of farmland surrounding them given over to vines. Others were still being constructed.

Two men on horseback drew level, and Nick recognised one as a security guard from the villa, though both had adopted the uniform of Roman cavalrymen, with short-swords and daggers at their sides.

“Have you had any problem with violence?” Whelan cast him a sideways glance. “Not really.”

“But doesn’t it look odd to the locals that we’ve got our own guards?”

“No,” replied Whelan. “It fits the story. You’ve got to keep in mind, Nick, we’re not going to their Pompeii. *We* haven’t travelled in time. They have. They’re living by rules we create, in our town.”

“You’ve had no problems convincing the people we’re gods?”

“Technically we haven’t claimed to be deities.”

“Just the agents of one?”

“Precisely. And we’ve specifically chosen a god these people already believed in, the deified Emperor Augustus. Sent to protect them in their darkest hour.”

Nick remained silent.

“You’re not convinced?”

“Roman religion is relatively opaque.”

“Go on.”

“We’re not going to their Pompeii. We haven’t travelled in time. They have.”

“Well, most modern religions are centred on just one god. But in another two thousand years, our descendants may look back at our culture and think we worshipped any number of deities: Santa Claus, the tooth fairy, even Batman. It doesn’t necessarily follow that the Romans believed in all the gods they wrote about. Especially not a real man – emperor or not – who was deified after his death.”

Whelan considered this. “Well, fortunately, we tested our story on a small group before we transported the rest of the population.”

Nick nodded. A sensible move. “I presume your reconstruction includes the Temple of Fortuna Augusta?”

“Yes.”

“And you’ve reinforced the message how?”

“With smoke and mirrors. It didn’t take too much, to be honest. After all, when you’ve been sucked out of the jaws of hell and then prodded and poked by our medical teams... Well, let’s just say we didn’t really have to invoke Clarke’s Third Law.”

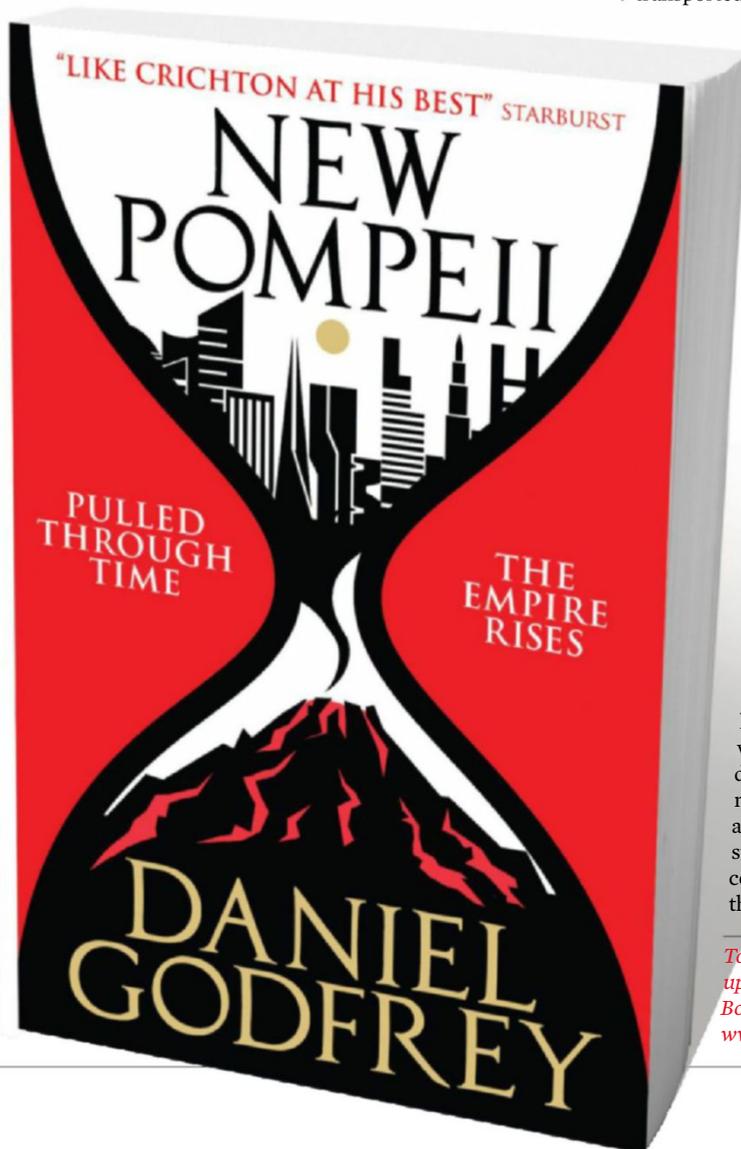
“Clarke?” Nick knew he must have looked confused, but he didn’t try to hide it. “I’m not familiar...”

“As in ‘Arthur C.’. The science-fiction writer. ‘Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.’ You’ll understand soon enough.”

Astridge waved lazily in his direction from the front of the wagon and Nick craned to see.

A dark stain rose above the horizon. Smoke. Nick let out a soft whistle. Smoke – from small domestic fires he presumed – all mingling together as it rose into the air. Soon the road widened. And suddenly there it was. A sight no one could have seen in over two thousand years. ●

To find out what happens next, pick up *New Pompeii*, out now from Titan Books. E-book also available. www.titanbooks.com



COMICS

DC UNIVERSE: REBIRTH

Born again



★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

- ▶ Publisher DC Comics
- ▶ Writer Geoff Johns
- ▶ Artists Phil Jimenez, Ethan Van Sciver, Ivan Reis, Gary Frank

ISSUE 1 Back in 2011, DC Comics

relaunched its entire line. Labelling the event *The New 52*, DC de-aged its most iconic characters, erased continuity the company had spent decades accumulating, and started afresh from #1. The aim was to bring back readers alienated by complex plots and crossovers requiring an encyclopaedia to understand. Ultimately, the experiment failed,

with the comics side of the DC enterprise suffering its worst sales in decades. Sure, their TV shows are popular, and their MCU-style movie universe launched recently with *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice*, but without the comics to inspire the franchises, DC would be stuck in ever decreasing circles.

So, when the company announced another brand-adjustment, named *Rebirth*, fans were understandably worried – could DC survive another failed reboot so soon after the last one? Thankfully, those worries have been assuaged by this giant-sized one-shot, our first glimpse at the *Rebirth* project

– and not just because it's excellent (and it really is).

The book does contain a controversial twist (which we won't spoil here), that caused fan forums to light up the moment the issue hit shelves, but the biggest twist of *Rebirth* is that it's not a reboot at all. It's actually one of the most astonishing artefacts in comic history: it's a company publicly admitting its mistakes, apologising, and promising to do better, in the form of a moving and thrilling story.

