

# SPACE SQUID

**FREE!**

Issue 10

Summer 2011



jungles · piper spawn  
monkeys · bashful blood  
mouth · dammit, doctor te

dammit, doctor terror · comic · cursed jungles · piper spawn  
les · piper spawn · autocide · explorer monkeys · bashful b  
ys · bashful bloodsucker · pottermouth · dammit, doctor

## The Bizarro Issue

YOUR PUNY PLANET'S FINEST SELF-STORIES & HIJINX CHILDISH YET NOT FOR CHILDREN

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BOULDER,  
COLORADO

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UNIONTOWN, OHIO

## SEX SYMBOL

**PUBS**

*UNDERGROUND VOICES, SPLASH OF RED, GHOST OCEAN, DANSE MACABRE, FOGGED CLARITY, E-BOOK: A MIND IS A TERRIBLE THING TO TASTE*  
**X-MEN: FIRST CLASS 60s EVENT I FORREST GUMPED**  
Rogue giving Sonny Liston a hug on February 25, 1964.

## HAPPY LOVEPET REJUVENATOR

**PUBS**

*MURKY DEPTHS, BARDS AND SAGES, KASMA SF*  
**X-MEN: FIRST CLASS 60s EVENT I FORREST GUMPED**  
Crowd control at Woodstock, with matching weed-camo tights.

## INTERLUDE

**PUBS**

*BIZARRO CENTRAL (INTERLUDE'S FIRST APPEARANCE), SHORT, FAST, AND DEADLY*  
**X-MEN: FIRST CLASS 60s EVENT I FORREST GUMPED**  
Teleported onstage at Woodstock. No one noticed.

## JUNGLE GROWTH

**PUBS**

*ASSHOLE WEEKLY, ASSHOLE MONTHLY, ASSHOLE QUARTERLY*  
**X-MEN: FIRST CLASS 60s EVENT I FORREST GUMPED**  
Being an asshole.

## MORNING ESPRESSO

**PUBS**

*NOVEL: SOUNDTRACK TO THE END OF THE WORLD, ELECTRIC SPEC, TQR STORIES, ON SPEC, BLACK INK HORROR, ARCANE MAGAZINE, A CAPELLA ZOO*  
**X-MEN: FIRST CLASS 60s EVENT I FORREST GUMPED**  
In passing, I told Bob Dylan acoustic was old news.

## LITTLE GREEN PILLS

**PUBS**

*WEIRDYEAR (PILLS' FIRST APPEARANCE), INTERTEXT, THE EDGE, BARDS AND SAGES, ANTHOLOGY: WRETCHED MOMENTS*

## EXPLORING

**PUBS**

*ON THE PREMISES, NECROTIC TISSUE, HORROR GARAGE, MALPRACTICE: AN ANTHOLOGY OF BEDSIDE TERROR*  
**X-MEN: FIRST CLASS 60s EVENT I FORREST GUMPED**  
Mama always said I'd save Dr. King. She was wrong.

## LAB WORK

**PUBS**

*THE SOUTHERN REVIEW, WITNESS, PLEIADES, ASIA LITERARY REVIEW, AND THE SUN*  
**X-MEN: FIRST CLASS 60s EVENT I FORREST GUMPED**  
Gibby's 17-strikeout game in the '68 World Series.

## PROPHECY NEGOTIATIONS

**PUBS**

*EVERY DAY FICTION, GOLDEN VISIONS, ELECTRIC SPEC, BULL SPEC*  
**X-MEN: FIRST CLASS 60s EVENT I FORREST GUMPED**  
Mastermind behind human/mutant integration programming: aka, *Sesame Street*.

## NOSFER@TU

**PUBS**

*KGB BAR LIT JOURNAL, SHOCK TOTEM, DANSE MACABRE*

## BEST BOY, BRIGHTEST BOY

**PUBS**

*NECROTIC TISSUE, SILVER BLADE, KALEIDOTROPE*  
**X-MEN: FIRST CLASS 60s EVENT I FORREST GUMPED**  
First *Doctor Who* episode, 1963, caveman costume.

## INK FROM THE EDITORS



## WAY AHEAD OF YOU

When we started *Space Squid* more than five years ago, it was with one simple goal in mind: To attach ourselves parasitically to the next literary movement. For a while we hooked ourselves to the Inferno/Krusher movement and we thought we had found our ticket to the gravy train. But now *Space Squid* finds itself riding high atop the spurting wave of Bizarro Fiction, a nascent genre that we have apparently been publishing all along. Which is why we have made this our extra-special Bizarro issue...by not doing anything different. We've got poop jokes, cross-dressing, and a story from our arch-nemesis, Mikal Trimm. And maybe, just maybe, this familiar formula will shatter the decadent status quo and generate something a thousand times more feral and awesome. So here's looking at you, Bizarro Fiction. God bless your motherfucking clowns.

## EDITORIAL CHUM

**MATTHEW BEY** **D CHANG** **STEVE WILSON** **ELLE VAN HENSBERGEN**  
KEEPER OF THE TABLETS THE GOLEM KING INDESIGN-MANCER SLUSH BENDER

## FEATURE PRESENTATION

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### FATHER

**PUBS**

*NOVELS: THE LAST DRAGON, MAZE*  
**X-MEN: FIRST CLASS 60s EVENT I FORREST GUMPED**  
On April 1, 1963, used mutated mouth powers to hum the organ in the debut episode of *General Hospital*.

**J.M. MCDERMOTT**  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

## OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

4, 8	7	10	11	12	20	22
<b>CHRIS FRIEND</b> ILLUSTRATOR PARKERSBURG, WV	<b>SHAUN RILEY</b> CARTOONIST	<b>E. BERGER</b> ILLUSTRATOR	<b>JONES E.</b> CARTOONIST GRAFTON, WI	<b>JULIA HARVEY</b> ILLUSTRATOR AUSTIN, TX	<b>R.L. CARTER</b> ILLUSTRATOR TULSA, OK	<b>CHRIS WALTRIP</b> ILLUSTRATOR AUSTIN, TX
24	28	30	COVER			
<b>JEREMIAH DUSEK</b> ILLUSTRATOR	<b>SAL AYALA</b> CARTOONIST POMONA, CA	<b>ROB HOVDEN</b> COMIC WRITERS	<b>PHIL ASHWORTH</b> CARTOONIST	<b>FRED STANTON</b> MODEL AUSTIN, TX	<b>MICHELLE BELISLE</b> MODEL AUSTIN, TX	

# Space Squid gets archived

## Complete works venerated at Cushing Library



### LAST FALL

In September, knowing that countless archives would soon be kicking down our door to get a piece of us, your editors preemptively donated the complete works of *Space Squid*—including the clay tablets that are now the stuff of legend—to the Science Fiction and Fantasy Collection at the Cushing Memorial Library and Archives at Texas A&M University. *Space Squid* now reigns supreme over lesser works like the university's Alex Haley Archive and its collection of John Donne's poetry. The collection's curator, Cait Coker, went so far as to protect the precious tablet in the kind of protective box someone in her line of work would use on an actual ancient artifact, which we thought was only fitting.



## Tablet left for future archeologists

### LAST WINTER

Here are some clay tablet shards we left outside for a future archeologist to find. His name is John. He's a friend of ours, but he hasn't said anything so we figure he didn't find it.

## Issue #9 Squid Grrrl Megan Parker: The Lost Q&A



**Without the law we are nothing. Thomas Jefferson said that. Didn't he?**

\*Silence, looks around.\*

**Sumerian cuneiform survived as a communications medium well into the second century CE. Compare and contrast with 133t speak.**

I used to have a pink slidey phone that the 3 button broke on, and suddenly, the 3, e, f, and g broke. We were Christmas shopping when it happened, and I said something like, "Oh my god my fucking 3 just broke." And then I laughed. I couldn't even use the fucking 3 to replace the e! I couldn't spell out OR use the number 3. I had to get creative. I once

told a friend that I less than 2 + 1 of them. Yeah. I guess that's what all printing comes down to, eventually, getting creative to get your point across.

**I'm really into Korean TV drama right now. Why don't you just talk about that for a bit.**

Well, I don't know much about Korean TV, but I could maybe totally be cool with that, if it's anything like Japanese game shows, or the Chinese Boob Clamp. Have you seen the Boob Clamp? I desperately need one of those!

**Is it okay to catch panfish? You, know, like deliberately?**

I don't see why it wouldn't be. But what the hell do I know, I don't even like fish.



# Sex Symbol

BY NICK KIMBRO

I've been showing her my teeth all night—flashing them from across the table and clanging them against my glass whenever I take a sip. The waiter asks me about the wine menu and I say: “I never drink ... wine,” in my best Bela Lugosi accent. She eats it up, although she has no problem drinking wine herself: She orders three glasses, and the duck.

