

# MARVEL'S PHASE THREE: THE FACTS



# SEK

257

THE WORLD'S  
**#1**  
SCI-FI MAG

**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS!**

MOVE OVER 007!

## KINGSMAN:

### THE SECRET SERVICE

Colin Firth shows  
Bond how to Kick-Ass

**JUPITER  
ASCENDING**  
It's *The Matrix* in space!

**A KIND OF  
TRAGIC**  
Why *Highlander 2*  
was not the one



MARVEL'S  
AGENT CARTER

## MASSIVE 2015 TV PREVIEW

WHERE TO POINT YOUR REMOTE CONTROL THIS YEAR



THE WALKING DEAD



DAREDEVIL



GAME OF THRONES



THUNDERBIRDS

PLUS! 12 MONKEYS • ORPHAN BLACK • JONATHAN STRANGE & MR NORRELL • iZOMBIE • HELIX • TATAU

**PLUS!**

STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS • THE FLASH • THE 100 • HOVERBOARDS  
AMY ACKER • NEAL ASHER • BIG HERO 6 • M NIGHT SHYAMALAN DOES TV...

Future



WARHAMMER  
40,000  
SPACE MARINE BATTLES™

# SONS OF WRATH

The origin story of the Flesh Tearers

BY ANDY SMILLIE

Forged in the bloody aftermath of the galaxy's greatest civil war, the Flesh Tearers are the most ferocious Chapter of Space Marines in the Imperium.

With their Legion divided, these warriors must find a new purpose or be consumed by the dark curse of their bloodline.

eBook and Hardback edition now available from [blacklibrary.com](http://blacklibrary.com)

## Order the First Edition

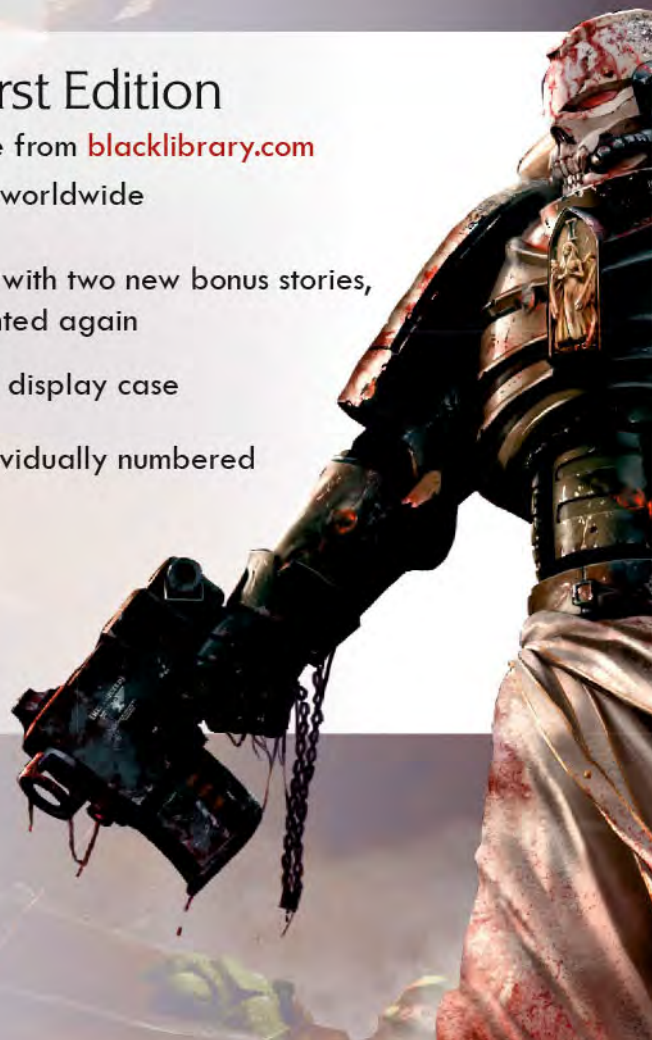
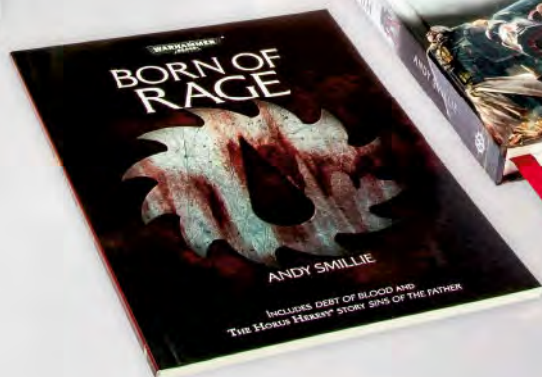
Exclusively available from [blacklibrary.com](http://blacklibrary.com)

Only 3,000 printed worldwide

Includes paperback with two new bonus stories,  
one never to be printed again

Themed magnetised display case

Every copy individually numbered







blacklibrary.com






SOME MARRIAGES ARE MADE IN HEAVEN,  
OTHERS ARE MADE IN **HELL!**



# GANJA & Hess

ON BLU-RAY & DVD FOR THE FIRST TIME  
IN THE UK FROM JANUARY

**EUREKA!**

 @eurekavideo

**amazon.co.uk**





# WELCOME TO SFX 257 CONTENTS



"WE CREATED THIS TO  
SAVE BANK HOLIDAY  
MONDAYS IN THE  
FUTURE"

46



"I THINK I'VE  
CRIED ABOUT FOUR  
TIMES ALREADY  
AS PEGGY"

64



"WARNER WANTED  
A WACHOWSKI-  
CONCEIVED WORLD"

76



"WE WANTED A  
MORE MINIMALIST  
APPROACH, KIND OF  
APPLE-LITE"

82

## 9 RED ALERT

M Night Shyamalan takes a trip to *Wayward Pines* while we pass judgement on that *Star Wars* trailer.

## 25 READER SURVEY

We want to know what you think of SFX!

## 30 COLUMNISTS

Langford looks for mistakes, while Bonnie asks why Wonder Woman's spent so long in development hell.

## 33 THE WRITING DEAD 2

Our zombie short story competition has risen again.

## 36 POST APOCALYPSE

This bit is all about you! You only have you to blame.

## 44 BLASTERMIND QUIZ

Grapple with some questions about sci-fi wrestlers.

## 46 KINGSMAN COVER FEATURE!

Who thought that nice Mr Darcy would wind up in *The Secret Service*? Turns out he's handy with a brolly.

## 52 THE UNMISSABLE TV PREVIEW

It's cold outside and there are wolves – best stay at home with our winter TV preview to guide you.

## 64 MARVEL'S AGENT CARTER

AKA What Hayley Atwell did when Cap was on ice.

## 68 CLOSE ENCOUNTER

Candice Patton on keeping up with *The Flash*.

## 70 MARVEL MOVIE PREVIEW

Anything DC can do... with added Black Panther, Captain Marvel and a generous dash of Avenger.

## 74 BACK TO THE FUTURE PART II

The campaign for *Jaws 19* starts here.

## 76 JUPITER ASCENDING

They've done computers and motor racing – now the Wachowskis are ticking off outer space.

## 80 BROUGHT TO BOOK

Neal Asher discusses Polity and politics.

## 82 BIG HERO 6

It's Marvel again, but not as we know it.

## 86 HIGHLANDER II: THE QUICKENING

Turns out not even the director likes this movie.

## 90 PENNY DREADFUL

Definitely *not* giving up horror for the new year.

## 93 RATED

*The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies* in cinemas, *Lucy* on shiny discs, *Dark Intelligence* on the page – together at last in our reviews section.

## 124 VIEW SCREEN

*Arrow*, *Supernatural*, *The Vampire Diaries* and more.