We follow the Flash's Wally West incarnation – erased by *The New 52* continuity – as he travels through DC's iconic multiverse, trying to bring himself back to reality by asking characters to remember who he is.

It's a beautiful, goosebumps-inducing concept (with lovely,

“It's DC admitting its mistakes and promising to do better”

varied art), made even more admirable by writer (and DC executive) Geoff Johns's ability to appraise what went wrong with individual *New 52* characters, and the DC line as a whole, with West's observations matching most fans' negative opinions. By making characters younger, DC lost its most valuable asset, its history. And, more importantly, by going dark tonally, it lost its sense of optimism. “Seeing everything, I realise it wasn't 10 years that was stolen from us,” Wally observes at one point. “It was love.”

Rebirth is the return of DC's lost magic, the pinnacle of what we adored about the comics they put out: smart characters crossing multiple universes in the search for kindness, and hope. It's a brave book, it's a heroic book, and it might just save DC from itself.

Sam Ashurst

i Geoff Johns compares *Rebirth* to *The Force Awakens*: “It goes back to the classic tropes, but introduces new characters.”



Luke's birthday parties never went well.

POWER MAN AND IRON FIST

Luke who's back!

★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

- ▶ Publisher Marvel Comics
- ▶ Writer David Walker
- ▶ Artist Sanford Greene

ISSUES 1-4 Off the back of

their upcoming Netflix solo shows, Luke Cage and Danny Rand have finally got their own team book again.

Writer David Walker plays with the notion that the Heroes for Hire are back in business, with Luke in denial not only about being called “Power Man” but also whether he and Danny have indeed re-established their crime-fighting partnership. Former associates Misty Knight and Colleen Wing are nowhere to be seen, but ample support is provided by Luke's wife Jessica Jones.

The first four issues centre on former Heroes for Hire secretary Jennie Royce joining forces with crime boss Black Mariah to steal the sinister Supersoul Stone from Tombstone, and Walker mixes pathos with some chaotic action scenes as the pair blunder from scene to scene.

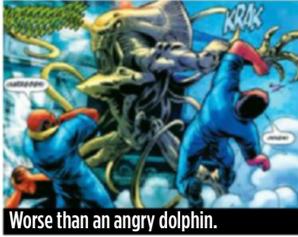
With his exaggerated figure work, Sanford Greene's kinetic, cartoony art perfectly fits Walker's vibrant script, and he has great fun depicting the oversized Luke squeezing into the duo's tiny car. It currently feels more like Luke's book, but hopefully future issues will delve deeper into Danny's life. Fingers crossed Power Man and Iron Fist are back for good.

Stephen Jewell

i *Power Man* #50 (in which it became *Power Man And Iron Fist*) is what made Walker (then 10) want to write comics.



A moment later the giant coin fell on the dinosaur and all hell broke loose.



Worse than an angry dolphin.

INDEPENDENCE DAY: DARK FATHOM

Deep trouble



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

- ▶ Publisher Titan Comics
- ▶ Writer Victor Gischler
- ▶ Artists Steve Scott, Rodney Ramos, Alex Shibao, Tazio Bettin, Ivan Rodriguez

GRAPHIC NOVEL Released to coincide with the release of *Independence Day: Resurgence*, this prequel miniseries acts more as an adjunct to the first movie.

Dark Fathom takes place a few months after the original 1996 alien invasion was thwarted, as Captain Joshua Adams – a general in the new film – is dispatched to recover an alien fighter craft that’s crash-landed in the Atlantic.

Foregoing the film’s bombastic approach, writer Victor Gischler instead weaves a tense, claustrophobic tale, which mostly occurs in a sub at the bottom of the ocean.

Imbuing Adams with a fear of water gives him some much-needed vulnerability. Gischler also offsets the submarine crew’s testosterone-fuelled machismo by focusing on Adams’s relationship with sub commander Captain Meredith, who’s determined to protect her crew at all costs.

Considering seven pencillers and inkers have contributed to the five-parter, there’s a solid consistency to the art. And with a final page teaser hinting at things to come, hopefully more up-to-date adventures will follow. **Stephen Jewell**

i Gischler says he channelled “a little bit of Captain Kirk” into the way Meredith always worries about her crew.



Feeling hungry?

JUDGE DREDD: THE CURSED EARTH

Return of the Big Mac



▶ **RELEASED 14 JULY**

- ▶ Publisher Rebellion
- ▶ Writers Pat Mills, John Wagner, Jack Adrian
- ▶ Artists Mick McMahon, Brian Bolland

GRAPHIC NOVEL *Satire’s* always been a vital ingredient in Judge Dredd stories, but one of the earliest Dredd mega-epics pushed the satirical boundaries a little too far. *The Cursed Earth* follows Dredd on a voyage across the radioactive wastelands of America to save Mega-City Two, and the original 25-part epic featured encounters with remixed versions of corporate characters like Ronald McDonald, the Michelin Man and the Jolly Green Giant.

Thanks to a threatened lawsuit, those chapters were never reprinted in the UK and left out of previous collections – but now, thanks to changes in the UK’s parody laws, publishers Rebellion are finally releasing the complete story in a snazzy hardback “uncensored” edition.

The Cursed Earth is still a landmark in *2000 AD*’s early history, a punky explosion of adventure that features top-notch artwork from seminal Dredd artists Mick McMahon and Brian Bolland. The restoration of the original colour double-page spreads makes this handsome edition even more attractive, but it’s the two “uncensored” stories – 26 pages of restored material – that are the main highlight.

“Giants Aren’t Gentlemen”, which stars a genetically engineered Jolly Green Giant, is notable for Bolland’s typically sharp visuals, while “Burger Wars” is a ferocious romp that pitches Dredd against the warring fast-food clans of the McDonalds and the Burger King. Featuring energetic art from McMahon, it’s a blackly comic classic that lives up to its reputation, and once again proves how strong the early years of *2000 AD* were. **Saxon Bullock**

i According to artist Kevin O’Neill, *The Cursed Earth* was inspired by the 1967 Roger Zelazny novel *Damnation Alley*.



“And come and colour me in!”

CINEMA PURGATORIO

Movies and Moore



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

- ▶ Publisher Avatar Press
- ▶ Editors Alan Moore, William Christensen
- ▶ Artists Various

ISSUE 1 Alan Moore may have left mainstream comics far behind, but he still hasn’t given up on the medium itself. Most of his comics work now comes via indie publishers Avatar, and his latest project for them is an ambitious one – this monthly black-and-white anthology.

Moore has assembled an impressive spread of writers – including Garth Ennis and Kieron Gillen – and he’s also contributing a story each time. This first issue shows that their “Cinema Purgatorio” tales are going to be unsettling film-based horror stories, carrying the same grotesque, brutal tone as later *League Of Extraordinary Gentlemen* adventures.