I watch her mouth move, her neck. Her mouth. Her neck.

And when the check arrives, she excuses herself to go to the bathroom. I follow, locking the door and standing behind her while she faces the mirror. She watches while her zipper unfurls, as of its own volition, and the tops of her jeans splay apart. She watches while her panties bulge—nearly doubles over with excitement. Then she excuses herself again. “I really do have to pee,” she says, and I wait for her to finish.

We leave the bathroom together. On our way to the door the waiter intercepts us and politely reminds me about the check.

I flash him my teeth and hiss.

His mouth forms a straight line.

“Would you like to speak to a manager?” he asks.

“No. Just left my wallet in the car.”

Later, in the car, she leans across the gear-shift and buries her face in my lap. We're parked in an empty lot within nose-shot of the recycling plant. The smell of garbage and chemicals fills the car, along with orange light and shadow from a streetlamp. I feel her wet lips part and tell her that, when she is finished, I am going to eat her.

She makes a muffled sound like laughter, although sexier.

“Really,” I say. “We still do that, you know.”

Her lips move faster and I forget what I am talking about. My head presses against the seat-back, and one set of fingers digs in between the window while the other cups the base of her skull. I bare my teeth at the rearview mirror but, for obvious reasons, see nothing.

I try to convince myself that, when she is done, I really will drain her. Like I said. Like a tube of toothpaste.

“I am dangerous,” I breathe to myself, and as if in response, one of my bared fangs pricks my lip. Blood dribbles down my chin, drips onto the bare thigh next to where she is bent. I return to the mirror and bare my teeth again. A suspended stream of blood appears in the reflection.

Yes, I think at last, closing my eyes. I truly am terrifying. ▲



Vampires are bizarre only when they're ironic.

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS FRIEND

# Happy Lovepet Animal Rejuvenator TM!!!

BY JACK SKELTER

Congradulations!!! And Thanks You!!! For purchasing **HAPPY LOVEPET ANIMAL REJUVENATOR TM** product!!! Made pridely in nice place Guangzhou, China, our newest product giving immensely satisfaction to pet owner in whole wide world!!!

Product using revolutionary scientifical technologies discovered by **HAPPY LOVEPET LABORATORIES** (China), Inc. —not copycat!!!  
(Please to ignore scandal lawsuits filed by greedy Sony-Matsushita-Warner LLC and Wright Biotechnologies Limited)

Your **HAPPY LOVEPET ANIMAL REJUVENATOR TM** box set is containing:

- (a) 1 x main casing (b) 1 x 9MV universal power adaptor (c) 1 x electrode kit (d) 2 x special gel tube
- (e) 1 x inflatable animal bed cushion (approx 700mm x 1200mm) — hand pump include

## METHOD OF SETUP:

- (1) Putting main casing (a) on flat surface like floor, ground, table  
(wet surface or human lap not recommending due to risk schock electrically).

**WARNING:** Main casing keep safe!! Nothing bumping or knocking!

- (2) Connecting power adaptor (b) to side of main casing (a).
- (3) Plugging power adaptor (b) to outlet source (not turn on power yet).
- (4) Connecting electrode kit (c) to main casing (a).
- (5) Inflating animal bed cushion (e). Set aside.

## METHOD OF OPERATINGS:

- (i) Placing freshly dead animal on animal bed cushion (e) — animal must fitting on bed cushion; if not fitting, cannot happened, sorry.
- (ii) If animal furred, shave two spots on animal head approx 30mm — 100mm apart (depend on animal sized). Shave not including in box. If animal head missing or squished, cannot happened, sorry.
- (iii) Spreading special gel (d) on two shaved spot (spread not too thick, just enough).

**WARNING:** Not use any else gel!!!

- (iv) Connecting electrode kit (c) suction cups to two shaved spot, be careful!
- (v) Turning on power switch, main casing (a). Not touching animal!
- (vi) After heard “beep” sound, waiting 5 to 7 minutes approx for resultung.
- (vii) If nothing happen, check or repeating **METHOD OF SETUP**.
- (viii) If nothing still happen, repeating steps (i) through (vii) until happen.

## CAUTIONS:

- \*Not connecting **HAPPY LOVEPET** product to alive animals!!  
(Company not responsible for runaway or explode!)
- \*Not connecting **HAPPY LOVEPET** product to animal dead 3 days or more!!  
(Warranty not apply to adult or children scaring!).

Engrish is bizarro in a mundane context

# Interlude

BY KARL A. FISCHER

**A**t last, sweet relief. You buckle your belt and zip up your pants, feeling as though you weigh several pounds less. You diligently ignore what-  
ever stained the floor orange and wash your hands. Like any good convenience store bathroom, a condom dispenser hovers just over the sink. It also purports to sell Swedish massage oil, vibrators, and the secret to lasting happiness: "You must make four purchases in order to acquire the full set." You scoff.

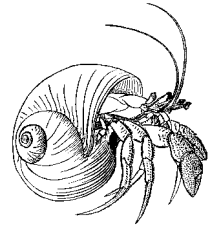
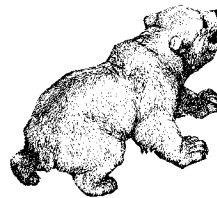
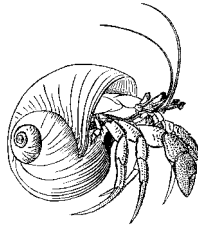
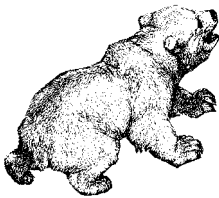
the sunset. However, at this moment, such thoughts are only a distant comfort. He is holding a prairie dog, which is holding a gun.

"This isn't a public rest stop," he says in a thick accent. "Read the sign."

You read the sign: "You must be born on or before this date in order to purchase—"

"The other sign. Bathroom's for paying customers only."

The prairie dog loads a bullet into the chamber of its gun and yips. You take notice of the large hermit crabs on the floor, each



Breakfast food during the day is usually bizarre

When you reemerge, you find that the store's selection of candy has been much reduced, the shelves picked clean like a vultured corpse. Only bags of black licorice and something called Cuntpunching Delicious remain. The coffee pots are empty and the parking lot is devoid of all cars except your tiny red shitbox. You reason that your piss was so fulfilling that you entered into a brief state of mythic time. As you head for the door, a small cough alerts you to the presence of a paunchy Tibetan man behind the counter. He does not look very happy.

You suppose that, at home, he is a perfectly hospitable man, perhaps even a loving father. You imagine him inviting his neighbors over for beer and kabobs and conversing languidly while the children throw rocks into

of which has a knife taped to its shell. You look around for something edible and cheap. Hotdogs are out of the question. Black licorice is a no. You note the selection of beer, but drinking and driving, while fun, is also out of question (thirty days sober and going strong).

Resolved, you reach for the Cuntpunching Delicious, the last one in the box, but the clerk looses a growl before your fingers can close. "Not that. I'm saving that for later."

One of the hermit crabs attempts to scavenge your shoe for nutrients and its knife falls off. Nothing seems even remotely desirable until you survey the end of the beverage aisle. You eventually pick out a bottle of fruit-flavored drink and make towards the counter.

ILLUSTRATIONS CLIPPED BY STEVE WILSON

The sight of your credit card causes some contention.

"There will be a 79-cent transaction fee," says the clerk.

You groan. All you have in real money is a pair of quarters. The prairie dog looks antsy and the hermit crabs start to swarm. A bear in a golf cart pulls into a handicapped spot and begins eyeing your pathetic excuse for a car. It and the clerk wave at one another.

You fondle the quarters for comfort, as you might your own testicles, when inspiration strikes. You hold up the coins and walk back into the bathroom. The condom dispenser leers at you from the sink. It shudders when you deposit the fifty cents, as if insulted by its own purpose in life, and only grudgingly allows you to rotate its valve. A small plastic container is released into your hand.

You're not sure whether you got the massage oil or a vibrator.

Returning to the counter, you hold up the dispensed good. This does not please the clerk, but even he must concede that you are now a paying customer. He puts his prairie dog away and sits down to read a book. The bear and its golf cart are nowhere to be found.