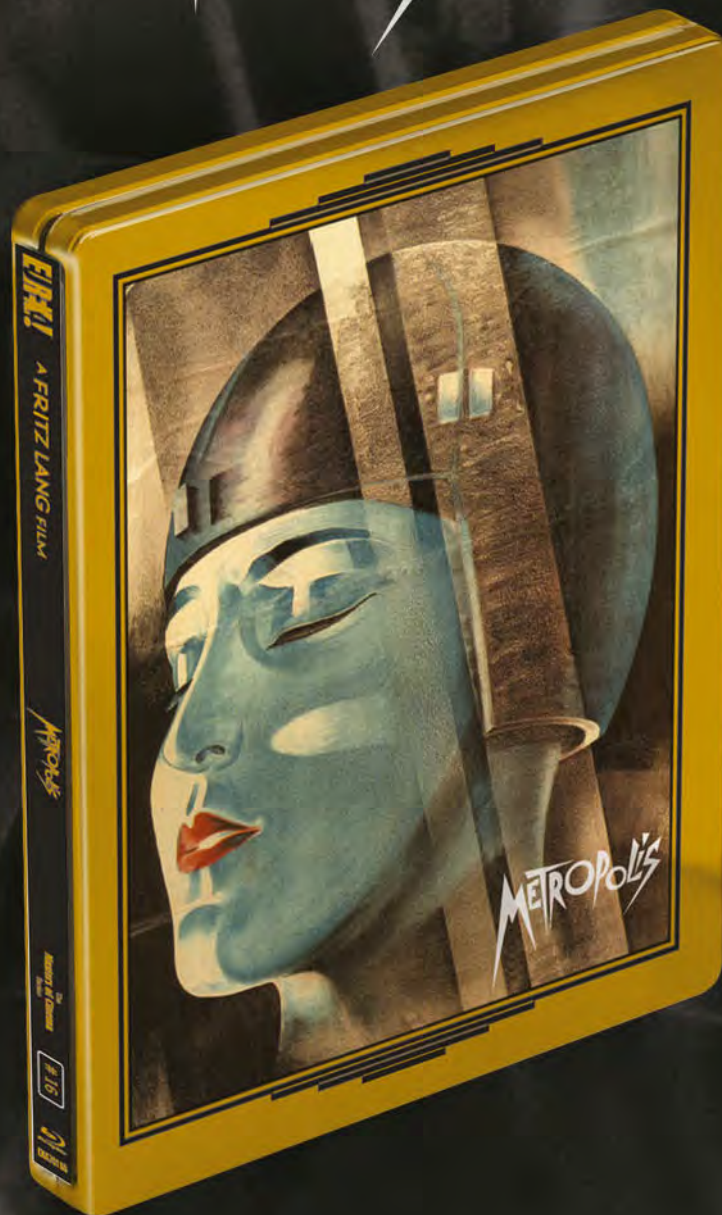
## 130 TOTAL RECALL

Remembering the Riddler from '60s *Batman*.



# METROPOLIS

WIN A  
**METROPOLIS**  
ENGRAVED  
GOLD BAR\*



THE MOST ICONIC OF ALL SCI-FI FILMS  
IN AN ALL NEW ULTIMATE COLLECTOR'S EDITION.

2 x BLU-RAY STEELBOOK WITH ADDITIONAL SPECIAL FEATURES  
LIMITED EDITION OF 4000. AVAILABLE JANUARY.

\*PURCHASE NECESSARY. TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY. SEE INSIDE PACK FOR DETAILS

**FILM!**  
www.mastersofcinema.org

The  
**Masters of Cinema**  
Series

Twitter: @mastersofcinema  
Instagram: @mauraxavideo

AVAILABLE FROM  
**amazon.co.uk**





## THE INSIDE SKINNY

What your *SFX* chums are thinking about...

### RICHARD EDWARDS EDITOR

#### RAVES

► The *Force Awakens* trailer made me happy in a way I never thought 88 seconds of movie clips could. It can't come out soon enough.

#### RANTS

► Was it really necessary to cram first trailers for *Star Wars*, *Jurassic World* and *Terminator Genisys* – not to mention the *Bond SPECTRE* announcement – into a mere nine days?



### NICK SETCHFIELD FEATURES EDITOR

#### RAVES

► Thrilled to see *Bond* battling *SPECTRE* again. Is it too much to hope for monorails and piranha pools? Okay, I'll settle for the cat.

► Amazed that people are quibbling about Benedict Cumberbatch being cast as Doctor Strange. Too obvious? Too perfect? Too right? Hm. Are we taking spot-on casting for granted now? 20 years ago it would have been Arnie...



### ALEX COX OPERATIONS EDITOR

#### RAVES

► Let's unfairly rate films based only on trailers! *Jurassic World*: doing for the *JP* franchise what *Crystal Skull* did for *Indy*. A terrible waste. *Terminator Genisys*: Young Arnold has been inflated beyond even his original grotesque proportions. Therefore this will be amazing. *The Force Awakens*: Worse than *Attack Of The Clones*. Definitely. [That's it, get out – Ed]



### IAN BERRIMAN HOME ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

#### RAVES

► Musical discovery of the month: "Beam Me Aboard Mr Spock", an incredibly obscure 1973 glam track by one Barry Rolfe: <http://bit.ly/beamaboard>

► TASCHEN's coffee table-crushingly gigantic *75 Years Of Marvel* book arrived too late to review in the appropriate year, unfortunately, but it's a gorgeous artefact.



### JORDAN FARLEY COMMUNITY EDITOR

#### RAVES

► Happy 2015! We get to see new *Star Wars* and *Avengers* films this year. Best. Year. Ever.

► After the latest demo, I'll be counting down the seconds until *Uncharted 4* is in my hands.

#### RANTS

► *Krypton* sounds spectacularly pointless.

► No more Orange Wednesday from Feb. Noooo!



### DAVE BRADLEY GROUP ED-IN-CHIEF

#### RAVES

► *Agents Of SHIELD* is now essential viewing, thanks mostly to interesting characters and a slightly darker tone.

► The BB-8 "ball droid" in the *Star Wars* trailer is a real physical prop not CGI! But...

#### RANTS

► ...there's almost a year to wait until we actually get to see *The Force Awakens*. I'm already planning when to start queuing.



### JON COATES ART EDITOR

#### RAVES

► *Mad Max: Fury Road* looks so exciting, and utterly insane. Reserve me a seat now!

► The recent *Bond* announcement did not disappoint. *SPECTRE* is a cracking title and the casting of Christoph Waltz is a great move. I can totally imagine him as Blofeld. Here's hoping...

#### RANTS

► Wish the force could awaken a bit sooner!



### ADRIAN HILL AD MANAGER

#### RAVES

► Well the end of the year was big! December was a heck of a month for new trailers, that's for sure. *Jurassic World* looks fun, but *Terminator: Genisys* looks like a total rehash if you ask me. Of course the biggest thing to send the internet into meltdown was the new *Star Wars*. Not bad for starters, but what really got me super excited was the launch of 007. I can't wait to see *SPECTRE*, trailer or not.



### RHIAN DRINKWATER FREELANCE WRITER

#### RAVES

► Loving the sheer amount of comic-inspired TV on at the moment. *Arrow*, *Gotham*, *The Flash*, *Constantine*, *SHIELD*... and it's all so good!

► Finally read *Ancillary Justice* and it's brilliant.

#### RANTS

► Changes to VAT rules are making it much harder for authors to sell their ebooks direct from their own websites. Google "VATmess" for the info.



### DAVID WEST FREELANCE WRITER

#### RAVES

► Max Barry's *Lexicon* is easily one of my favourite books this year. Smart, emotionally engaging science fiction and tremendous prose. And still digging Patricia Briggs's *Mercy Thompson* series after charging through *Frost Burned*.

#### RANTS

► I'm lukewarm on Stephen King's *Revival*. He's never dull, but it's not one of his strongest.



### SARAH DOBBS FREELANCE WRITER

#### RAVES

► Just caught up on *American Horror Story: Coven* and it's amazing – smart and scary and shocking, episode after episode. Somehow it's even made me into a *Fleetwood Mac* fan. Can't wait to see *Freakshow*.

#### RANTS

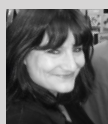
► I can't bring myself to get excited about *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* yet. Even seeing the Millennium Falcon hasn't won me over. Bah!



### JAYNE NELSON FREELANCE WRITER

#### RAVES

► The second seasons of *Defiance* and *Agents Of SHIELD* have been astonishing – both shows have raised their game so high it's hard to believe they're the same programmes. Thank heavens they weren't cancelled after their wobbly starts and got this second chance to shine! And elsewhere, *Supernatural*'s tenth year has been a joy. Long may they continue.



There's always plenty of debate in the *SFX* office about how sci-fi James Bond really is. Over the years, 007 has flirted with gritty realism, all-out fantasy and pretty much everything in between, but he usually has at least one expertly shined shoe in the genre camp. There's absolutely no doubt about the sci-fi credentials of *Kingsman: The Secret Service*, however. *Kick-Ass* collaborators Matthew Vaughn and Mark Millar have made an unabashed love letter to the over-the-top Roger Moore era, in one of the hottest action movies of the year. We speak to Vaughn, Millar and stars Colin Firth and Taron Egerton about reinventing the secret agent on page 46.