The rest of the contents are a mixed bag, however. The black-and-white visuals from a selection of artists are consistently imaginative and spectacular, but not all the writers are yet delivering eight-page chapters that feel truly satisfying – except for Gillen, who steals the show with the *Mad Max*-meets-*Pokémon* adventure “Modded”. *Cinema Purgatorio* has gotten off to a slightly uneven start, but hopefully the strong creative backing will soon see this anthology finding its feet.

Saxon Bullock

i Moore and Kevin O’Neill are currently working on the final volume of *The League Of Extraordinary Gentlemen*.

DOOM

Party like it's 1993



★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

▶ Reviewed on PC

▶ Also on PlayStation 4, Xbox One

▶ Publisher Bethesda

VIDEOGAME Bethesda's monster-mashing revival is worlds apart from contemporary first-person games – there are no setpieces, stealth bits, puzzles or AI companions. Just a faithful renewal of the 1993 original.

In their exploitation of an inter-dimensional energy source, Mars-based megacorp UAC has opened a portal to Hell, giving nightmarish monsters a shortcut to free food. You're on a one-man mission to plug it up and clean up the mess. The narrative is fed through loading screen passages, brief holographic records and occasional voices in your ear.

At first you've got nothing but a pistol and a gallery of gory "Glory

Kills", shooting foes until they're staggered before hitting the right button to twist their skulls 180 degrees/sweep their legs and squelch their faces. It's not long, however, before your combat acumen evolves, as you grab new guns, add secondary fire abilities and slot in armour power-ups. The action is perfectly honed, hectic, and cloud-drift-smooth. You feel like you're gliding around on a magic carpet. Each environment is self-contained and separated by a loading screen, and while there's enough space to wander, you're always pulled towards the fight. These revolve around Gore Nests. Destroying one triggers a shootout against a sudden rush of demons; only by wasting them all can you progress. It's an experience best taken in several short, sharp doses.

The game's online offering is impressively full-featured. Calling SnapMap a map-editor would be a

“Has the icy bloodlust of a polar bear”

disservice to what's actually a powerful programming tool. There are tutorials for logic editing, how to set win/lose conditions, and training in the use of item spawners. Even if you take one look at some interweaving AI paths and decide the grind isn't for you, SnapMap will power brilliant user-created content for years.

An overabundance of Glory Kills hampers combat, and the uninspiring grey confines of SnapMap mode prove restrictive. Still, with the icy bloodlust of a polar bear, *Doom* instantly bridges the generational gap between '93 and now in a blaze of blood and bullets. It's an old-school shoot-fest made with new-school expertise. **Ben Griffin**

i Look out for random bits of metal rebar in the ground. Hit one and a door opens to reveal a classic slice of '93-style *Doom*.



"Can't we settle this over a cuppa?"

TOTAL WAR: WARHAMMER

Build 'em up

★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

▶ Format PC

▶ Publisher Sega

VIDEOGAME If you've ever urged your miniatures across a barren tabletop, this is the *Warhammer* game you've been waiting for.

Warhammer is simple enough to comprehend – Chaos bad, Empire good, Dwarfs grumpy – and the game does a fine job of explaining each faction. Understanding *Total War* is more difficult. The map is grouped into regions, each with multiple settlements. You have to take all the settlements to control a region. As cities grow, you can build more impressive structures, each with different benefits. But you don't need to build *all* the buildings in every settlement – if you have the right combination, you can recruit elite troops anywhere in the area. It's an elegant system once you get it, but it does take time. If you were ever going to learn a *Total War* game, though, this is the one.

Every turn tells a story that could be a page in any *Warhammer* army book. Every hero character takes a journey worthy of telling tales about. The frustration that comes from seeing your empire crumble is eclipsed by the thrill of reclamation. There's enough depth and spectacle here to keep the most fervent fantasy fan engaged until the End Times. **Matt Elliott**

i There are four playable factions: Dwarfs; Empire of Man; Greenskins; Vampire Counts. A fifth is available as DLC.



Some people take diets too far.



[Kraken not shown.]

THE KRAKEN WAKES

Tentacular trouble



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

(Available On iPlayer Until 27 June/4 July)

100 minutes | Radio broadcast

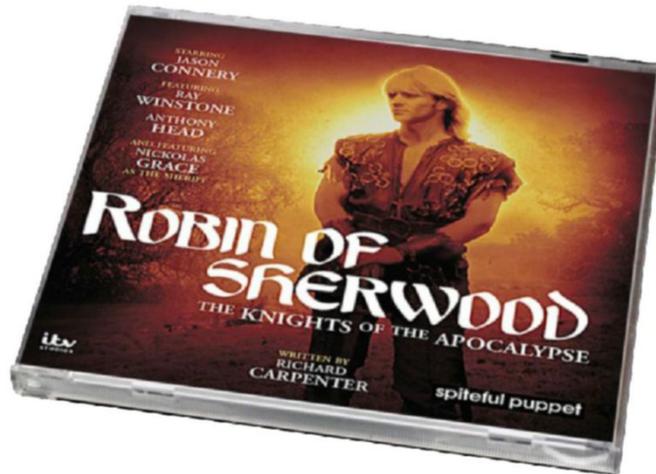
▶ Station Radio 4

AUDIO DRAMA Radio 4's dystopian drama season *Dangerous Visions* returned recently for a second year, and perhaps the most eye-catching of its 10 new audio productions (most still available on iPlayer) was this two-part adaptation of one of John Wyndham's lesser-known novels.

The Kraken Wakes doesn't have the same reputation as *The Day Of The Triffids* or *The Midwich Cuckoos*, but it's a surprisingly relevant tale of cataclysmic climate change brought on by an alien incursion in the ocean's deepest depths. Crime writer Val McDermid's script updates the story and the science to the present day, while there are strong performances from Tamsin Greig and Paul Higgins.

Unfortunately, it's hampered by the bizarre choice to record *The Kraken Wakes* as a live event with orchestral music and an audience. The result has the stilted unreality and lack of immersion you'd expect from a '50s radio play, combined with some clunky modern-day pop culture references. The compelling nature of the story still shines through, but this strangely executed adaptation is far from the best way to experience it. **Saxon Bullock**

i Other highlights of the season include adaptations of *Brave New World* and *News From Nowhere*.



ROBIN OF SHERWOOD: THE KNIGHTS OF THE APOCALYPSE



Nothing is forgotten, thankfully



▶ **RELEASED 30 JUNE**

120 minutes | CD/download

▶ Publisher Spiteful Puppet

AUDIO DRAMA Imagine if, 30 years from now, every surviving *Firefly* cast member got together and recorded an unfiled script as an audio drama. You'd flip your lid, wouldn't you? Well, that's exactly what *Robin Of Sherwood* fans are doing right now.