Without further obstacle, you exit the convenience store and scramble back into your red clown car. You find that you did not get either the oil or a vibrator. The package glows with displaced light and warms your hands. You diligently place the secret of lasting happiness in between your thighs and resume your drive through the cold desert as day rapidly descends into night. ▲

CÖMÍCK BY SHAUN RILEY

Å WÖRD FRÖM ÖUR SPÖNSÖR



The Drabblecast  
www.drabblecast.org

A Free, Weekly Podcast Featuring  
Strange Stories, by Strange Authors,  
for Strange Listeners - Such as Yourself

# Jungle Growth

BY MIKAL TRIMM

**G**od, I hate this place." Wendell sweated in rivers instead of rivulets, deluges rather than drips. Since he stood over six feet and weighed in at a paltry hundred-eighty pounds, this pissed him off to no end.

At his side, short pudgy Mark Guevara had the nerve to wipe a single bead of sweat off his forehead. This pissed Wendell off even more. "Don't worry, sir. With the deal you just made, I doubt you'll see it again." Wendell never knew if Guevara taunted him deliberately, or if he just didn't realize how mocking he sounded. Hell of an assistant, otherwise.

They'd taken the Land Rover as far as they could into this godforsaken ass-end of the Amazon Basin, then relied on the Brazilian guide to get them closer to their goal: two thousand acres of prime Amazonian wood, just waiting for Wendell to re-purpose for the betterment of mankind.

Or WGC Industries. Whichever came first.

They'd left the guide behind to set up camp while they "took a quick look-see at their investment," as Wendell put it. No worries about getting lost—Guevara carried a fancy little GPS tracker with enough power to receive satellite signals even in the bowels of Hell itself, or so the literature claimed.

As far as Wendell was concerned, he was testing their advertising claims at this very moment.

"So, why we gotta be so hush-hush about this, Mark? Hell, backwards tribes in the Amazon ain't nothing new—we've been flushing these natives out for years now."

"Most of the tribes we've displaced with our, um, reclamation efforts have had at least some contact with the outside world—

Brazilian authorities, anthropologists, whatever. These particular natives," and there Guevara went again, saying a word like he was really saying something clever, "have had no contact with the outside world, sir. None."

"So?"

"So, they're true primitives. You show them a lighter, it's magic. You try to take a picture, they think you're stealing their essence. You try to cut down their trees, they think you're murdering their ancestors. Get it?"

Wendell smiled. "Yeah, I get it. So to them, I'm God, right?"

"No, sir." Guevara almost smiled. "You're the Devil."

Wendell almost-smiled back. "Well, at least they got something right."

A half-hour deeper into the wetness greenness hotness, and Wendell decided that anything living in this climate didn't deserve to live, period. To Wendell, everything stank



Hatred of Mikal Trimm isn't bizarre in the slightest.

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS FRIEND



of rot, decay, death. He sneezed once, again, and then coughed up a wad of phlegm that landed on his shoe, green and glimmering. He caught his breath finally, looked up, and Guevara was gone.

“Gueva—cough—Mark! Where’d you go?”

“You should see this, sir. Seriously.”

A voice in the distance, and Wendell followed it, gasping and hacking all the while. He stumbled into what amounted to a clearing in this wretched place, still wheezing for breath.

He barely managed a good inhale when he found himself unable to breathe again. Guevara, standing a few feet away, seemed similarly affected.

The tree was huge. The frigging Empire State Building of the Amazon, so thick at its base that even redwoods would withdraw their shallow roots in shame. Wendell approached it like a penitent at his Savior’s feet, almost kneeling in supplication. The gnarled trunk showed him knots and burls that, if he squinted the right way, looked like faces, either in repose or tortured beyond

belief, depending on the play of light through the jungle canopy.

Wendell breathed out, finally. “Are there more like these?”

Guevara made a move that could be a nod, a shrug, or a reaction to an insect bite.

“Whatever. Take a picture, me by this bastard, just for scale. We can’t cut this one down.”

Guevara dug his digital camera out of a pocket of his cargo pants, held it to his chest. “We can’t? Really?”

Damn that tone in his voice. “Nope. This one goes on the masthead. Looks good for our investors. I may be the Devil down here, but I’m damn sure God to them.”

Wendell walked up to the trunk, placed his hand against it, and smiled for the camera.

He barely had time to feel the tree-bark writhing, then smiling against his hand before Guevara, his laughter echoing under the jungle’s canopy, took the picture and sucked his soul away. ▲

NON-LINEAR-TIME STORY JUMP NON-LINEAR-TIME STORY JUMP

# Best Boy, Brightest Boy

*continued from pg. 23*

When you caught them, they sang like nothing ever before had sung under the mountain.

I hunt once in a hundred years or more, but you left often—fifty years between, twenty years between, five years between. You threatened the sanctuary of the world under the mountain. I loved you, child of Hamelin, child of hunting, child of harm, but no magic could bind you. You had too many of my charms.

I cast you out. Oh woe and darkness under the mountain! I raged for days—years—generations at the loss, for you had been my pride and joy, my malicious son, my macabre son, my missing son. You begged to stay, but under the mountain is still my place of power. Your stolen magic could not oppose me there. The dark welcomed you when I

opened up the mountain and sent you away.

I watch you sometimes. You beat your drum, and they love you. They follow you and you catch them, just as you always did. You took the magic from me and you gave it a name. When you named it, I knew you had not forgotten. For what else would you have been thinking when you named your musical trap? Clear in your mind were the mountains that moved to bring you into your once kingdom. When they scream the words of your songs, loving you and your music magic even as you kill them, they pay homage to me, and my pipe, and the rocks that rolled to trap the children of Hamelin.

You and your music, my rock star, my raw star, my raging star. You and your rock and roll magic. ▲

# Morning Espresso at the

BY ANTHONY J. RAPINO

**L**arry, my boss, eyes the track marks on my arms. He licks his lips. "I'm going to unlock the door. Get ready."  
"Sure."

I go behind the counter and tie an apron around my waist. My arms ache, but I have to ignore it. It's early and people want their coffee.

Larry opens the door and three customers walk in. The one man and woman are dressed in business clothes. But the third man, the one making sure to walk just a little faster than the other two, looks like he spent the night in his clothes.

He collapses on the counter—leaning across the surface—and stares at my arms until I say, "What'll it be?"

"Espresso. Special bl-blend." His lips are cracked and bleeding. His hair is greasy.

"That's twenty-five dollars."

"I know. You think I don't know?"

I point at the counter. "Money up front."

His face puckers. "I-I only have..." He digs into his pockets and I hear change jingling.

The business man behind him takes the crumpled bum by the

shoulders and leads him out the door. The bum never even gets his hands back out of his pockets before he's tossed onto the street.

The woman has queued up and she places twenty-five dollars on the counter. "The special blend."

Another two customers wander in. I can tell from the look in their eyes what they want. It's going to be a long day.

To the woman, I say, "Right away."

When I turn to get the equipment from the shelf, I see Larry standing there, watching me.

I go back to the counter. First I take a cotton ball and tip the bottle of chlorhexidine to saturate it. Then I rub the cotton ball on the inside of my left arm. Next I unwrap a 17-gauge needle and attach the small hose. I crimp the other end with a clip.

The woman pushes her blonde hair behind her ears and leans closer to watch. Everyone waits with reverence. They've come to pray at the Church of Me.

I line up a number of espresso cups. I pump my fist a few times. I don't bother with the tourniquet any more. My veins are plump and ready. I push the needle into my skin. Some of



Grotesque customer service is bizarre.

ILLUSTRATION BY E. BERGER

# Church of Me

the onlookers gasp, an intake of breath like ecstasy. The woman lets a tiny moan slip.

The deep black liquid spills from my body and fills the crimped tube. I hold the end over the first cup and release the steaming fluid. As it pours into the cup, the smell of a dark roast espresso fills the café. My special blend. I refasten the clip. The blonde businesswoman wants to grab the cup. Her entire body is bent forward. But she waits for me to lift it to her.

She takes it, lowers her eyes, and drinks. She shivers then steals away to enjoy the rest of her coffee in peace.

The businessman is next. He places his money down and I fill his cup. I hold it out to him and he takes it, drinking the entirety of the cup in one gulp. His eyes are on me the entire time, and as if hypnotized, he reaches over the counter and tugs out the needle.

My lifeblood drips down my arm. It smells delicious even to me.

There is a moment when nothing happens. The man holding the tube seems shocked by his

own actions. Ashamed. He has blasphemed in the Church of Me.

But it passes.

He opens his mouth and drool drips over his chin. The customers behind him are stretching over each other to see. Someone moans. The bum that had been thrown out, as if summoned by the promise of my special blend, reappears in the doorway of the shop.

I have time only to say, "Don't."

The man leaps across the counter and latches onto my bleeding arm. At first he only sucks at the hole. Then he bites and coffee spills from me. But I don't blame him.