*Kingsman* is the among the first of many massive movies and TV shows heading your way in 2015, in what could well be the biggest year in sci-fi history. And looking beyond *Star Wars*, *Jurassic World*, *Avengers* and the rest, 2015 is a momentous year for *SFX* because we turn 20. Yes, it was in May 1995 that the mag first landed in the nation's newsagents, and we'll be doing plenty to mark the occasion over the coming months.

But we're not resting on our laurels as we approach our third decade, and we want to know what you think of the world's number one sci-fi fantasy magazine. Turn to page 25 to find out how you can take part in our survey and be in with a chance of winning £200 of vouchers.

Rich

Richard Edwards, Editor  
@RichDEdwards

**SFX** Next issue on sale Wednesday 4 February 2015

Postal address: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA • Editorial email: [sfx@futurenet.com](mailto:sfx@futurenet.com)

Customer services UK: 0844 848 28 52 • International contact: +44 (0)1604 251 045

Subs info: visit [myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/sfx](http://myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/sfx) or check out page 34 for the latest offer.



"TAKES SEVERAL **DISTURBING**,  
**HORRIFIC** TURNS ON ITS WAY TO  
A **MIND-EXPANDING** FINALE"

KIM NEWMAN

"A **CHILLING** LAYER OF REAL,  
VERY HUMAN ANXIETY"

FANGORIA

ROSE LESLIE  
HARRY TREADAWAY



AFTER THE CEREMONY COMES THE RITUAL

---

**ON DIGITAL TO OWN - JAN 12**  
**ON DVD, BLU-RAY & ON DEMAND JAN 19**

MAGNET

ARROW FILMS



In association with  
www.whoshotjohn.co.uk  
movie inspired clothing

# RED ALERT

THE FUTURE FIRST

edited by Jordan Farley

WAYWARD PINES

## Between The Pines

The *Sixth Sense* director heads for the small screen via a very strange American town...



14  
**WAKY  
WAKY**

Investigating the first trailer for *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.



18  
**TINKER  
TAYLOR**

Eliza Taylor is rebuilding humanity in *The 100* season two.



24  
**DOG DAY  
AFTERNOON**

Rise Of The Planet Of The Dogs in Hungarian drama *White God*.

**N**OW THAT DAVID LYNCH has announced he's returning to *Twin Peaks*, we can probably expect a flood of excursions to small American towns where weird happenings are the norm. *Wayward Pines* has got in there early, however, having gone before the cameras well before Lynch had given any inkling that delicious cherry pie might be back on the menu. Not that anyone's trying to hide the show's influences... "We're copying the shit out of David Lynch," laughs M Night Shyamalan, the *Sixth Sense*/*Unbreakable* director who's making his first foray onto the small screen as an executive producer and director on *Wayward Pines*. "I'm super drawn to *Twin*

*Peaks*. I'm definitely a devotee of his right now. When you watch the pilot, it's so fucking audacious. I can't believe they let him do it."

"I definitely understand why people compare *Wayward Pines* to *Twin Peaks*," adds leading man Matt Dillon, "but I think it's different. I know the author of the book, Blake Crouch, is a huge fan of that show, but he also told me some of the inspirations for the book were just his own imagination. One day he was just walking down the street in this small town in Colorado, and a phone rang – he created this whole paranoid scenario in his mind that the phone was signalling other people."

Based on Crouch's novel (simply called *Pines*), the ten-part series centres on Dillon's





**SCI-FACT!**  
Wayward Pines will air in 125 countries on the same day – the largest launch for a scripted series ever.



This game of musical statues had been going on for hours.

# SEEING THE WOOD FOR THE TREES

Notes from a small town

## M NIGHT TELEVISION

**1** After a career spent in movies, Shyamalan says the move to TV brought him new challenges. "Obviously I've been dealing with three-act formats for so long in movies, but networks have commercial breaks, so there's a five- or six-act structure that they have per episode. That's a new thing I had to learn. Also, the amount of material that you have to put out there, and the amount of time you have to do it is incredible. I just can't believe how fast they do it. It's unbelievable!"

## ON A BREAK

**2** In American terms, a ten-episode season is fairly short. Even so, Shyamalan put production on hiatus halfway through to make sure everyone was heading in the right direction. "We put a gap in the middle so I could stop everything and recalibrate, edit, talk to the actors, rewrite... We started to get into the 'we'll figure it out' thing, and when too many of those piled up, I said I thought it would be wise if we took our time to do it properly. It was six or eight weeks, but it meant a lot. Fox were super-accommodating for that."

## BIG FISH

**3** Shyamalan says he tried to bring some of his experience as a filmmaker to the look of the show. "I said, 'Are you interested in having a cinema aesthetic, in the sense of longer takes and the kind of things we bring to films?' [Fox] were so interested in bringing a different tone to the piece, they wanted it to be the thing that stands out about it – you're flipping channels and you come to it. Its vocabulary is instantly different. That really excited me. They all sat across from me and said, 'That's what we want,' and that's what they let us do."

## ADAPTATION

**4** Author Blake Crouch was still working on his novel when the show went into production, so the writing became a two-way process. "It was an interesting opportunity because it was kind of back and forth between Blake and us going, 'We're going to take your book, and *this* many episodes will be about the first book. This is where we're thinking of going.' He'll go, 'Oh, I was thinking about this... Maybe I'll put that in my book.' He was really gracious to let us develop this story in organic ways. He couldn't have been a better collaborator."





Wandering the mean streets of small town America.

Secret Service agent Ethan Burke, who goes out looking for his missing partner Kate Hewson (Carla Gugino), gets involved in a car accident, and finds himself trapped in the Idaho town of the title – think *Doc Hollywood*, but more sinister. The locals are governed by rules that say they mustn't try to leave or ask about the past, and they must *always* answer the phone if it rings – looks like that “where paradise is home” on the sign outside the town would set alarm bells ringing at Advertising Standards. Meanwhile, Burke's wife and son (Shannyn Sossamon and Charlie Tahan) try to track him down in the outside world.

“The tone of the piece had a weird humour about it,” says Shyamalan, “and a deep mystery at its centre. It was where I wanted to be as a storyteller, as long as there were answers to it. That was the first thing I asked: ‘Are there answers to everything I'm reading here?’ When I was told where it was going, I was like, ‘I'm in, I could definitely see how to tell that story.’”

“You don't know if it's supernatural, psychological or science fiction,” explains Dillon. “Ethan is questioning his own sanity. But it's more than that. It's not just a story of a guy who's losing his mind, but it might appear that way.”

It turns out that *Wayward Pines* itself is populated by a cast of Oscar and Golden Globe winners and nominees, including Melissa Leo (*The Fighter*), Terrence Howard (*Iron Man*), Toby Jones (*Captain America*) and Juliette Lewis (*Natural Born Killers*).

“I don't think you can have an agenda for getting a cast like this,” admits Shyamalan. “You get lucky – the gods of storytelling allow it to happen. It's an honour, definitely, to have this calibre of cast, but I was definitely pinching myself. We got him? We got her? We got him? We got her? It's great. It's a snowball effect, I think. It starts to signal the integrity level.”

But the centre of the show is undoubtedly Burke, whose relationship with his wife has already been severely damaged by an affair with Hewson, and who bears the scars of mistakes made in the field. Shyamalan says

## “I don't think you can have an agenda for getting a cast like this”

the role was perfect for Dillon who, like the filmmaker, was exploring new territory by venturing onto TV.

“Matt Dillon's very funny,” Shyamalan reveals. “If you hang out with him and go to dinner and drink with him, he's drop dead funny. He's got this straight humour – he'll say something straight, and he'll just crack up, whether it's really offensive or whatever. So I brought a lot of that out in him, as he's expressing his version of: ‘Why is everybody acting so weird? You're acting like a crazy person!’ Getting those gestures, it's very natural from him. He has the physicality of what we needed, but he can also do the humour. The secret weapon of the show is humour – at least as we start out.”

In a move that's becoming increasingly common on US TV, *Wayward Pines* has taken a leaf out of the book Brits have been following for years by starting out with a self-contained short run of 10 episodes – which should hopefully avoid any *Lost*-style efforts to stretch things out indefinitely.