Based on a screenplay by creator Richard Carpenter that picks up after the '80s ITV show ended, *The Knights Of The Apocalypse* continues the adventures of Jason Connery's Robin and co, and does it bloody well too. Once you get over the sheer, fist-pumping joy of

“ Sit back and enjoy the episode that never was ”

hearing Ray Winstone's Will Scarlet grumbling like a mardy bastard, Nickolas Grace's Sheriff saying "Gisburne!" as though he's found something icky on his shoe and, yes, those Clannad vocals at the start, you can sit back and enjoy the episode that never was.

And it's a doozy: filled with all of *Robin Of Sherwood's* glorious swords and sorcery and boasting a scenery-chewing turn from Anthony Head as the bad guy. Despite the fact the series was so gloriously visual – all misty forests and moody castles – the sound design does such a great job of conjuring crackling fires, frog-filled marshes and echoey dungeons. The cast are on top form, too; as in-character as you'd expect given the writer, and there are even a few belly laughs (a scene involving a toilet is a treasure). We'll never get to see new *Robin Of Sherwood* on our screens again, but this is the next best thing. **Jayne Nelson**

i Due to rights issues, ITV stipulated the proceeds must go to charity: the British Red Cross and the Sherwood Forest Trust.



LOST PATROL

Rumble in the jungle



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

Two players

▶ Publisher Games Workshop

TABLETOP GAME In Games

Workshop's latest a squad of Space Marines must fend off attack from hordes of alien Genestealers. Sound familiar? That's because it's a similar premise to the recent *Deathwatch: Overkill*. The actual games, however, are quite different and *Lost Patrol* is faster and easier to get to grips with – albeit still time-consuming when it comes to the fiddly business of miniature assembly.

The Marines are searching a treacherous jungle (represented by a shuffled stack of hexagonal tiles) for an escape craft. Tangleweed bogs them down, while Infestation tiles spew out more Genestealers. Should the squad split up or stay together? Tiles are only revealed when a Marine has direct line of sight, so dividing the group will clear the way faster but leaves them vulnerable to attack, and as scouts these guys are hopelessly out-classed, generally needing to roll a six to hit their agile opponents.

It's a simple mechanic in a game that's clearly targeted at new or less experienced players, but it's challenging (especially for the beleaguered Marine player) and fun. And, for once, you don't need to buy expansion packs or extra figures – it's all in the box, and at a very reasonable price.

Will Salmon

i Also out: *Warhammer Quest: Silver Tower*, an updated version of the long out-of-print dungeon adventure.



COLLECTABLES

What we've been playing with this month

1 There's a neat concept behind this set of 6" tall **Star Wars character torso glasses** (FPI price £14.99; product code D5827), but does it actually work in practice? They look okay when you're looking directly at the front or the back, but viewed from the sides there's an awkward join between the two sides. And after ten seconds of looking at an

expanse of Han's shirt you realise you'd rather be looking at his *face*. On balance we think we prefer one of manufacturer Half Moon Bay's other glassware sets – like the *Star Wars* characters tumblers (D5828) or the quotes shot glasses (D5829).

2 Do you run an institution housing the most murderous and bug-nuts

members of society? In need of some handy signage for your decaying gothic pile? Look no further than the **Arkham Asylum tin sign** (price £4.99) – measuring 21cm by 15cm, with screw holes in each corner, it comes complete with Joker graffiti. Alternatively, decorate the entrance to your secret hi-tech crime-busting lair with this **Batcave tin sign**.

Warning: may act as a ruddy great tip-off to your local criminal community.

3 That's no moon... it's a condiment set. These ceramic **Death Star salt and pepper shakers** (FPI price £8.99; product code D5973) split the Imperial super-weapon into two hemispheres, with the salt side getting the deadly superlaser – appropriately enough given its deleterious effects on your health. The results look a bit odd. And who the hell actually *uses* a pepper shaker anyway? Anyone?

4 Part octopus, part man, part dragon and now all vinyl, this **Cthulhu Pop! figure**

All products are available at

forbiddenplanet
international
home shopping

www.forbiddenplanet.co.uk
01621 877 222

Reviews



(FPI price £8.99; product code C4095) won't drive you insane if you gaze upon it – though the concept of a cutesy figure of HP Lovecraft's ancient one does make you question your sanity. In a radical departure by Funko standards, he actually has eyelids. Our favourite detail is the trunks; it looks like he's wearing a grass skirt. Two variants are available: one glows in the dark, while the other (perhaps aimed at Donald Trump) boasts a "gold patina".

5 Calling all true believers! Stick this **Vinyl Idolz Stan Lee** (FPI price £16.99; product code D5549) on your desktop and perhaps it'll inspire you to create some of the greatest

comic book characters and stories ever! If not, you can always admire the curious finer details of this smooth, sturdy figure, such as the googly Homer Simpson-style eyes underneath his shades. Since Stan's got four fingers here – one hand doing a Spidey web-flick – perhaps that's entirely intentional.

6 These **Harry Potter collectors' tins** (price £3.99) are definitely *not* for keeping smoking stuff in, y'hear? They're 100% for collecting bits and bobs, so if you've got a pile of buttons, pin badges or even magic beans in need of stashing, you're in luck. They come emblazoned with the crests of all four Hogwarts houses. Four more boxes, featuring

"Quidditch captain", Bank of Gringotts, Hogwarts Express and Hogwarts crest designs are also out.

7 This ceramic **Darth Vader figural stein** (FPI price £33.99; product code D5983) is not recommended for anybody who isn't strong with the Force. Not only is the Sith-shaped flagon (which holds 22oz of beer – that's just over a pint) a weighty arm-killer, but when the lid's open, Vader has a tendency to topple over – which is why it comes with a stern warning to "hold stein firmly in hand when lid is open". Still, he makes a fun puppet if you waggle his head up and down. Look for R2-D2, Boba Fett and Chewbacca steins too. ●

THINGS TO COME

More goodies on their way soon



ETA
OCTOBER
EXPECT TO PAY
£40/£50

HARLEY QUINN PROP REPLICAS

◆ Complete your cosplay with these replicas of the *Suicide Squad* sicko's weaponry: a bat bearing "Good night", and a massive mallet. Both are 28" long, made of soft materials and play sounds when swung!



ETA
OCTOBER
EXPECT TO PAY
£11

LAMENT CONFIGURATION PUZZLE CUBE

◆ It has six sides to show you... Yes, it's basically a *Hellraiser*-themed spin on the Rubik's Cube. Is completing it worth risking the wrath of the Cenobites? We're not taking any chances...



ETA
OCTOBER
EXPECT TO PAY
£10 EACH

MARVEL DOORMATS

◆ Show your contempt for Hydra (or, if you're evil, SHIELD) by wiping your feet on their logo! There are also Captain America's shield and Marvel logo designs. All four are made of coir (coconut fibre), and measure 73cm by 43cm.