The other customers are on me now. I see Larry watching. He grabs the phone, starts to dial, but stops midway. He drops the receiver and joins the others. I don't blame him either.

They bite at my every fleshy bit and feed on my body and blood. As I fade, I wonder what they will do when I'm gone.

I wonder whose altar they will next pray before. ▲

THE LIFE AND LOVES OF THE PARADE'S GRAND MARSHAL FISHER AVERY  
CÖMICK BY JONES E. CÖMICK BY JONES E. CÖMICK



# Little Green Pills

BY PATRICK WHITTAKER

Lee put his foot down. Ahead of him was open road. No traffic lights, no cops. Just a narrow lane slicing through the English countryside.

It was 4 in the morning and the engine sang as its pistons pumped.

It had been one mother of a party. The booze, the birds and the music were above par but the pills had topped them all. Triangular and green. "What the hell are these?" he'd asked, examining the two that had just been placed in the palm of his hand.

"Like nothing you've tried before," said the girl, getting out of bed and starting to dress.

He didn't bother to ask what they did. When it came to drugs, there was no substitute for experience.

Lee washed the pills down with whisky. *Incredible*, he thought as he headed

home. Who knew time could run backwards? He saw he was up to 60 miles an hour. The hedges on either side of the lane blurred into a continuous green line.

The girl led Lee into a bedroom.

He unbuttoned his shirt. She dragged him onto the bed and teased his nipples with her tongue.

Just like before.

*I've gone back in time*, he realized. *It's the pills.*

*The pills I haven't taken yet.*

Lee washed the pills down with whisky. And the world stopped.

The girl froze in an impossible position: one leg raised, half in her jeans. Gravity should have floored her but she remained upright and motionless.

The thump-thump of music from the room below stopped.

The moth circling the ceiling light was

Bizarro rarely deals with time travel.

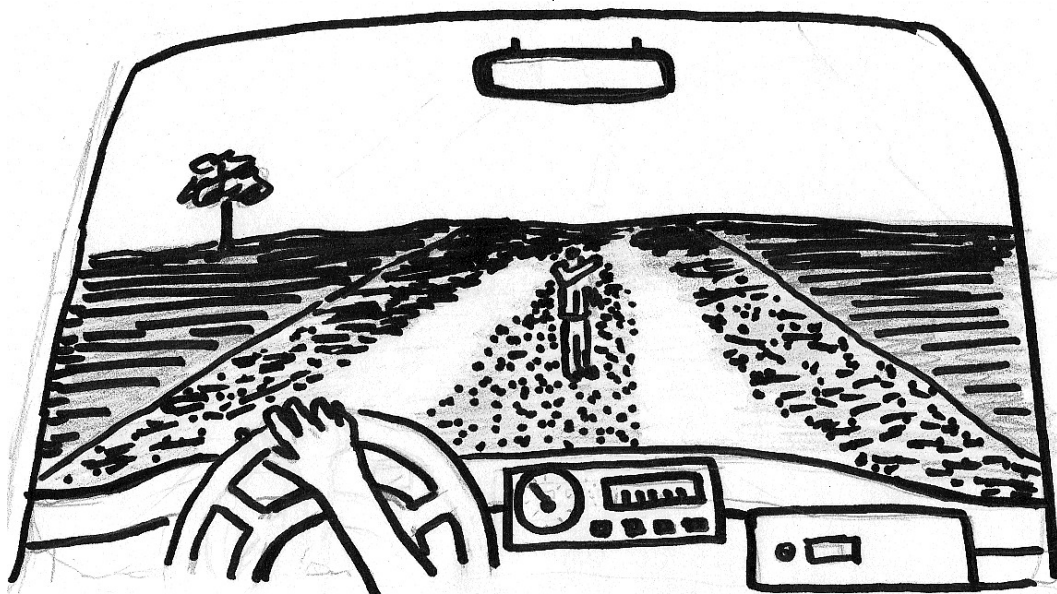


ILLUSTRATION BY JULIA HARVEY



arrested in mid-flight.

And then time ran backwards. The girl discarded her clothes. She climbed into the bed and remounted him.

He felt a burst of pleasure as his semen flowed back into his penis.

66 miles an hour now. He hadn't felt this good in a long, long time.

Having the same sex twice had been a blast, but doing it in reverse beat even that. If the girl hadn't disappeared without so much as a goodbye, he'd have offered her a lot of money for as many pills as she could supply.

He tried to find out who she was but nobody seemed to know. They hadn't seen her and had no idea what pills he was on about.

Lee hung around, hoping the girl would re- turn. Every now and then, time would speed up, slow down or run in reverse.

He had one joint and smoked it three times.

The needle hit 70.

An hour ago, he'd been driving down a motorway at 20 miles an hour. It felt more like 100.

As he took a bend, something was suddenly in his headlights. He hit the brakes. Time slowed.

A man stood like a mannequin in the middle of the road, arms raised to protect his face.

Lee's car crawled towards him, an agonising fraction of an inch at a time. He tried to hit the brake pedal but his foot felt like it was immersed in syrup.

The bonnet touched flesh. Metal crumpled. The man rose into the air at a leisurely rate.

And then time returned to normal. The man rolled across the roof and landed in a lifeless heap on the road behind.

Lee didn't stop.

*I didn't see him. I had no chance. What was he doing standing in the road like that?*

*I should go back. See if he's all right. But he can't be. Not at that speed.*

*Death must have been instant.*

*I'm loaded with booze and God knows what else. They'll do me for manslaughter. Lock me up and ban me from driving.*

*Got to keep moving. Get out of here before they find the body. There's nothing I can do for him now.*

Something caused the pistons to stop pumping. The car glided to a halt and its headlights went out.

Lee felt calm. As calm as the night. When he tried to restart the engine, it didn't so much as splutter.

He thought about the man he'd hit. Pictured his broken body lying in the middle of the road.

*If I ring for a mechanic, they'll see the dead man and the dent in my bonnet and that's me done for.*

*I have to go back. Hide him in a ditch. Then I can get the car fixed and head on home.*

He figured the accident had been about a mile away. With luck, he'd be there and back in less than an hour.

A full moon aided his progress.

He'd been walking for about twenty minutes when he found himself getting out of his car. The little green pills weren't finished with him yet.

As he set off once more, he wondered if he could go back to before the accident and stop it happening.

Lee reached the accident scene. There was no sign of a body.

He checked the hedges and the ditches and the fields they defined.

Nothing.

He walked along the road, keeping his eyes peeled. Still nothing.

*continued on pg. 27*

I HAVE TO GO  
**BACK.**  
**HIDE HIM IN A DITCH.**

# Exploring

BY BRYCE ALBERTSON

**C**ome on! Vamanos! Everybody let's go! Come on, let's get to it! I know that we can do it!"

The little brown-haired girl sang as she marched along, her pet monkey right behind her, just as his contract stated he should be. He smiled and sang, la la la, thinking about the check that would be waiting for him once he was done "exploring" for the day.

His smile grew wider still when he thought about the bottle of Thunderbird, the two grams of Peruvian flake, and the three solid hours of dungeon lovin' that check would buy. If he closed his eyes, he could still feel the spanking Mistress Mariana had given him last weekend.

*Ah...memories.*

The little brown-haired girl stopped. "Where are we going today, Socks?"

Socks the Monkey brushed at the leg of his shorts, pretending to swat away some dirt, but in reality, trying to readjust the chubby he was growing. "Grandma's house! Grandma's house!"

Thinking about Grandma helped. His chubby softened.

"Oh no!" The little brown-haired girl put her hands to her cheeks. "I forgot how to get there!"

"Oh no!" Socks did the same, but mockingly. *Check the Map, you fake-ass little bitch.*

"We should check the Map," the little

brown-haired girl said, removing her backpack. She placed it on the ground and rummaged through it until she found the Map, which began singing the moment she found it:

*"I'm the Map! I'm the Map! I'm the Map! I'm the Map! I'm the Maaaaaaaap!"*

Socks was glad he was high. It was the only way he could deal with this shit. "How do we get to Grandma's house?"

"Start at the waterfall," the Map said, "then cut through the graveyard, and then you're at Grandma's house!"

"Got it," Socks said.

"Waterfall! Graveyard! Grandma's house!" The Map shouted.

Socks scowled. "I said I got it"

"Waterfall! Graveyard! Grandma's hoooooouse!"

Socks crumpled the Map into a ball and stuffed it into the little brown-

haired girl's backpack. It screamed. Socks smiled.

"Socks!" The little brown-haired girl frowned. "That wasn't very nice."

Socks shook his head. "I didn't mean to be not nice. I'm just in a hurry to get to Mistress Mar...I mean...Grandma's house. I need some of her...uh...chocolate chip cookies."