“Well, the beauty of the format – and I think the beauty of Blake's books – is that it's a beautiful story unto itself,” Shyamalan says. “But we could do it again if we feel like it's appropriate and right. The way I approached *Unbreakable* was the same. I wrote it and if I felt like I wanted to do another one, one day, I'll do another one. This is that opportunity. It's contained enough that it's a beautiful piece that you could keep as those 10 episodes. But maybe [we'll go back], yeah.” **SFX**

*Wayward Pines* comes to Fox in the UK and US simultaneously on 14 May.







PROJECT ALMANAC

# Time Teens

*Back To The Future* meets *Chronicle*  
in new found footage film

**A** SCIENCE FICTION adventure. A found footage film. A teen time travel story. *Project Almanac* combines all three, but it was the film's basic coming-of-age story that attracted first-time director Dean Israelite to the \$12 million project. "It was the emotional core of the story that attracted me, combined with a teenage adventure that reminded me of *The Goonies* in terms of its expansiveness and the imagination of the young characters," says Israelite. "It's a character-driven story that centres on a group of teenage friends, and then we introduce found footage and time travel, in an unconventional way."

The story follows a group of high schoolers, led by David Raskin (Jonny Weston), a brilliant teenager who discovers schematics for a time machine left behind by his late father. David and his friends build the time machine, which they use to try and correct mistakes in their pasts, resulting in various complications for them in the present. "The device of the time travel is tied thematically into the protagonist's journey," explains Israelite. "The adventure he goes on as a result of time travel is what ultimately allows him to come of age. I tried to make everything feel as real and grounded as possible. In that way, you would believe that this was a real kid going through real teenage problems, and if the time travel felt as authentic and grounded as his life, if it didn't feel like just another big budget movie, with big budget visual effects, then everything would fit together, tonally and aesthetically."

The film's grounded approach is especially evident in the time machine that David and his friends construct in the story, which is a synthesis of the imagination and spare parts they have at their disposal. "They build the time machine with all of the spare parts they can find, like a graphics card from an Xbox," says Israelite. "They control the machine with a smartphone, using a coded app they

**"It's really a fun teenage adventure, with some darker elements"**

created that can interface with it. The machine is mobile; it's compact enough to fit into a backpack, so they can walk around with it at school."

*Project Almanac*'s offbeat assortment of genre elements, and Israelite's inexperience, made the project a tough sell for producer Brad Fuller, when he approached Paramount Pictures with the Andrew Deutschman/Jason Pagan script. "I would describe *Project Almanac* as *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* and *Weird Science* meets *Chronicle*," says Fuller, a partner in Platinum Dunes, the genre-themed production shingle founded by Michael Bay. "It's really a fun teenage adventure, with some darker elements that appear later in the story. Paramount was wary of the project, and of Dean, who impressed them with his detailed storyboards, and with a sequence he shot from the film. Michael has a strong relationship with Paramount, and he wrote the executives a letter saying he believed in the project, and in Dean as director."

Coming-of-age and time travel stories have a universal appeal and Israelite believes that *Project Almanac* will resonate with anyone who's ever been young and thirsted for adventure. "The film is about how small changes can have huge effects on who we are and how we feel about ourselves," says Israelite. "We all know what it feels like to go from boy to man or girl to woman – the struggles, the lessons; the wonderment that comes from that time in our lives."

*Project Almanac* is released in UK cinemas on 6 February.



Teenagers these days, always standing in circles in the woods. Get a job!



Tomorrow's packed lunch took a heck of a lot of planning.



## DATAFLOW

BRIEF ENCOUNTERS



### NEWBIES

- ▶ ITV adapting **BEOWULF** as a 13-part series, produced by *Primeval*'s Tim Haines.
- ▶ Charlie Higson (above) scripting a new, 10-part **JEKYLL AND HYDE** drama, also for ITV.
- ▶ Sean Bean to star as monster-hunting lawman John Marlott in **THE FRANKENSTEIN CHRONICLES** for, you guessed it, ITV.
- ▶ Bond screenwriters Neil Purvis and Robert Wade adapting Len Deighton's alt-history spy novel **SS-GB** for BBC One.
- ▶ Channel 4 developing half-hour comedy **SPACE ARK**, set aboard the titular interstellar vessel six months after the end the end of the world.
- ▶ Confirmed: *Man Of Steel* prequel series **KRYPTON**, about Superman's grandad, underway at Syfy. David S Goyer and *FlashForward*'s Ian Goldberg will write.
- ▶ Cult CG animated series **REBOOT** getting, er, rebooted. The subtitle is *The Guardian Code*.
- ▶ Warren Ellis' **GLOBAL FREQUENCY**, about a privately funded crime-fighting syndicate, snapped up by Warner Bros TV.

© REX (1)

"It's a wrong move to take a superhero and give it psychological realism. There is no psychological realism. He's a bodybuilder who jumps off buildings"

Prestige author Christopher Priest shows Christopher Nolan some tough love.

DON'T QUOTE ME

#### SCI-FACT!

Dean Israelite is currently in pre-production on a *WarGames* remake.

## MY SCI-FI

# Josie Long

The stand-up is a reformed comic snob who likes deep space



© GILES SMITH

### FAVOURITE SF/FANTASY FILMS

▶ *Guardians Of The Galaxy* made me feel 12 years old. Chris Pratt was incredible, and it looked beautiful, and felt like it was written by people I'd get on with. I'm glad there's been a resurgence of big space films. I enjoy anything with improbable space travel where you're overwhelmed by the size of the universe. But I haven't seen *2001*, which is remiss of me.

### FAVOURITE SF/FANTASY TV

▶ I loved *Red Dwarf* and *Quantum Leap* to the point of obsession. All my Christmas presents were books about one of them. I was in the fan club and bought the *Smegazine* and for some reason loads of greetings cards, which I didn't send, just kept. Later on I liked *Sliders*, which was like a low-rent *Quantum Leap*.

### FAVOURITE SF/FANTASY COMICS

▶ I was very snobby when I was a teenager about superhero comics. I went down the indie route. The exception was Alan Moore, where I'd be like "No, *Watchmen* is art!" I know Alan – he's kind and a genius, and I think he's one of the most magical men alive.

### FAVOURITE SF/FANTASY CHARACTER

▶ Clarisse from *Fahrenheit 451* is this girl who Guy meets who is unusual to him because she's a free thinker in a dystopian society. Her family don't watch telly, while everyone else does, and she walks everywhere when nobody does – she's just fucking cool. I love that book.

Josie Long is touring her show *Cara Josephine* across the country from 19 January. See [josielong.com](http://josielong.com) for dates.





# FREEZE FRAME

RELEASE DATE  
**18 DEC**  
**2015**



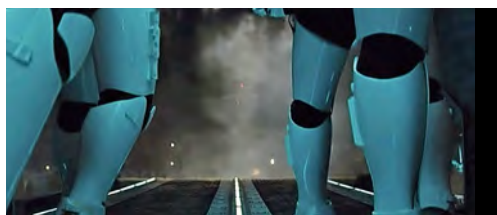
● “There has been an awakening. Have you felt it?” a voice asks as the camera lingers on what appear to be Tatooine sand dunes. Andy Serkis has since confirmed the trailer’s 15 words are all spoken by his currently unknown character.



● Surprise! Twenty one seconds in we get our first look at a face new to *Star Wars* as Jon Boyega’s Finn emerges from the bottom of the frame. Is he an AWOL Stormtrooper? Or could he be in disguise, like Han and Luke in *A New Hope*?



● At 23 seconds the infamous electronic warble of an Imperial Probe Droid can be heard. Coupled with Boyega’s distressed appearance it’s clear he’s on the run. The armour also has an updated version of the classic Stormtrooper markings.



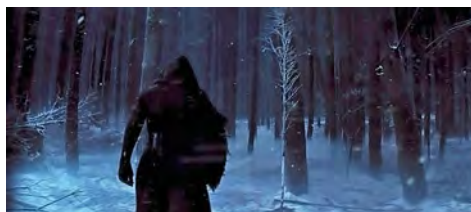
● JJ Abrams abandons George Lucas’s classical camerawork for *Saving Private Ryan*-esque shakycam in this sequence – apt as the Stormtroopers are deployed at an unknown location like the Allies at Normandy. We’ve got a bad feeling about this.



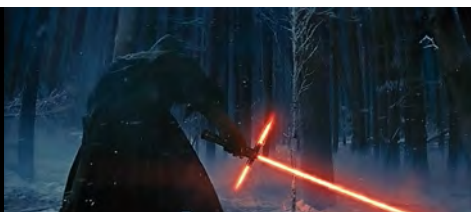
● The second new face in this trailer belongs to Daisy Ridley’s Rey. The shawl and headwear are reminiscent of Leia’s Endor gear, and the goggles appear to be made from a salvaged Stormtrooper visor.