Photography by Olly Carris



ARROW, THE FLASH, LEGENDS OF TOMORROW

Time to look forward?

DC'S TV UNIVERSE

Is the DCTVU all about its first seasons?

▶ **UK Broadcast** Sky 1, finished
▶ **US Broadcast** The CW, finished
▶ **Episodes Reviewed** 4.01-4.23 (*Arrow*), 2.01-2.23 (*The Flash*), 1.01-1.16 (*Legends Of Tomorrow*)

◉ **If there's one thing that Greg Berlanti** and the DC TV Universe he's sculpted have proven, it's the ability to hit the ground running. While all four of the DC shows Berlanti has overseen — *Arrow*, *The Flash*, *Supergirl* and *Legends Of Tomorrow* — have fulfilled the dreams of many a fan, their initial seasons have, on the whole, yielded the highest levels of satisfaction thus far. Some may

decry *Arrow's* first year, but only its second has surpassed it. Few would argue that *The Flash's* second season topped its first. And while *Legends* has only enjoyed one outing thus far, it's proved more entertaining than this past season of *Arrow* and *Flash*. As has sister show *Supergirl*.

To be fair, season four of *Arrow* offered perhaps the show's finest actor yet in Neal McDonough, who made Damien Darhk as charmingly twisted as any of *Buffy's* Big Bads. And Echo Kellum's Curtis Holt was a worthy successor to Brandon Routh's Ray Palmer in the laughs department. But the soap operatics

surrounding Felicity's maiming and Laurel's death proved more overwrought than moving. Though we'll take Darhk's plan to destroy Oliver's city any day over the lacklustre strategy of Ra's al Ghul in season three.

Meanwhile, in just its second year *The Flash* recycled the central storyline of its first season, in which a seemingly benevolent benefactor — then Harrison Wells, now Jay Garrick — was revealed to be a supervillain with a secret, evil agenda. Since the character of Garrick has long been one of the most revered in DC Comics, fans were left with a sour taste in their

ZOOM IN



NEED TO KNOW ▲

→ We loved Gorilla City's first live-action appearance — in the final shot of *The Flash's* "Gorilla Warfare" (2.07) — and knowing that, in the comics, Grodd both originates there and seeks to overthrow it made it even more thrilling.

DID YOU SPOT?

→ In *Legends Of Tomorrow's* outer space adventure "Marooned" (1.07), pirate captive Rip Hunter signals a command code to his ship the *Waverider* by mentioning Kanjar Ro, Silver Age DC's greatest space villain.

TRIVIA

→ The Silver Age Atom's home, Ivy Town, appeared this season as the location of Martin Stein's university (in *Legends*) and the suburb to which Oliver and Felicity move (in *Arrow*).

BEST EPISODE

→ After the grimdark of *Batman V Superman*, it was a complete joy to watch *Supergirl* have fun teaming up with the Flash in the crossover episode "Worlds Finest" (*Supergirl* 1.18).

IT'S WOSSIPNAME! ▼

→ Wondering which other comic adaptation you saw *Arrow's* Neal McDonough (Damien Darhk) in? He played Howling Commando Dum Dum Dugan in *Captain America: The First Avenger* — and *Agent Carter*.





Arthur Darvill as Rip Hunter, Time Master. Not Time Lord. Definitely not Time Lord.

mouth for half of this season, until the finale revealed that the “real” Jay was alive and well after being held prisoner all year by Zoom. That Wells was played by the wonderful Tom Cavanagh, while the faux Garrick was played by the less dynamic Teddy Sears did not go unnoticed... Season two also wrapped by taking Barry Allen yet again to the night of his mother’s murder. Though he saved her this time, an action that’s bound to have huge repercussions next season, one can’t help but wonder if this show wouldn’t be better off looking forward more often than it looks back, as befitting a hero whose *raison d’être* is speed.

Legends Of Tomorrow started awkwardly on its maiden mission, initially trying to do too much with its large squad of superheroes before we’d been given a chance to know them better. Thankfully, things took a leap forward when fan-favourite director Joe Dante (he of *Gremlins* fame) stepped in to helm a 1950s-set episode that looked at the era’s casual bigotry with a fresh pair of 21st century eyes, while ratcheting up the

“Flash recycled the central story of its first season”

suspense of the team’s mission to save the Earth from Vandal Savage and finding humour at every turn. Actor Casper Crump wasn’t the most frightening of world conquerors, but Brandon Routh (as Atom), Wentworth Miller (as Captain Cold), and Caity Lotz (doing most of her own stunts as the White Canary) mined enough laughs, chills and thrills to make *Legends* the DCTVU’s surprise winner this year.

With the first-rate *Supergirl*’s production now moving from the CBS network to join the other DC shows at The CW, *Legends* and the rest will have some stiff competition next year.

Joseph McCabe



The slight wobble at the end cost him the gymnastics gold medal.



DOLOROUS EDD TOLLETT

Game Of Thrones isn’t all about the big guns, you know...

► UK Broadcast Mondays, Sky Atlantic ► US Broadcast Sundays, HBO

⚙️ **The current (albeit temporary)** Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch is everything *Game Of Thrones* has taught us that people are not. He’s loyal, brave, funny and – crucially – still alive at time of writing. He is not a great man, but rather a *friend* to great men, and as such is worth his weight in Lannister gold in a world where genuine friends are so very few and far between.

Let’s recap some of Dolorous Edd’s finest moments, shall we? He took part in the Great Ranging north of the Wall, surviving Craster’s Keep and the White Walker assault on the Fist of the First Men; he took charge of the Wall during Mance Rayder’s attack; he was at Hardhome; he’s backed up Jon Snow every step of the way, and was ready to die avenging him. And he’s been hilarious the entire time.

You see, some folk crumble in the face of

danger; some are spurred on to greatness; and some people – the best people – make jokes under their breath and wearily get on with whatever suicidal task they’ve been given. We know which one of the three we’d be. Is Edd the bravest? No. The most charismatic? Nope. Does he have a dragon, or a Valyrian steel sword, or an intriguing backstory? Definitely not.

He’s a small man caught up in great events, and little more than a footnote in George RR Martin’s voluminous scrolls. And yet, he’s the Brother of the Night’s Watch we identify with most. For are we not all, at heart, Dolorous Edd Tollett, wearily battling through life, laughing at the madness of the world and wondering how we got here? Edd, we salute you, and as long as you have the Wall we’d be honoured to serve at Castle Black.

Rob Power

They're already looking towards season 12...