"I'm hungry, too," the little brown-haired girl said. "Come on, vamanos!"

The two began their journey again, stopping at the edge of the graveyard.



To bizarre, children's TV is a lucious snort of devil's dandruff.

ILLUSTRATION BY STEVE WILSON

"It sure looks scary in there," the little brown-haired girl said.

*What's scary is that if you don't get your ass moving, it's gonna be Wednesday before I get my freak on.* "Yeah," said Socks, tugging open the wrought iron gate. "But nothing's gonna stop us, cause we're brave explorers!"

The little brown-haired girl's eyes widened. "But what if Stealer the Fox is hiding in there?"

"Then we'll just say 'Stealer no stealing' and he'll leave us alone," Socks said and then sighed, knowing what was coming now.

"Will you tell us if you see Stealer?" the little brown-haired girl asked as she turned away from Socks and stared blankly into the distance. She waited.

Socks shook his head.

"Muchas gracias," the little brown-haired girl said to her imaginary audience. "Alright, Socks. Let's go! *Come on, vamonos! Everybody let's go...*"

Socks mumbled the song with her, smiling when she would turn to look at him, but all the time, feeling as if something was dreadfully wrong. The hairs on his neck stood erect. He shivered. Something wasn't right with this graveyard. Too many of the graves appeared to be open.

Socks told himself that there was probably a fatal collision involving The Happy School Bus, a thought that would normally have made him smile, but if that was the case, surely the headstones would all be new. He stopped to inspect one of them. It read:

*Here lies*

*FRED McFEELY ROGERS*

*Born March 20, 1928*

*Died February 27, 2003*

*In loving memory of one who brought so many smiles to so many children.*

"Poor sweater-changing fuck," Socks said under his breath.

The little brown-haired girl turned. "What did you say, Socks?"

"I said poor sweater-changing luck," Socks said. "I heard he died trying to put on a sweater without taking it off the coat rack."

The little brown-haired girl blinked for the third time that day. "Really?"

Just then, a skeletal hand burst from the ground and made a swipe at Socks. He jumped away just in time.

"Zombies!" Socks shouted.

"Oh no!" The little brown-haired girl slapped her hands to her cheeks. "What should we do, boys and girls?"

As she turned to stare into the distance, Socks grabbed her arm and began to drag her out of the graveyard. There was no way he was going to let his meal ticket die. "Run, bitch! Run!"

Other corpses in various states of decay began to claw their way out of the moist red clay. One opened his mouth and black blood drooled out onto his rotting lime green cardigan. He howled as Socks and the little brown-haired girl ran past. "Braaaaaaaains!"

Socks dashed from the graveyard, dragging the little brown-haired girl behind him. The dead weight slowed him, allowing the zombies to stay within striking distance as the little brown-haired girl waited for a response from her imaginary audience.

Reaching Grandma's house, Socks banged frantically on the door. "Help! For

*continued on pg. 27*

**If you don't get your ass moving,  
it's gonna be Wednesday**

**before I get  
my freak on.**

# Pottermore

## trivia collector cards!

BY STEVE WILSON

**Cornelius Fudge**  
**Minister of Magic**



Investigated for sending suggestive photos of himself to women via owl post.

**Lucius Malfoy**  
**Pureblood Death eater**



Underwent years of marriage counseling with Narcissa under a strictly Freudian sphinx.

**Filius Flitwick**  
**Professor of Charms**



Donated to muggle sperm bank for extra cash during wizard graduate school.

**Nick**  
**Nearly Headless Ghost**



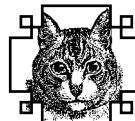
Haunted a miniature-golf course before coming to Hogwarts.

**Victor Krum**  
**Seeker for Bulgaria**



Accused of potion doping by former teammates.

**Crookshanks**  
**Hermione Granger's Cat**



Fathered several generations of Diagon Alley stray cats before getting fixed.

**MINISTRY BAILS OUT  
MAGIC BROOM INDUSTRY!**



**SEAMUS FINNIGAN  
HAS DYSLEXIA!**





"... the fresh Potter material ... already stretches to 18,000 words about the novels' characters, places and objects, with more to come. 'I generated more material than ever appeared in the books,' says Rowling. 'I thought who would ever want to know the significance of all the difference wand woods?...Now you can go and see.'"

— "Pottermore website launched by JK Rowling as 'give-back' to fans" — *Guardian*, June 23, 2011

## E. COLI BREAKOUT AT HONEYDUKES!



## UNEMPLOYED WIZARDS RIOT IN DIAGON ALLEY!

**Dean Thomas**  
**Gryffindor Student**



Arrested for looting  
electronics store with  
summoning charm  
during Tottenham riots.

**Madam Pomfrey**  
**Hogwarts Nurse**



Suspended for giving  
controversial third-term  
fetal-disapparation to  
Pansy Parkinson.

**Dennis Creevey**  
**Gryffindor Student**



Inspired by Wyrld Sisters  
lyrcis to open fire on potions  
class with Avada Kedavra  
Curse.

**Arthur Weasley**  
**Ministry Staffer**



Treated erectile  
dysfunction with regular  
dosage of armadillo bile  
and wolfsbane.

**Three Broomsticks**  
**Hogsmeade Inn**



Frequented by Albus  
Dumbledore and  
Kingsley Shacklebolt as  
a gay disco in the 1970s.

**Gringotts**  
**Goblin Bank**



Issued a foreclose on Sirius  
Black's invisible home but  
couldn't find it.

## LEAKY CAULDRON TURNED INTO CONDO!



## DAILY PROPHET LAYS OFF 100 EMPLOYEES!



# Lab Work

BY DAVID YOST

The world knew him as Doctor Terror, but to us, he was just the Doc. When all people see on the news is Terrordroids ravaging a world capital, or Cleveland overgrown with carnivorous plants from the Mesozoic, it's easy for them to forget that thousands of lab hours that go into each attack. Work that long for anybody, and he's just another boss, whether or not his face is an eyeless mask of black titanium.

I don't mean to suggest that the job was without unique challenges. First, there was

the crazy laughing whenever the Doc gave us the day's assignments. And then there was the constant relocation. We'd set up shop in the caldera of a live volcano one week, and then just when we'd get used to the heat, Silver Fist would come crashing in and boom: we're all piling into a Terrors sub to the Mariana Trench.

Still, you have to understand what an opportunity this was. Where else could a guy like me give a synaptic injection to a giant squid, or graft extra heads onto a grizzly bear? Just a year before, I was checking slides for Gram stains; now I was strapping jetpacks onto velociraptors. I was changing the world in ways my professors at Tulsa Tech could only dream of. And then, too, there was the Doc's lover, the international-supermodel-

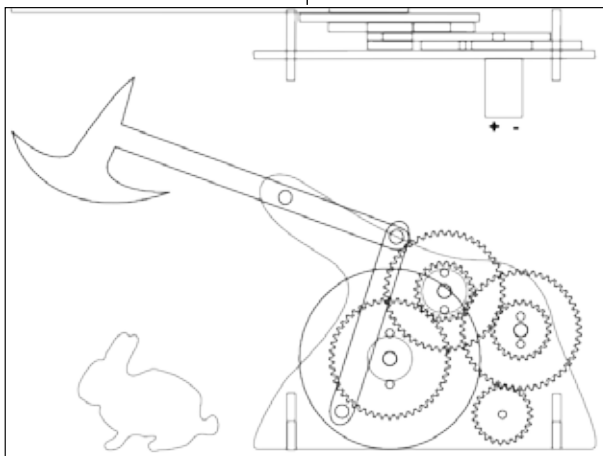
turned-ninja Minerva Katana, brightening up the place. We used to try to guess her cheongsam size in micrometers until the day she overheard and sliced one of my hands off in the break room. The Doc fitted me out with a robotic prosthesis, though, so no harm done.

In our field, you expect a lot of turnover, but soon the staff shook down to a core of me and two other guys, Phil and Aneesh. Many masterminds make light work, as they say, and there's no question the three of us did our best stuff together: the napalm pistols, the Terror Tanks, the time-trap that shot

Silver Fist and Karate Boy back to the Pleistocene. The Doc took the credit in the press, but in the lab, we were a team. Our biggest coup was when we turned the Build-A-Bear chain into robot assembly lines. We had Terror-bears in half the homes in America, even

the White House, and were twenty seconds from activation when Silver Fist smashed our broadcast antenna. Even the Doc had to admit that one was a good try.

But it couldn't last forever—what does? The first wedge came when the Doc picked Phil over me and Aneesh to be his new Terror-borg: rocket boots, dermal Kevlar, jackhammer arms, sonic scream, even the chest-mounted freeze cannon that Aneesh had spent months on. Phil tried to be gracious about it, but pretty soon he was always



Scientific rigor fails the bizarre test.