● This vessel looks a little like Luke’s speeder turned on its side, but more importantly has that chunky, down and dirty, used future quality that was sorely missing from the prequels. Can’t see the point in that tiny windshield though.



● Andy Serkis returns, mumbling “The dark side, and the light” as we get our first glimpse at *The Force Awakens*’ new Dark Sider, Kylo Ren. Adam Driver seems like a safe bet for the man in the cloak.



● The broadsaber doesn’t just have an extended handle/blade, but a nifty crossguard too. The violently unstable plasma gives the saber’s blades a flame-like appearance. Could it be the work of a someone un-trained in the art of saber construction?



● After a brief fade to black the money shot in a trailer full of them – the return of the Millennium Falcon; accompanied, of course, by John Williams’ timeless fanfare. So this is what it feels like to be 10 years old again.

## THE BUZZ

### RICH



A work of genius. Okay, it tells you next to nothing about the movie, but this far out do we really want all the answers? From a swooping Millennium Falcon to those evocative sound effects, JJ knows how to hit *all* the right fan buttons – just imagine what it’ll be like when we get to see Luke, Han and Leia in action...

### DAVE B



Distinctly JJ – just look at the way the camera twists and turns in the Millennium Falcon clip – and packed with detail, this is definitely the trailer I was hoping for. Is it a broadsaber or a trisaber? I don’t care what we’re calling it, I get goosebumps each time I see it power up. This film can’t come soon enough.

### JORDAN



Any concerns I had about *The Force Awakens* after *Star Trek Into Darkness* left me cold were instantly obliterated by this teaser. Despite focusing on exciting new faces it’s already clear *Episode VII* has original trilogy magic running through its veins. And damn if that lightsaber isn’t the coolest thing I’ve ever seen.

### NINA



Tatooine dunes, you look so warm. Someone’s in trouble in the desert – sounds about right. Loving the scenic starfighter battle and the new lightsaber, though not sure how useful those baby side handles are. Then cue the Falcon, the score, the goosebumps! I’d definitely say a new hope has awoken.

### NICK



Ludicrously exciting. There’s a real elegance to this trailer – it ditched the clutter of the prequels and taps into the essence of *Star Wars*. Some of the images feel torn from a lost portfolio of Ralph McQuarrie concept art. And the Falcon punching into that dream-blue sky as John Williams kicks in... shivers in the Force!

### IAN



I’ve tried to avoid getting excited about *Episode VII* because I hated the prequel trilogy... but that did the job. The mystery over Boyega’s character is intriguing, the balldroid is cute, and the Stormtroopers look awesome. Plus, with none of the returning cast featured we’ve still plenty to look forward to. Sold!



## THIS MONTH: we return to a galaxy far, far away with the first teaser trailer for **Star Wars: The Force Awakens**



● This adorable ball droid is called BB-8, is rumoured to be the property of Daisy Ridley's character and, says Mark Hamill, is a live-action prop. Note the podracer-esque engine in the background. Did the sport die out after Jabba's demise?



● The new Stormtrooper helmets tally with previously leaked concept art. But the big question is – what are Stormtroopers still doing in a post Empire Galaxy? Are these the last remnants or have they been adopted by the former Rebel Alliance?



● A blurry look at the Stormtrooper's new blaster rifles, which feature extensive white panels, three red lights (an ammo gauge or a setting indicator?) and a scope similar to the one atop Han's blaster. Bet they're still terrible shots though.



● Again, the smart money would say that this is Tatooine, with a handful of sparse buildings and moisture vaporators visible in the background. Rey most likely lives there, a farm girl at the start of an epic journey, just like Luke.



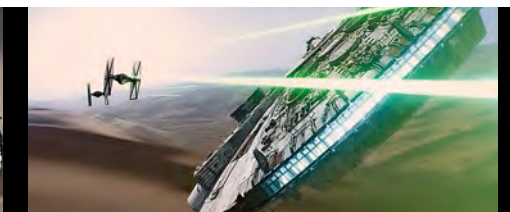
● This partially concealed phizzog belongs to Oscar Isaac's Poe Dameron, who pilots one of the new-look X-Wings. The heavily scuffed helmets have had an update too – but it seems the Alliance is alive and well 30 years after *Return Of The Jedi*.



● A formation of X-Wings skim across the water's surface on an unknown planet. We don't see a single scene set among the stars in this trailer, quite deliberately no doubt. For the most part it focuses on what's *new*.



● The Falcon performs some impossible aerobatics through clear blue skies. The ol' rust bucket's clearly been well cared for since *Jedi*, with a new rectangular radar dish (after Lando knocked the last one off) and clearer red markings on the top.



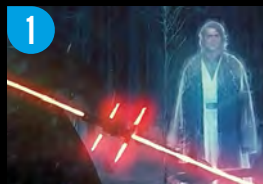
● Are Han and Chewie in the cockpit? Our hearts say yes. After all, who else could play chicken with two Tie Fighters and emerge unscathed? This sequence was filmed with IMAX cameras to provide maximum visual wallop.



● So: has the dark side of the Force been slumbering since Vader's death? How is it returning now? At the trailer's end the sound of Luke's lightsaber igniting can be heard. Is the light side of the Force awakening too? All we know is we can't wait.

## SPOOF WARS

Five of our favourite *Force Awakens* trailer parodies



### George Lucas

<http://bit.ly/LucasSE>

► This parody gives it the George Lucas Special Edition treatment, with ubiquitous CGI creatures, Hayden Christensen's Force ghost and a screen full of Tie Fighters. Brilliant.



### Wes Anderson

<http://bit.ly/WesPresents>

► What if Wes Anderson made *The Force Awakens*? It'd have moody French music, a muted colour palette and humorously dry text emblazoned across the screen at every turn.



### Disney

<http://bit.ly/DisneyAwakens>

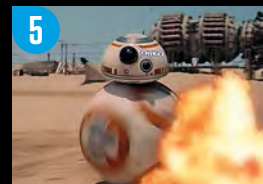
► Disney may already be making *The Force Awakens*, but it could have been much worse if the licensing department had a say in things – Goofy Troopers for a start.



### LEGO

<http://bit.ly/ForceLego>

► Of course there are several LEGO parodies. But our favourite is Zach FB's which is exceptionally well put together and recreates every shot from the teaser brick for brick.



### Michael Bay

<http://bit.ly/BayWars>

► Imagine the most obnoxious version of *The Force Awakens* trailer possible then multiply by a million and you have an idea of what Michael Bay's film might look like. Hilarious.



## NAMELESS

# Untitled Masterpiece

Grant Morrison prepares to unleash unspeakable horror on the planet

**W**HAT'S IN A NAME? Everything and nothing, according to Grant Morrison. Stuck on what to call his new Image series with his old *Batman Incorporated* foil Chris Burnham, the Glasgow comics legend realised that his problem was actually a solution.

"It had no name, therefore *Nameless* it became," he says. "Nameless is, of course, a much-loved word among horror writers who often invoke nameless rites and nameless ones, so it brought that hint of Lovecraft that we were looking for and it inspired a great hook for our lead character and what happens to him."

Admitting that he "genuinely wouldn't recommend it to anyone who's feeling emotionally or psychologically vulnerable," the six-parter could be Morrison's bleakest work yet. Centring around a mission to save the Earth from an approaching asteroid, it embarks on a similar but far darker journey to *Interstellar*. "In *Nameless*, what's out there waiting for us is nothing less than pure evil and undying hate," explains Morrison. "Cosmic rays and wormholes are the least of our characters' worries."



You'd guess that they might be scowling under those helmets.

In Morrison's words, the key phrase is 'nothing is real'. "In the third issue, the comic we think we're reading begins to change into something quite different," he teases. "There are sci-fi and thriller elements but everything's used in the service of unease and dread."

I'd say it's more of a horror comic than anything else, touching on all the various aspects of the genre from apocalyptic, supernatural, occult stuff to squicky gross-out scenes, existential soul-freezing nihilism and quasi-religious, sweat-inducing visions of hell and judgement."