SEASON 11

SUPERNATURAL

Good God, bad God



- ▶ UK Broadcast E4, Wednesdays 10pm
- ▶ US Broadcast The CW, finished
- ▶ Episodes Reviewed 11.01-11.23

With The CW starry-eyed over the success of its slow-burning cult phenomenon and season 12 already greenlit, things are looking good for *Supernatural's* long-term future. We could sound a word of warning about the fact that a huge chunk of the creative team have announced they're leaving, however – especially showrunner Jeremy Carver, who gave the show a kick up the arse when he returned to the fold in 2012 – but we'll just cross our fingers and hope that the magic stays firmly in place.

In the meantime we can look back on a mostly successful season 11, especially the extraordinary

"Baby", an entire episode shown from the perspective of the Winchester brothers' iconic Chevy Impala. Elsewhere there are all the usual innovative creatures and entities, including a fantastic take on imaginary friends in "Just My Imagination" that ended up nominated for a Hugo, and the return of Lucifer, who's as much fun as ever.

But things get *really* good in the season's final four episodes, which reintroduce Rob Benedict's cuddly Chuck Shurley as God Himself. Just imagine the sheer amount of balls-out guts it took to write a scene in which God and Lucifer sit down and have a discussion about their behaviour – an authoritative dad vs a grumpy child. Just wow.

One thing doesn't quite work, though: Amara, aka the Darkness.

Making God's sister the season's antagonist was a cracking idea, but from then on the writers were hamstrung by the fact that... well, she's *God's sister*. She's weak at first, yes, but once her powers kick in she could have destroyed everybody in her path with a mere thought; instead we get her messing around with some spooky, mind-controlling fog and repeatedly failing to take down the Winchesters (apparently because she'd fallen for Dean... yawn).

Amara gets there in the end, however, and you can't deny the idea of God being frightened is powerful. It's just another one of those bravura, groundbreaking concepts that have made *Supernatural* such a pleasure over the years, and this season is no exception. **Jayne Nelson**

ZOOM IN



TRIVIA ▲
→ There's a *Daredevil* reference in "Baby", as Dean dispatches a monster using a car door, Wilson Fisk-style. Only Fisk didn't apologise to the car afterwards.

BEST EPISODE
→ "Baby" (11.04): stunning TV, with the pre-requisite monsters, gory deaths and bromantic heart-to-hearts – all shot from the interior of the Impala.

BEST DIALOGUE
→ Dean stumbles across Chuck – aka God – looking at his computer. "I've never seen so much porn," says Chuck. "Not in one sitting..."

DID YOU SPOT?
→ The Chuck Shurley-focused episode 20 is named "Don't Call Me Shurley" – a reference to the evergreen *Airplane!*.

BEST MOMENT ▼
→ Chuck sings! "Fare Thee Well (Dink's Song)" at the end of "Don't Call Me Shurley" is possibly in the Top 10 of all-time *Supernatural* moments.





LINE UP

The month's most quotable dialogue

ROWENA
"I'll turn you into a moose. An actual moose."

Supernatural, Episode 11.22



BRIENNE OF TARTH
"[Jon Snow] seems trustworthy. A bit brooding perhaps but I suppose that's understandable, considering."

Game Of Thrones, Episode 6.05



AGENT COULSON (HOLOGRAM VERSION)

"Help me, Obi-Wan Kenobi, you're my only hope..."

Agents Of SHIELD, Episode 3.22



CAT GRANT

"Kira, call Harrison Ford and tell him that I'm flattered, but once and for all I do not date older men. Especially when they're married."

Supergirl, Episode 1.19



DAMIEN DARHK
"What does a guy have to do to end the world in peace?"

Arrow, Episode 4.23



SCRIPT EASE

A TV season distilled

SEASON 2

GOTHAM

A wretched hive of scum and villainy

▶ UK Broadcast Channel 5, finished

▶ US Broadcast Fox, finished

▶ Episodes Reviewed 2.01-2.22



Businessman THEO GALAVAN announces he's running for Mayor. He's clearly evil. Civilisations rise and fall, the Sun almost runs out of fuel to burn and still nobody notices. Meanwhile, he frees some criminals from Arkham Asylum.

JEROME
Look at me, I'm the proto-Joker!
Hahahaha!

GALAVAN
You could well be, my friend. But now I'm going to kill you.

JEROME
...Bugger.

JEROME is murdered by GALAVAN, who looks like a hero. However, DETECTIVE JIM GORDON still isn't so sure.

JIM
Hmm, I'm starting to suspect Galavan isn't a good guy.

THE AUDIENCE
About time! You're a crap cop.

Meanwhile, EDWARD NYGMA has killed his crush's boyfriend and started to date her.

EDWARD
I love you so much!

MISS KRINGLE
So do I!... Hang on, did you kill my boyfriend?

EDWARD
...Bugger.

He kills MISS KRINGLE. Elsewhere, PENGUIN is in charge of Gotham, but he falls from grace, loses his mum, ends up in Arkham and then finds his dad, PEE-WEE HERMAN.

PEE-WEE HERMAN
I love you so much!

PENGUIN
I love you so much!

PENGUIN's dad is killed.

PENGUIN
...Bugger.

Inside Arkham Asylum, DR HUGO STRANGE is experimenting on inmates, making super-powered creatures and releasing them. The universe grows old and TIME ITSELF almost ends before anybody notices.

JIM
Hmm, I'm starting to suspect Dr Strange isn't a good guy.

THE AUDIENCE
About time! You're a crap cop.

BRUCE WAYNE discovers that DR STRANGE killed his parents.

BRUCE
I will defeat this evil foe!

Instead, BRUCE is held captive by DR STRANGE and almost blown up.

THE AUDIENCE

And you're a crap Dark Knight.

BRUCE
I haven't even hit puberty yet, give me a bloody chance.

Arkham Asylum's MONSTER INMATES are released into Gotham. They shamble off, into the shadows.

THE AUDIENCE
Will next season be called "Villains Hit Big City, Find Jobs, Get On The Housing Ladder"?

THE WRITERS
Actually we're going with "Batman Vs Puberty".

BRUCE
I will defeat this evil foe!

BRUCE'S HORMONES
We're going to make him even more moody.

THE AUDIENCE
...And Batman begins!

Jayne Nelson



Well at least everyone had got the memo about the dress code.