ILLUSTRATION BY MATTHEW BEY

out on missions with Minerva Katana, and Aneesh and I were left feeding his talking ligers. When Karate Boy finally kicked him into a vat of fluoroantimonic acid, it was like it happened to someone I didn't even know.

Aneesh took the whole thing hard, though, and his work started to slide. I tried covering for him, but I was hip-deep in plans for a new gravity rifle and there was only so much I could do. When Aneesh lost his third batch of Fist-clones in a row, the Doc had finally had enough, and injected him with a doomsday virus and set him loose in Albuquerque. Silver Fist found a cure before the infection could spread, but not before Aneesh's whole head melted into jelly.

His parents, who had seen this as a resume-builder for Johns Hopkins, were inconsolable. As for me, well, you couldn't look in

that jar of his remains and not wonder who was next.

Then Silver Fist broke up a meteorite robbery we'd been counting on to restock our destronium. After that, even the Doc got gloomy. Instead of scientific articles on laser implants or death rays, now he was carrying around Schopenhauer and muttering about Sisyphus. One of the new guys even told us he'd heard the Doc crying in the throne room. When the Doc fed him to the robocrocs an hour later, we figured it had to be true.

So when the Doc finally crossed the line, then, I can't say that it was a complete surprise. Minerva Katana and I had ambushed Karate Boy and brought him to the Hall of Terror in chains, ready to brainwash him and strap him to a neutron bomb. But the Doc just pulled out a revolver, and before we could do anything, he shot the kid twice

in the face. "There," he said. "We win." But it didn't feel like winning. It felt like cheating.

I don't need to tell you what happened next—the whole world knows it. Suffice to say, you didn't need to be a criminal genius to see the jig was up. That night I sat up with the Doc till he sobbed himself to sleep, and then I went to find Minerva. By the time Silver Fist came smashing through the roof with Paragon, Flagwaver, and the rest of Team Champion, the two of us were on a Terrorjet headed for Middle America.

Now I teach AP chemistry at a local high school, and the only time I use my robot hand is to open a jar of home-canned peaches or plums. Minnie watches the kids

during the day and gives fencing lessons in the evening. Most days, it's hard to remember there was a time when I spent a whole

month trying to put a

man's brain into a sperm whale's body.

Still, Minnie and I have our fits of nostalgia, and we'll get it out of our system by telling our story to some neighbors over a Bud Lite at a backyard barbeque. But before we hit them with the Dismemory Ray, they always ask us the same thing: "So why did you bother? You had to know that Silver Fist was always going to stop you." True enough, I suppose. But if our time with the Doc taught us anything, it's that you don't take up mad science for glory or results. You do it for that moment where you're hurtling along in a truck stolen from the Union Ice Co., with the mayor tied up beside you and Terrorcycles on every side and enough vaccine-resistant smallpox in back to wipe out a continent, and as City Hall explodes in your rearview mirror, you think, maybe, just this once, it's really going to work. Those memories, not even Silver Fist can take away. ▲

HE SHOT THE KID TWICE IN THE

**FACE.**

**"There," he said. "We win."**

# Prophecy Negotiations

BY RICH MATRUNICK

I'm a farmboy and a jackass: They exist, I assure you. And they're all still alive, I can assure you of that, too. Thing is, we don't go parading off with the first wizard that waltzes into town, offering up prophecy and the like. No, that's a do-gooder mistake. Half of those rookie do-gooders end up dead, and I'm of the belief that the other half deserve to. Frankly, they ruin it for the rest of us. See, I'm a jackass, but I'm no fool either.

That's why you always turn down the first wizard. Sure, he'll try to use all sorts of guilt trips on you. And a heap of promises about hidden powers and whatnot on top of that. What he doesn't tell you is that you're pretty much on your own from here on out, and those powers will turn out to be more trouble than they're worth. If you're lucky he'll give you a sword or something. If you're even luckier, the sword won't be a pain in the ass to use.

Wizard number two, now that's where things start to get interesting. I mean, prophecies need to be fulfilled, no doubt about that, and there's more than one wizard who wants to put his stamp on the thing. Wizard number two is usually a 'get in, get out, get done' guy. Magic horse, magic airship, magic eagle...magic rocket-propelled dwarf. Whatever it is, it's bound to be magic, and it's bound to be a hell of a lot better than walking. If you're a gamblin' man, a good magic portal can take the whole travel nonsense out altogether. Not for me though. I don't even

want a fraction of a chance that I'll come out on the other side with my head glued to my horse's ass.

I can't say I much liked wizard number two's offer. Getting there faster does have its benefits, but you lose out on a bunch of booze and busty barmaids along the way

With wizard number three, you start to see a big improvement in offers. We're talking armies here,

magical or otherwise, that can do a good deal of the grunt-work for you. The non-magical ones are especially good at soaking up fireballs, lightning, or huge boulders before they get too close for comfort. Nothing worse than coming home for a victory party with your eyebrows singed clear off.

Wizards four, five, and six you can usually get in a pretty good bidding war. Just remember that no request is too outrageous. You want the power to shoot lightning bolts out of your left nostril? Well, if wizard four won't grant it, five sure as hell will, and six will throw in the right nostril for free. Point being, by the time these windbags are done with their back and forth, the ante should at least be up to: a magic sword, a minimum of two magic rings, a pet dragon (or griffon, depending on your hemi-



ILLUSTRATION BY R.L. CARTER

Epic fantasy is bizarre only when deconstructed.



sphere), an army, a spare army (that pops out of a magic horn/lute/banjo), and three well-endowed women to accompany and fight over you along the way.

I admit, I didn't get past wizard number six. I accepted his offer, killed the dark lord, and returned home without so much as a scratch on me. Set to marry the princess in a month. All in all, I'd say the quest was pretty darn refreshing.

But then there's the thing with dark lords: they just don't like to stay dead. Some jerk of a wizard (turns out it was number four) brought him back for another go 'round. Even meaner and badder, if that can be believed. Naturally, the wizard parade started up again.

# Nosfer@tu

BY JOSEPH MORGADO

Oh, great. Spam.

*From: Tiberius Erectus*

*Subject: Discount Viagra for Your Woman Pleasure*

Not needed . . . yet.

*Click. Deleted.*

*From: Fifth Third Bank*

*Subject: Secure Account Verification Process*

No account there. Crap bank, will never survive. I'm with Washington Mutual.

*Click. Deleted.*

*From: Bob Fuckuda*

*Subject: Replica Rolex Watchezzz*

Bought one two weeks ago. Still working.

*Click. Deleted.*

*From: Monkeyboy*

*Subject: Enlarger for NO Little Embarrassment of BIG Consequences*

Not a problem, so I'm told.

*Click. Deleted.*

So that's where we stand now. I'm way past wizard six at the moment, past ten, past...I believe I'm somewhere in the high teens (can't throw a stone without hitting a damn wizard). This guy though, this wizard twenty-something, now he's got one hell of an offer. Good angle.

Seems he can turn me into a wizard. Pointed hat and magic staff and everything. Meaning I could go get a farmboy to whack the dark lord for me.

I mean, sure, I may have to occasionally pop in to check up on him. But it would be his bacon on the line. He can deal with the rocket-propelled dwarf.

No wonder there's so many damn wizards. ▲



*From: Dr. Clement Iwu, Cousin of Former President of Nigeria*

*Subject: Half of \$30 Million for USA Bank Account Details*

Not falling for that one again.

*Click. Deleted.*

*From: Marsha*

*Subject: Please Open To Invite Me In*

Wait a sec. Do I know a Marsha? Maybe I should open this one. I mean, it's a girl.

*Click. Opened.*

Message: ;-)

Door to apartment just opened. I'm sure it was locked. Strange girl has just stepped in. Now walking towards me.

Girl speaks: "Invitation accepted."

Girl winks and smiles. Why is that familiar?

Watch just stopped. Damn you, Bob Fuckuda! Girl passes mirror. No reflection. Note to self: Must clean mirror. Girl is like, incredibly beautiful: black hair, pale skin, full lips, perfect fangs.

Oh, great. Spampire. ▲



**BY**  
**MEGAN**  
**R.**  
**ENGELHARDT**

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS WALTRIP

Once, at the beginning, you asked why you were brought here. This is what I told you: your parents made a deal. I would rid them of their plague of rats, and they would pay me. I cleared the town of pests, easily done, and returned for my payment. They laughed at me and tried to send me away with less than they promised. Money is not important. Promises are.