Compared to Benedict Cumberbatch's Sherlock, Morrison claims that his mysterious protagonist is closer in spirit to James McAvoy's misanthropic policeman in *Filth*. "Part of the driving force of the series involves setting up a character type and situation that you think you're familiar with – a scuzzy Constantine occult hero facing an Armageddon-style scenario – but then dismantling that first impression in various cruel and horrific ways," he says. "He's also the first Scottish lead in a comic I've written since Captain Clyde in 1981!"

*Nameless*'s creator-owned status also allowed Burnham – known for his experimental layouts – to really cut loose. "Where *Batman Incorporated* was fairly down to earth, this goes to a much more squirmy, psychedelic place," says Morrison. "It's also uncensored, so we're showcasing the phantasmagoric side of what Chris can do." **SFX**

*Nameless* is published on 3 February.

## LUMEN

# Illuminating Company

Frey and Spielberg go steampunk down under

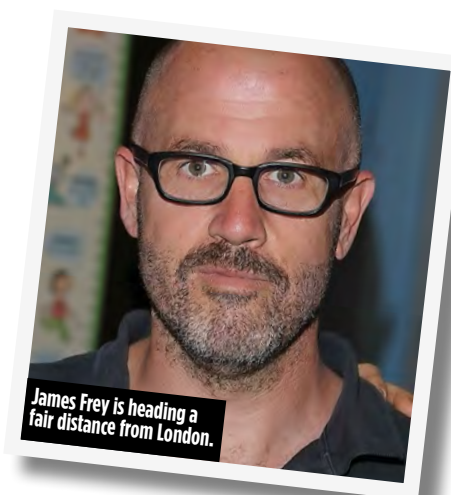
● HAS THERE EVER BEEN A REALLY GOOD steampunk movie or TV show? Harking back to William Gibson and Bruce Sterling's *The Difference Engine*, the appeal of the retro-futuristic subgenre has mostly been dominated by novels over the past few decades. But now *Lumen* – James Frey's new pilot for Steven Spielberg's Amblin Television – is propelling it into unprecedented territory on the small screen.

"Steampunk is cool!" the *Endgame* author tells Red Alert. "You only have to go to Comic-Con and see all the people in steampunk costumes to know how popular it is. Nobody has really done anything like this before, so if it works it'll be awesome!"

Directed by Joe Johnston (*Captain America: The*

*First Avenger*) and starring *Parenthood*'s Sam Jaeger, it follows 16-year-old Charlie, whose determination to discover why his favourite fantasy author has inexplicably disappeared unwittingly embroils his family in a timeless mystical battle. "We were trying to come up with an idea for a show for Amblin and we thought of this magical world," Frey explains. "But if you even begin to go into the idea of a magical world, you soon realise that everything has already been done before. So we imagined a steampunk world where instead of electricity, magic is the primary source of power."

But while most steampunk stories are invariably set in a version of Victorian London, *Lumen* will



James Frey is heading a fair distance from London.

shoot in Auckland.

"They've built some pretty astonishing facilities there," claims Frey. "There are only a few places in the world where you can shoot something as effects-heavy as a steampunk show and there's a whole bunch of crew who know how to do that kind of world-building." **SFX**

© REX (C)





A selection from the Craig Stevens Palitoy  
Star Wars 3 3/4" figure collection

A Star Wars trilogy of sales  
of over 75 MOCs

Released on 28th January 2015  
Sequels to appear later in 2015

For more information regarding  
forthcoming sales visit the Vectis website  
All Vectis sales are Room Auctions  
live internet bidding available at  
[www.invaluable.com](http://www.invaluable.com)  
& [www.vectis.co.uk](http://www.vectis.co.uk)



**Vectis**  
AUCTIONS LTD  
COLLECTABLE TOY SPECIALISTS

**TEL - 01642 750616**

e-mail [admin@vectis.co.uk](mailto:admin@vectis.co.uk) [www.vectis.co.uk](http://www.vectis.co.uk)

**VECTIS AUCTIONS, FLECK WAY, THORNABY, STOCKTON-ON-TEES, TS17 9JZ**



**We Sell  
Much More  
Than Just Toys**

**Brikabrax UK**  
[www.brikabrax.co.uk](http://www.brikabrax.co.uk)







## STAR TURN

# Eliza Taylor

The Aussie actress trying to reboot humanity in the second season of *The 100*

### REVOLUTIONARY LEADER

▶ "I think that Clark is a strong female character and it's not often you get to play that when you've got blonde hair and blue eyes. So I was drawn to the Katniss vibe. Also the pilot was written like a feature film and I wanted to know what happens next. I wanted to keep reading and that is a good sign."

### THE FIGHT STUFF

▶ "Clark's gone Jason Bourne. She's turned into such a fighter. I'm trying to be [more like her] by going to the gym as much as possible and getting in touch with some pretty raw emotions but it can be challenging at times. A lot of the body language has been interesting for me to not look as girlie. I noticed when I watched earlier episodes something would happen and I would go, 'Ew!' Now I try to stand stronger and make my movements more calculated to be able to fight."

### TIME FOR LOVE?

▶ "I don't think the story is going in that direction because they don't want it to be a typical CW show and I'm okay with that. But I think the dynamic between Bellamy (Bob Morley) and Clark is interesting so I would like to see where that goes. But they won't tell me if that's going to happen."

### POST-APOCALYPTIC PRESSURE COOKER

▶ "I think she handles everything really, really gracefully for being such a young girl and having so much thrown at her. She keeps the same goal in mind which is survive, survive, survive. I do think there are times when she does catch herself and think, 'Look at what I've become. This was not a part of the plan.' But she just has to push forward and I think she does that really, really well."

### LOST IN TRANSLATION

▶ "The American accent isn't an issue. I have my moments but for the most part I have been doing it for a long time. I used to teach the American dialect when I was an out of work actor/drama teacher so it was something I studied and it's ingrained. I don't have to think about it too much."



*The 100* season two starts on E4 on Tuesday 6 January.





Somebody started the fireworks a bit early.

## THE RENDLESHAM UFO INCIDENT

# Into The Woods

UK's Area 51 inspires East Anglian scare show

**W**HEN DANIEL SIMPSON MOVED to Suffolk, he didn't expect to find the subject for his next film literally on his doorstep. But the London-born director was living on the edge of the Rendlesham Forest, which in 1980 was the site of several sightings of unexplained lights and the supposed landing of an extraterrestrial craft.

"As a filmmaker, I've always wanted to make a UFO film," he tells Red Alert. "It seemed like the obvious thing to do. I also wanted to make a film about treasure hunters, so I just combined the two things together."

Renowned as "Britain's version of Roswell," the incident provides the impetus for *The Rendlesham UFO Incident*, although the terrifying events have been updated to the present day. "We couldn't really make a film based on that now because it would become a period piece," he says. "We had to come up with something else that would tie in, so we concocted our own story about these ordinary people coming to the forest."

"This is a small English film and at the heart of it is this weird old Britain, which in a way is to do with things like *The Wicker Man*, and there's also Morris dancers. As it goes on, it just gets more and more strange. You're not immersed in a big science fiction world; you're in a forest and there are these lights..." **SFX**

*The Rendlesham UFO Incident* is in select UK cinemas from 6 February and is available on DVD from 9 February.

## AERIAL ASSAULT SF TV ROUND UP



### SHOWRUNNING

► **CONTINUUM** (above) renewed for a fourth and final season. Meanwhile, season three airs on Syfy UK from 28 January.

► In the least surprising news of the month, **AGENTS OF SHIELD** showrunners Jed Whedon and Maurissa Tancher have confirmed that *Avengers: Age Of Ultron* will impact the Marvel show.

► **CONSTANTINE** fails to pick up a full season order. Anyone know an anti-cancellation spell?

► **THE LEFTOVERS** getting a soft reboot for season two, with a largely new cast (though Justin Theroux will stay on) and a new setting.

► **SUPERNATURAL** season nine airing on E4 RIGHT NOW. About damn time.

► *Torchwood's* Catherine Tregenna penning a **DOCTOR WHO** script for series nine. She'll be the show's first female writer in seven years.

► **THE FLASH/ARROW** producer Andrew Kreisberg says Batman, Superman and their respective cities are off limits for the CW shows.

► Danny John-Jules reveals scripts for **RED DWARF XI** are currently being written.

"My ideal role would be a baddie in a James Bond film. I think the wheelchair and the computer voice would fit the part."

Forget **SPECTRE**, could Stephen Hawking be Bond's biggest threat yet?

### SCI-FACT!

The movie rights for *The Fire Sermon* have already been snapped up by DreamWorks.