SEASON 3

AGENTS OF SHIELD

Marvel's last bastion of network TV

- ▶ **UK Broadcast** E4, finished
- ▶ **US Broadcast** ABC, finished
- ▶ **Episodes Reviewed** 3.01-3.22

◉ **What a shame that as Marvel's Agents Of SHIELD concludes its best season yet, its future has never looked shakier.** While Marvel's big screen offerings go from strength to strength, on network TV the company's pocket universe is on the verge of imploding. *Agent Carter* has been cancelled. *Marvel's Most Wanted* stumbled at the pilot stage. *Agents Of SHIELD* itself will move from a 9pm to a 10pm slot on ABC for season four. It's not looking good. It's mystifying why *Agents Of SHIELD* is struggling, especially with the likes of *Civil War* providing free publicity. Admittedly, three years back, the

series got off to a unpromising start, disappointing those expecting a weekly *Avengers*, delivering instead a high-tech *Scooby-Doo* complete with Mystery Machine. Since then the show has improved exponentially, with the Inhuman-fuelled season three delivering, if not the *Avengers* every week, then perhaps the X-Men. This is also the most consistent, innovative and surprising season so far, with a hell of a midseason gamechanger in which Grant Ward is reincarnated as Hydra's god, Hive. Along the way Simmons becomes stranded on a near-deserted alien planet in the show's bravest episode yet; Bobbi and Hunter leave SHIELD in a twisty-turny Cold War thriller that proves you don't need to kill characters to give them an

emotional exit; Hive kills people very unpleasantly; there are many excellently scripted moral arguments about how to deal with the Inhuman threat; and Fitz and Simmons whisper sweet quantum physics to each other in the most adorable geek romance ever. Sadly, at times *SHIELD* still feels a little old school in an era of Netflix superhero shows. Visually, despite excellent effects, the show can be drab, with workmanlike design and direction. The constant quipping, while often very funny, occasionally feels like an excuse to avoid proper dialogue. But if you like impressive comic book action with lots of jawdropping twists, the occasional emotional kick in the guts and engaging central characters, *SHIELD* remains a satisfying watch. **Dave Golder**

ZOOM IN



BEST EPISODE ▲
→ "Spacetime" (3.15) is a new, and very inventive, twist on the "Days Of Future Past" idea. Plus cool death-by-exosuit.

TRIVIA
→ Gideon Malick's mansion is the same building used as Wayne Manor in the 1960s *Batman* TV series - 380 San Rafael Ave, Pasadena, California.

IT'S WOSSISNAME
→ Whoever decided to cast John Hannah in a recurring role as a shifty cyberneticist deserves a pay bonus.

BEST MOMENT
→ The Hive versus Lash smackdown in "Emancipation" (3.20).

DID YOU SPOT? ▼
→ The character Edwin Abbott in "Spacetime" is named after the author of *Flatland*. Fitz's explanation for time in the episode alludes to that book.



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WEREWOLVES

Get in a hairy situation with these 20 lycanthrope-themed questions

Quizmaster: Ian Berriman, Reviews Editor

QUESTION 1

Name the only werewolf movie made by Hammer Films. Hint: it stars Oliver Reed.

QUESTION 2

Which TV impressionist played a werewolf in the Sylvester McCoy *Doctor Who* story "The Greatest Show In The Galaxy"?

QUESTION 3

What do the actors Russell Tovey and Sam Huntington have in common?

QUESTION 4 PICTURE QUESTION

Name this actor.

QUESTION 5

Which female-centric werewolf film focuses on the teenage Fitzgerald sisters?

QUESTION 6

Which Spanish actor/writer/director played a werewolf by the name of Waldemar Daninsky in a dozen different films, starting in 1968?

QUESTION 7

Which franchise features the shape-shifting Quileute tribe? (Okay, okay – strictly speaking they're not werewolves. But they can turn into wolves...)

QUESTION 8 PICTURE QUESTION

Which make-up maestro was responsible for this classic werewolf transformation scene?

QUESTION 9

Aroooooooooo! "Werewolves Of London" – who performed this 1978 song?



QUESTION 4



QUESTION 8



QUESTION 12



QUESTION 17

QUESTION 10

Which cult film director was responsible for the 1981 horror-comedy *Full Moon High*?

QUESTION 11

Which Marvel comic features a werewolf who goes by the appropriately canine name of Jack Russell?

QUESTION 12 PICTURE QUESTION

Identify the movie by the poster art.

QUESTION 13

Name the 2002 film in which a bunch of British Army squaddies are attacked by werewolves during a training exercise in the Highlands.

QUESTION 14

Which werewolf movie features a basketball team called the Beacontown Beavers?

QUESTION 15

Name the friendly werewolf played by Seth Green in *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*.

QUESTION 16

What word is used to describe the werewolves in the *Underworld* movies?

QUESTION 17 PICTURE QUESTION

What's the title of this *Doctor Who* episode?

QUESTION 18

Which actor played the main character in 2010's *The Wolfman*?

QUESTION 19

Here's some dialogue from 1941's *The Wolf Man*. "Even a man who is pure in heart and says his prayers by night, may become a wolf when the ----- blooms and the autumn moon is bright." What's the missing word?

QUESTION 20

Where was the 1997 sequel to *An American Werewolf In London* set?



Answers
1 The Curse Of The Werewolf
2 Jessica Martin 3 Playing the main werewolf in *Being Human* (UK/US)
4 Lon Chaney Jr 5 Ginger Snaps
6 Paul Naschy 7 *Twilight* 8 Rick Baker 9 Warren Zevon 10 Larry Cohen 11 *Werewolf By Night*
12 *The Howling* 13 *Dog Soldiers*
14 *Ten Wolf* 15 Oz 16 Lycans
17 "Tooth And Claw" 18 Benicio del Toro 19 Wolfbane 20 Paris

How did you do?

Which phase of the Moon are you?