One hundred and thirty children I led from the town, across the bridge where the rats fell like rain, through the fields all chewed and fallow, into the mountains that closed with a snap. And you were there, my low boy, the least boy, the leaping boy dancing with the others in your magical ecstasy.

That is where the story ends, with the mountains closed and the town waking in weeping, with no rats and no children and no future. But that is where *our* story starts. In my home of cobwebs and chimes, we played our games, do you remember? Games of running and hiding and choices and death. Recall, sweet child, the shouts and cries in the tunnels and catacombs. Gleeful cacophony echoing day and night, night and forever—sweet hymns to my ears.

One hundred and thirty children I took into my maze, my playground of red and bones in the dark. Three crawled out again. One tried to steal my pipe. He burned, flames creeping into his eyes. One tried to charm me, but I am uncharmable, I am the charmer of stars and worlds and rats and children. When I kissed her forehead she shrieked and fell and fell and died from the fall in her mind.

And then there was one.

Did I not take you in my arms and tend to your wounds? Did I not taste your ensorcelled blood? Did I not reach into your chest with my music, my magic, and burn on your heart the runes that claimed you as my own?

Did I not make you my son?

Your past life was gone. I was all you had: I, the musical mage, the maledict merchant. I was

your father and mother and master and friend, and you learned to love me.

I taught you the way of the music, as I was once taught in the caves of the dead by love-struck Orpheus. I wove the spells around you as they had been woven for me by a beautiful white kitsune, nine tails flowing like snow. I taught you the magic of protection, long life, calling, binding. You followed me, small child, smart child, savvy child, through the mountains and into the other worlds where I taught you to ply our trade.

You knew, my bright boy, my best boy, my bang the drum boy, that the truth of the magic was in the beat, the rhythm that pounds in their hearts and souls and blood. At the goblin markets you beat the drum and gathered pixies, banshees, gobs and orcs and Redcaps and nixes.

You smiled and laughed when the magic danced through your bones. I smiled with you, for I knew how it felt, the power of the calling curse. I was so proud of you that day, when you drowned the pixies in the rivers of gold that flow through our kingdom and lured the goblins into fields of vines that ate their green skin in stripes.

Such years we had together, piper and son, drummer and father. Oh, what rivers of blood we drew from men and beasts! The pain we caused! The treasures we took! They called us plagues, crusades, sickness. Never could they catch us, and never did they learn their lessons.

Yet we obeyed the rules, did we not, obedient child? For there *are* rules. We cannot break the deal. We cannot play our fiercest tunes where loyalty, honesty, lawfulness live. But we are lucky, for man never keeps his word. Man never pays. We took what we wanted.

Your desires were powerful and foreign to me. I wanted nothing more than revenge, than justice. But you wanted more, my human child, my hungry child, my happy grinning deadly child. You chose playmates from your wages, brought them to the maze, ran them like mice with missing tails.

*continued on page 9*

# father

No, I don't want to talk about it. I don't have to. I fucking broke my knuckles and I'd appreciate it if you left me alone.

I don't care who you are.

No, I'm not hurt anywhere else. I'm fine, you know, except that I, you know, broke my knuckles and I'm in excruciating pain and all, but no I'm really fine and I'd like you to leave. I don't want to talk to you. Where's my mom? Did you call her? Get her in here and get the hell out. You don't even know how he's doing, do you? You have no idea. I mean, I must've busted his nose. I know I busted his nose. How many teeth did he lose? You don't know? If you don't know, then get out because I don't want to talk to you.

I mean it.

Look, I said I don't want to talk to you.

Yeah, I busted him up. What's it to you?

He's not gonna press charges.

Because I know he's not.

I just do, okay.

Get off my back! Go bug somebody else!

This is none of your business. It's between me and him and I think you should leave.

I'm asking you nicely to please leave, okay?

What do you mean I have to talk to you?

But there isn't any abuse! Look at my hands and look at his face and tell me if there's abuse. If anything, there's parent abuse.

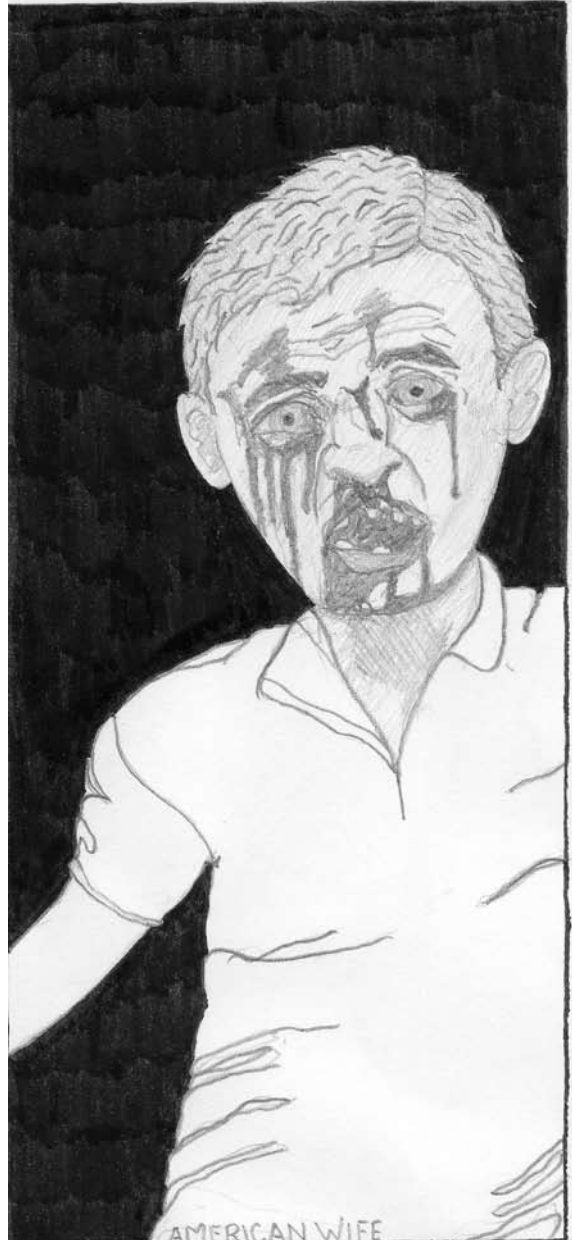


ILLUSTRATION BY JEREMIAH DUSEK



So what?

Tell me how he is and then come back, okay?  
Find out how he's doing and then come talk to me  
and I'll consider your offer.

You can't do that.

No, you can't. There isn't any abuse at all! You  
can't do that!

Fine, you want to know what happened that  
badly. Fine. FINE! I'll tell you. I came home late  
and beat up my Dad. That's what happened. Go  
write up your stupid reports, and leave us the hell  
alone.

What do you mean? No  
way. No.

Look, lady, you can't  
do that. Nothing happened,  
alright? It  
was just a stupid fight. It's totally over, totally com-  
pletely over and it will never happen again.

You can't do that! You don't understand!

Fine...

Look, I came home past curfew and Dad  
and Terri got pissed. They waited up for me and I  
came home, and I thought they'd be asleep. They  
weren't. They wanted to talk about it, and I got  
pissed off. I mean, I'm sixteen years old and I don't  
think being out late is such a big deal but appar-  
ently I'm mature enough to drive, but not mature  
enough to go to a few parties now and then. So, I  
got pissed and I just left. I went to my room and  
locked my door and told my dad to piss off. He  
broke my door down, and I took a swing at him  
and now we're in the hospital and I really would  
appreciate it if you went to check on my Dad. I  
know I broke his nose pretty bad and I know his  
eye didn't look that good, and I know he got some  
teeth knocked out. I didn't want to do that to him,  
but he made me.

He did make me.

Yes, he did. He actually did make me do it.

Who started it? What are you talking about?  
There wasn't a fight. I just hit him.

Well, I lied, alright. I mean, geez, you won't

even go find out about my Dad. How's he doing?

Well what's the last thing you heard?

That's great. You don't know anything. You  
come talk to me and you don't know a goddamn  
thing.

He did make me.

He told me to hit him.

I'm not lying. Really, he told me to hit him. I  
mean, I took the first swing and that one was all  
me, but after that he just kept telling me to hit  
him.

He did. I mean, he broke down my door and  
told me never to walk away

from him. He was all  
like, "Never walk away from  
me, boy. You never walk away  
from me! I am your father and  
you never walk away from me!"