## NEW AUTHOR

# Francesca Haig

Tasmanian poet steps into the world of dystopian fiction

Translation rights for the book have been sold to over 20 countries.



### WHAT WOULD YOU WRITE AS THE FIRE SERMON'S COVER BLURB?

► They were born together and they will die together. One strong Alpha twin, one mutated Omega; the only thing they share is the moment of their death. The Omegas live in segregation, cast out by their families and ruthlessly oppressed by their Alpha counterparts. The Alphas are the elite. Once their weaker twin has been cast aside, they're free to live in privilege and safety. Cass and Zach are both perfect on the outside: no visible Omega mutation. But Cass has a secret – one that Zach will stop at nothing to expose.

### HOW LONG DID YOU WORK ON THE BOOK?

► For years and years – at first, just in fits and spurts, as a bit of a fun side-project. Then for a year or two I concentrated on it more seriously.

### HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT BUILDING THE WORLD OF THE FIRE SERMON?

► There was no "eureka!" moment. It all grew organically from the idea of twins with a fatal bond. From that central hook I had to go back and think, how did they arrive in this state, how would they deal with this genetic mutation?

### HOW MUCH RESEARCH DID YOU HAVE TO DO?

► Not very much! The mechanics of the scientific aspects didn't grab me – it was the human consequences. If you write a novel about a class of people that live off another class of people, you're going to be thinking about parallels in our real world.

### WHICH SF/FANTASY AUTHORS WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE COMPARED TO IN A DREAM REVIEW?

► Cormac McCarthy for his stark, indelible vision; Laini Taylor, for her lyrical language; and Philip Pullman, for his philosophical acuity.

*The Fire Sermon* is published on 26 February.





HAMMER

# Hammer Time

The horror house shows no signs of slowing down...



The man with the Hammer.

● HAMMER HIT A HOME RUN WITH 2012'S *THE Woman In Black*, which established the resurgent company as a force to be reckoned with. Speaking with Simon Oakes, the man who calls the shots, it is clear there is no looking back.

"I think it is our responsibility to do the right thing with this brand and not just repeat the past," he begins. "That has been a little controversial because there are still some people wishing we could do new Dracula and Frankenstein films. But I tell them, 'that was then and this is now.' There is a contemporary Hammer version of *Dracula*, *Frankenstein* and *The Mummy* waiting to be made – but the question is how we find our way into that."

While some of the studio's old favourites will not, therefore, be reappearing anytime soon, Oakes does admit that he has dug into the Hammer library for a couple of forthcoming frighteners...

"We are doing a new Abominable Snowman movie," he reveals. "But this is a totally new version that is designed to thrill a modern audience. And we are also developing *Quatermass* for the BBC. Nigel Kneale's vision of a dystopian world is, I think, still powerful today. The original show was a metaphorical tale about the Cold War, so we are working on how to make Kneale's unique blend of science fiction and science fact relevant to our own troubled times." **SFX**

*The Woman In Black 2: Angel Of Death* is in cinemas now.

## AERIAL ASSAULT SF TV ROUND UP



### CASTING CALL

▶ Marvel and Netflix have found their **JESSICA JONES**. *Breaking Bad*'s Krysten Ritter (above) will play the PTSD-suffering superhero who opens a detective agency.

▶ Mark Hamill to reprise his role as The Trickster in **THE FLASH**. He first starred as the mass-murdering con artist in the 1990 *Flash* series.

▶ William Shatner to play a "pivotal" role in the second half of **HAVEN** season five. He'll appear in a four-episode arc.

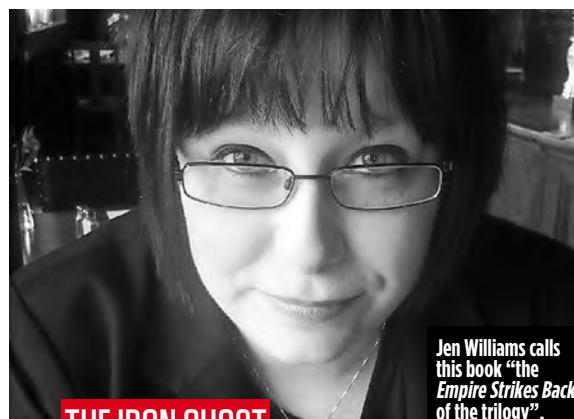
▶ *Beastmaster* and *V*'s Marc Singer joins the cast of **ARROW** as General Matthew Shrieve, the human leader of the Creature Commandos.

▶ *Lost Girl*'s Ksenia Solo, *Intruders*' James Frain and *War Of The Worlds*' Justin Chatwin have all joined the clone club for **ORPHAN BLACK**'s upcoming season three.

▶ Once and future king Bradley James nabs the devilish title role in Lifetime's **OMEN** sequel series, *Damien*.

▶ *Mad Men*'s January Jones and *Flight Of The Conchord*'s Kristen Schaal have joined Will Forte comedy **THE LAST MAN ON EARTH**.

© REX (1)



Jen Williams calls this book "the *Empire Strikes Back* of the trilogy".

### THE IRON GHOST

# Promise Fulfilled



Three's company in the *Copper Promise* follow-up

JEN WILLIAMS RETURNS TO THE world of her epic fantasy debut novel, *The Copper Promise*, in February with the publication of *The Iron Ghost*, continuing the adventures of heroes-for-hire Wydrin, Frith and Sebastian.

This time the trio accepts what they think is a simple snatch-and-grab job to retrieve a stolen item from the city of Skaldshollow. "However, they quickly find themselves in a steaming pile of trouble as they're dropped into the middle of a spiritual war where no one is telling the whole truth; the stones walk, and there is dark magic in the hills," says Williams, who is clearly very fond of her three protagonists. "I've never had to agonise too much over what Wydrin might say in any given situation – often something inappropriate – or how Frith would react when a situation gets out of hand – he will usually manage to make it worse – because they feel very real in my head," she says. "To be fair, all three had their blueprints in classic fantasy archetypes – the likeable rogue, the man bent on revenge, the honourable warrior – but hopefully given depths that move them past the archetypes and into something more modern."

As much as Williams likes her creations, she's still going to put them through the wringer. "*The Iron Ghost* was harder to write from an emotional standpoint because it takes the characters to some dark places," she says. "The threat in the first book – giant god of destruction, army of bloodthirsty minions – was very large and obvious. In the second book, the threats are a lot more

personal, and potentially a lot more damaging." **SFX**

*The Iron Ghost* haunts good bookstores from 26 February.

DON'T QUOTE ME

"I love Batman so dearly... If I saw Christian Bale going through the shopping mall, like in that scene on the Batmobile, I would have thrown my underwear at him"

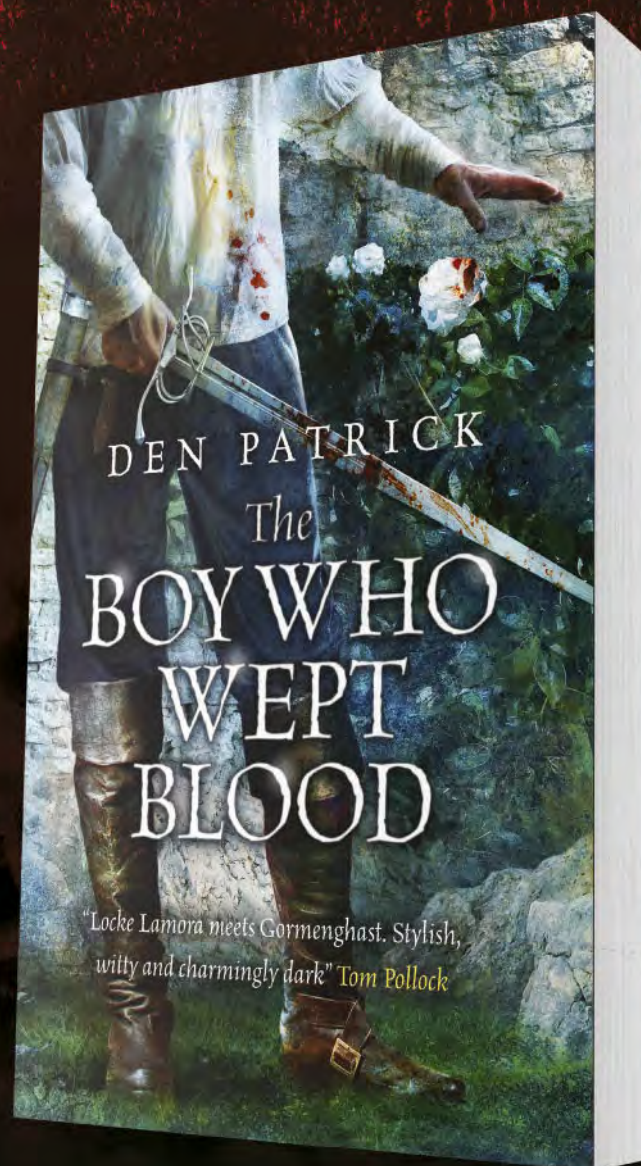
Reason #1086 Jennifer Lawrence is awesome: she's the world's biggest Dark Knight fan.