→ 0-5
New Moon



→ 6-10
Crescent Moon



→ 11-15
Half Moon



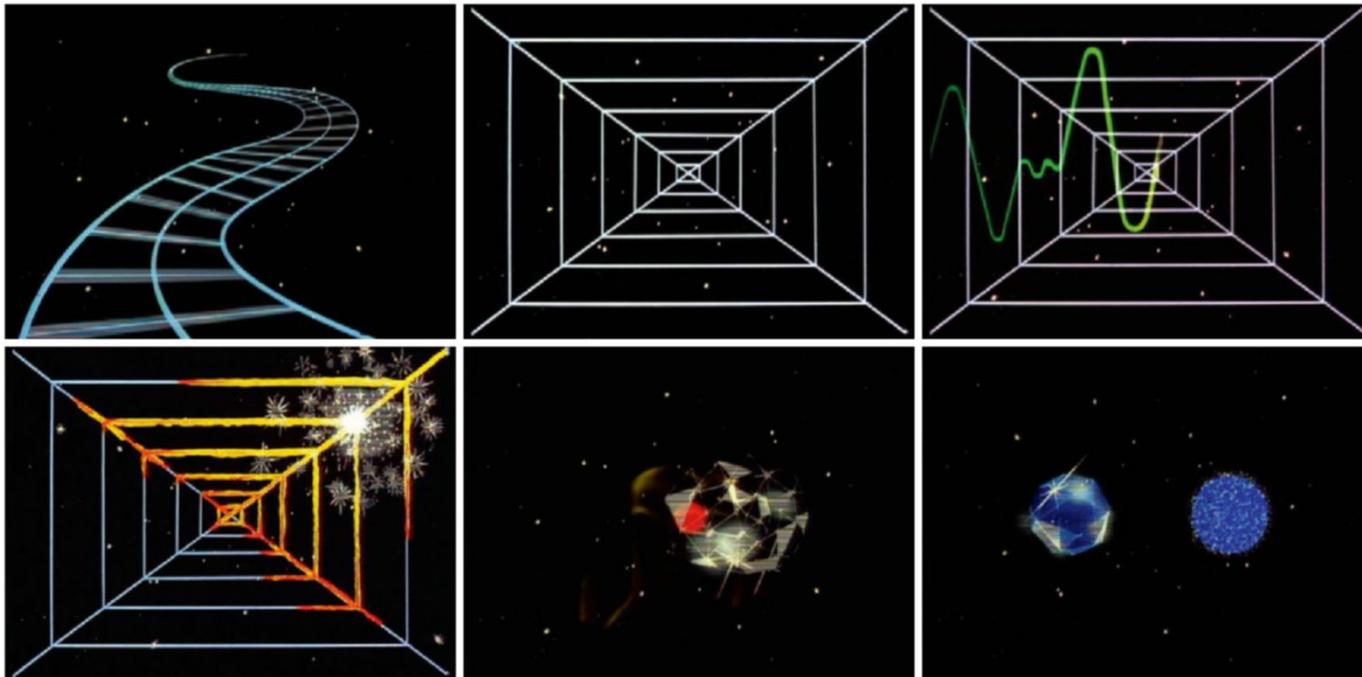
→ 16-19
Gibbous Moon



→ 20
Full Moon

Total Recall

Personal recollections of cherished sci-fi



SAPPHIRE AND STEEL'S TITLE SEQUENCE

Nick Setchfield, Features Editor

Television title sequences tended to make sense in the '70s. Imported cop shows reeled you in with rapidfire montages of rough justice and burning tyre rubber. Quiz shows tempted you with aspirationally spangly graphics and the soul-stirring words "From Norwich, it's the Sale of the Century!" *Coronation Street's* eternal northern terraces were reassuringly free of that foreign art muck.

So imagine the national brain-melt that met episode one of *Sapphire And Steel* when it debuted in July 1979, an improbable squatter in the 7pm *Emmerdale Farm* slot. Even now, nearly four decades on, its title sequence remains a masterclass of wilful weirdness.

It begins with an insistent shimmer of notes, like a signal reaching you from some remote, unknowable realm (HTV Wales, in my case). A pale blue walkway unfolds against a primitive animated starfield. A grid forms. Is it a spider's web? Or a targeting display? A green squiggle races across it, pulsing like a hospital monitor. In the corner of the screen a cartoon star ignites.

Then comes the voice. "Any irregularities will be handled by the



forces controlling each dimension," it declares, and it sounds as if God's in no mood for explanations. The grid fizzes like a sparkler, explodes, decays. "Transuranic heavy elements may not be used where there is life." You hear the words but you need a particle collider to decode them.

An ominous, half-glimpsed shape hovers on the screen (Dr Fate's helmet? The Great Lord Cthulhu?). "Medium atomic weights are available," the voice assures us, and that's a good thing, right? Kettle drums pound. Sparkling pinballs race out of the darkness. "Gold, lead, copper, jet, diamond, radium, sapphire, silver and steel..." It's the periodic table as poetry. "Sapphire and Steel have been assigned!" God, the thrill of that pay-off, every time.

As a kid I memorised every word of that cryptic, electrifying introduction (I had to ask my dad what transuranic meant – he didn't know, which made it extra-cool). I liked that it left space for answers. As inscrutable, as intriguing, as its heroes and their adventures, this isn't just a title sequence – it's pure imagination fuel. ●

Just like Sapphire, Nick is good at turning back time.

Fact Attack!

→ The man behind the voiceover has never been identified. One popular candidate is David Suchet, but he has no memory of doing it.

→ The show's theme is by Cyril Ornadel, who also composed the song "If I Ruled The World", covered by Tom Jones, James Brown and more.

→ None of the stories have titles – any you may see are fan inventions. The adventures are commonly referred to as Assignments One to Six.

→ In 2015 it was announced that *Luther* creator Neil Cross is working on a revival of the show, emphasising the horror elements.

SEE YOU
NEXT MONTH!
20 JULY
DETAILS ON
PAGE 41

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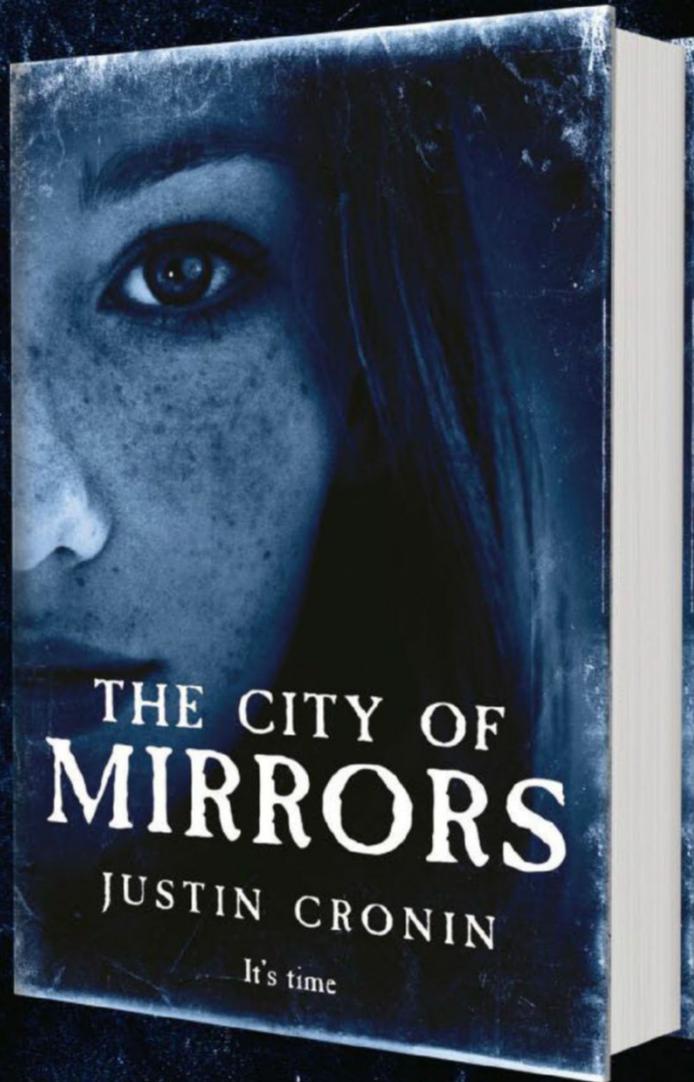
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