That was kind of during, actually. He said it  
while he was kicking down my door, and he was  
still yelling about it on the way in. That's when  
I took a swing. I busted him right in the jaw as  
hard as I could. He didn't fall over or anything, he  
just stumbled back and looked real surprised. I  
thought I was dead. I mean, you know, he's a big  
guy. He used to play football and stuff just like  
me. He even boxed heavyweight once. He's, like,  
huge. Well, I hit him and he kinda stumbled back.  
I looked at him right then and he was just really  
really huge. God, I thought I was dead. I thought  
he was gonna just kill me. He looked so shocked. I  
mean, he just looked like he was, you know, really  
surprised and stuff. He just, well, he just looked  
at me like that. If he hadn't looked so surprised I  
might've hit him again.

You wanted to know so bad, well I'm telling  
you so shut up, lady. Don't interrupt me again  
with that BS. I'm telling the truth so stop twisting  
my words around. This is what happened next.  
He took off his glasses, his watch, his shirt. He  
even took off that necklace Terri got him in Costa  
Rica. He even took off his wedding ring. He took  
everything off. Terri came running up because it

**THERE WASN'T A FIGHT**

**I JUST HIT HIM**

got real quiet, but she just stood in the doorway. She didn't say anything. I mean, this was about us, you know, about me and him.

Dad looked right at me and I was stepping back because I thought he was gonna open up on me. I really believed I was totally dead. He never hit me. Not even once. He just looked at me and he said, "You want to hit me, huh? You want to hit me in the face. Fine. Hit me."

I didn't even try. I thought he was gonna just use it as an excuse to get me on my feet so he could kill me. He shook his head at me like he was disappointed. He said, "I won't fight back. You have my word, boy. I won't lift a finger to stop you. I won't fight you. I can't fight you. Now get up. You want to hit me. So hit me. I'm not asking you boy. I'm telling you. Hit me."

I figured I'd rather go down on my feet. That's really what I thought. I mean, I thought he was still just playin' with me and he was gonna break me in half. I figured if I was gonna die, I'd wanna at least get one more good shot in. So I stood up and I popped him in the gut. He doubled over a little and laughed, "No, boy. You wanted to hit me in the face. You didn't want to hit me in the gut. The face, boy. Hit me right in the face."

Well, yeah. I did. I hit him right in the face. I was still pretty pissed so I was still swingin' good. I mean, I was half expecting him to turn around on me and let it loose on me, but he didn't. He'd take the shot and he'd look me in the eye and say, "Hit me again, boy. One more time." He kept saying it over and over again. I mean, I was okay with it until he started bleeding. I'll admit it. I really was. I mean, I'd been wantin' to hit him for a while. Then he started bleedin'. Didn't take long for that. Couple minutes at most, you know. He just started bleedin' every time I hit him. It was his nose first. God, I busted his nose real bad. He even

fell over for that one. That was the first time he fell over. Then he stood up, takin' his time to get up and stuff and he said, "Again, boy. C'mon. You're not done yet."

I was like, "You're bleeding."

He said, "So what? Didn't stop you before. It's my blood. You don't think it's your blood, do you? It's mine. I don't care if I lose a little blood. Hit me again. Hit me again, goddammit. That's an order, boy. Hit me again."

So I kept hitting him. He started falling over a lot, but he kept getting back up. I mean, he just wouldn't let me stop. He just kept getting up. What was I supposed to do? God, I started throwing up all over my room and he just told me to hit him again. God, his face was messed up. He was bleeding everywhere. His nose was fucked up. And I tried to go easy on him but he wouldn't let me. He said, "You fuckin' call that a punch? Didn't I teach you to punch better than that? What a wuss. You're a wuss, boy. You can't finish what you started. C'mon. Again. Hit me again, for real this time."

I broke my knuckles sometime after the first half hour, I think. We went at it for over two hours. He just wouldn't let me stop. He kept getting up. I mean, I didn't want to, but he kept getting up. He'd just spit the teeth out into his hand and put them in his pocket. Blood was everywhere. God he must've lost gallons of blood. I'm feeling sick, lady. I think I'm gonna puke again. That's what happened, alright.

What do you mean when did we stop? We stopped when he said I could stop. It was right after I switched hands. I hit him on the forehead and he fell over, and something snapped real loud in my hand. He stood up real, real slow - he'd been falling and standing up real slow every time - and he looked me in the face and he said, "How's your hand?"



I was holding my hand by then. I mean, I've really screwed up my knuckles. I told him, "It hurts like a motherfucker."

"Use your other hand," he said.

I said, "No. You made your point. I'm sorry. God, I'm so sorry."

He said, "Hit me again, boy. You're not done yet. You haven't finished the job. Use your other hand."

So I did. I only got four shots in with my left hand before he couldn't get up. He lay there on the ground. He was just laying there on his back in a mess of blood and vomit from both of us and he just looked up at me and he said, "I reckon you're done, boy. I reckon you're done." That's it. That's what happened.

What about her? Well, she couldn't watch. She watched at first, but after the first couple shots she just left. I don't know what she was doing. Why don't you ask her?

Dad isn't the kind of guy you can really argue

with once he's got his mind set on something.

Well, I helped him up, and we went out to the kitchen. He wanted a glass of water. He was bleeding so much and he could barely walk. I got him some water and he put the cup up to his face and he started drinking and so much of his blood got in there he ended up drinking more blood than water. God, I feel sick. I don't want to talk about this anymore, alright? I don't want to talk about anything. I think I'm gonna puke. Terri's gotta be here. If Mom isn't here, can you at least get Terri? Do you know if my Mom's gonna be here? Have you called her yet? I have her number somewhere. I know Terri knows where it is. Talk to her, okay. I mean, Terri. Talk to Terri. But I want to see my Mom, so get her up here, too.

Hey, wait. Nothing's gonna happen right? I mean, tonight was bad, but like I said, it's over. You're not gonna do anything, right? Can you find out how he's doing for me? Please? I really need to know if he's gonna be okay. ▲

NON-LINEAR-TIME STORY JUMPS NON-LINEAR-TIME STORY JUMPS

## Exploring

*continued from pg. 15*

the love of God, let us in!"

"Oh no! The door won't open," the little brown-haired girl said. "I know! We have to say 'abre!'"

Socks clawed at the door, trying to climb its slick surface as the zombies surrounded them.

The little brown-haired girl turned one final time to her imaginary audience. "Say abre! Say abre!"

The green-cardigan zombie's mouth opened in a gaping grin, his clawed hand reaching for the monkey's throat. "Naaaaaaay...buuuuuuuuurr..."

Socks pressed his back hard against the door. As he slid to the ground, rotting hands pulled him toward the mouths of the dead. He screamed. "Aaaaaaabre! Aaaaaaaaabre! AAAAAAAB-" ▲

## Green Pills

*continued from pg. 13*

Had the victim survived? Perhaps limped away or crawled off in search of help? If so, it was a miracle. *But where's the blood?*

Lee wondered if he had the right place. He went back and stood where he thought the victim had been hit. Then he pictured the impact and tried to work out the body's likeliest trajectory.

Lost in thought, he didn't hear the car until its headlights hit him at full beam. Instinctively, he raised his arms.

Time slowed almost to a halt; the car was inches away and he had no chance to avoid it. During the last and longest moment of his life, Lee saw his own startled face. It was behind the wheel of the car that was about to kill him. ▲

ART & WRITING  
BY SAL AYALA

# SCFT

STAR PAT, PANGA, ARGENT,  
AND MR. NAPALM  
IN

## CODE NAME CALLING



EVEN BETTER! YOU CAN SLAP ON A SOMBRERO & A PONCHO. YOU CAN CALL YOURSELF CAPTAIN BEANER!











them to the maze, ran them like mice with missing tails. When you caught them, they sang like nothing ever before had sung under the mountain.

I hunt once in a hundred years or more, but you left often—fifty years between, twenty years between, five years between. You threatened the sanctuary of the world under the mountain. I loved you, child of Hamelin, child of hunting, child of harm, but no magic could bind you. You had too many of my charms.

I cast you out. Oh woe and darkness under the mountain! I raged for days—years—generations at the loss, for you had been my pride and joy, my malicious son, my macabre son, my missing son. You begged to stay, but under the mountain is still my place of power. Your stolen magic could not oppose me there. The dark welcomed

you when I opened up the mountain and sent you away.

I watch you sometimes. You beat your drum, and they love you. They follow you and you catch them, just as you always did. You took the magic from me and you gave it a name. When you named it, I knew you had not forgotten. For what else would you have been thinking when you named your musical trap? Clear in your mind were the mountains that moved to bring you into your once kingdom. When they scream the words of your songs, loving you and your music magic even as you kill them, they pay homage to me, and my pipe, and the rocks that rolled to trap the children of Hamelin.

You and your music, my rock star, my raw star, my raging star. You and your rock and roll magic. ▲

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