### SCI-FACT!

In 1971 Hammer was developing *Zeppelin Vs Pterodactyls*. Sadly it never made it into production.



# PRIVILEGE. POWER. INTRIGUE.



RETURN TO LANDFALL FOR  
A BRAND NEW ADVENTURE.



[www.gollancz.co.uk](http://www.gollancz.co.uk)

Pick up or download your copy today







**SCI-FACT!**  
A *Peter Pan* musical aired in the US last month starring Christopher Walken as Hook.

# SPOTLIGHT

JM Barrie's eternal child gets the prequel treatment in Joe Wright's **Pan**

That was either a big bucket of fairy dust or one massive wave.



Leonardo DiCaprio's Benjamin Button moment.



When someone points a gun at you, you do the robot. It's only natural.



Tiger Lily has run up a massive tab at Hobbycraft.



## THE WRIGHT STUFF

► The little boy who never grew up is getting his childhood fleshed out, exploring how he got to Neverland, became leader of the Lost Boys and made his acquaintance with a certain mono-handed sea captain. The man in the director's chair is – perhaps unexpectedly – Joe Wright, though anyone who saw his imaginative *Anna Karenina* will know he's got the chops for a sumptuous period piece.

## PAN-TASTIC LEADING MAN

► Wright's biggest casting headache initially seemed to be finding an unknown to carry the movie, with Wright eventually finding young Levi Miller after a looong search. In the midst of WWII, the baby Peter is dumped at a grim Kathy Burke-run orphanage by his mysterious mum (Amanda Seyfried), who abandons him with a panpipe chain around his neck. It's from this drab reality that the born rabble-rouser finds himself being Shanghai-ed off to the second star to the right and straight on till morning, courtesy of a flying ship run by a nefarious pirate...

## HUGE ACTION

► ...but not *that* pirate. Pan's big bad is in fact Blackbeard, who's been busy plucking war orphans from their beds to work as slave labour in Neverland. This is Hugh Jackman in gloriously OTT, moustache-twirling mode, giving it two barrels of camp theatrics – rather reminiscent of his thesping doppelganger from *The Prestige* – with a suitable underscore of louche menace. Quality wiggage too.

## OFF THE HOOK?

► But what of Captain James Hook? Well, the foppish future friend of crocodiles is in the mix too, played by Garrett Hedlund although he's neither hooked nor a captain yet. In fact he's an Indiana Jones-esque adventurer who Peter meets at Blackbeard's mining camp. The two manage to strike up a firm friendship, with Hook aiding Peter's escape, although perhaps by the end of the movie this kinship might find itself severed... probably somewhere near the left wrist, if we were to guess.

## GOING NATIVE

► In the end, Wright's biggest casting headache has been Tiger Lily – the princess of the colourful native tribe that Peter and Hook stumble upon who discovers something special about that panpipe trinket. Given Pan-creator JM Barrie's un-PC depiction of the tribe – called \*cough\* the Pickaninny – it's kicked up a big stink to have porcelain-skinned Rooney Mara play the part.

## LOST ON THE WAY

► *Peter Pan* fans will be cheered to find much familiar. Mermaids will be encountered – played by Cara Delevingne – while you can expect Blackbeard's comeuppance at the finale to result in lots of orphan children with no particular place to go. What can we call them? Who will lead them? Sequel, anyone?

## WHEN TO EXPECT IT?

► *Pan* arrives in 2D and 3D on 17 May 2015. **SFX**





# VENGEANCE IS COMING



The second book in the Reckoners series from  
*Sunday Times* Bestselling Author Brandon Sanderson.



[www.gollancz.co.uk](http://www.gollancz.co.uk)

PICK UP OR DOWNLOAD YOUR COPY TODAY







**SCI-FACT!**  
Barack Obama was given a copy of *The Witcher* by former Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk in June 2014.

WHITE GOD

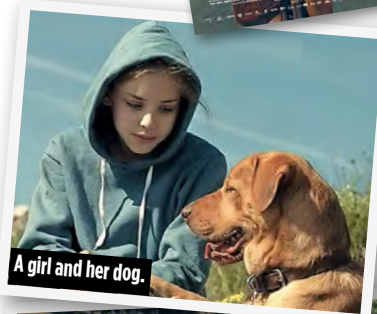
# Woofolution

Step aside apes, the dogs are revolting in Hungary

**E**VERY DOG HAS ITS DAY, BUT NOT quite the same day as *White God*'s Hagen, who leads the dogs of Budapest in an uprising against humanity – a comment, director Kornél Mundruczó says, on rising intolerance in Eastern Europe.

"This film is about minority. Not just about dogs as a minority but using them as a metaphor for the way we treat gypsies and Jews in Hungary. In the last ten years, with the rise of the extreme right, Europe has started to forget and repeated the same stories somehow. This film is repeating something that happened already but in a different form. It's very dangerous to forget our history."

Hagen, played by canine twins Luke and Body, gets separated from his 14-year-old owner Lili (Zsófia Psotta) after her dog-hating father throws him out. It is a film of "many genres" according to Mundruczó, but is divided into two sections. The first is that of Hagen's harsh time on the streets, where he and other hungry stray dogs are



A girl and her dog.



Our money's on number six.



Directing kids: easier than directing dogs.

pursued by catchers, before Hagen himself is forced into the cruel world of dog fighting – a traumatic experience that ends up twisting his sweet nature.

All of which, of course, is delivered with kitchen-sink reverence. But that's before Hagen, pushed to the brink by humanity, ignites a dog pound into a full-on pulp-horror revolution – complete with paw prints of blood and "he's behind you!" scares. It's a chaotic sequence that, Mundruczó says, was inspired by childhood favourite *Jurassic Park* and Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*.

To visualise such a revolution, however, Mundruczó had to direct with a record-breaking 254 dogs throughout *White God* – all of which won it the alternative "Palm Dog Prize" at Cannes last year.

"It required a lot of patience," he laughs. "We shot 55 days but I think 40 of those were just with the dogs. Like, there was one shot where all the dogs are meant to be breaking out of a dog pound and it was perfect but then there was just this one dog who decided to stay back. There was a lot of that. I think we have 250 hours of material for a two-hour film!" **SFX**

*White God* is released on 27 February.

THE WITCHER 3: WILD HUNT

# Magic Hour

Geralt of Rivia's story reaches an epic climax

● IF YOU'RE ANYTHING LIKE US CHANCES ARE you still haven't left the Hinterlands in *Dragon Age: Inquisition*, which is why it's probably good news that *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* was recently delayed till May. But worry not, fantasy RPG fans, the final chapter of Geralt's story will be worth the wait.

"This time we wanted to focus more on the personal life of Geralt, on his relations with his loved ones," says CD Projekt Red's Marcin Momot. "That being said, it's not a love story and Geralt will have to face an evil more brutal than anything he faced in the past – the Wild Hunt."

As well as shifting the focus from the politics of the witcher's unnamed continent to Geralt himself, *The Witcher 3* introduces a colossal open world 20% bigger than *Skyrim*, where 80 unique monsters can be tracked and slain.



And we thought the seagulls in Bath were bad.

"It was natural for us to move to an open world after *The Witcher 2*," Momot explains. "It enables players to travel and explore."

As before, the moral choices Geralt faces won't always be black and white. "Sometimes you will see the consequences of your decisions right after making a choice," says Momot. "But your actions will have repercussions throughout the whole game, most notably at the end."

After almost a decade telling Geralt's story CD Projekt Red have chosen to go out on a high. "Every epic story should have an epic finale! We don't want to milk gamers and make a million games about Geralt so people hate him, instead of feeling excited to play the games." **SFX**

*The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* is released on PS4, Xbox One and PC on 19 May.



# TELL US WHAT YOU THINK OF SFX



Take our online survey and let us know what *you* want to see featured in your favourite sci-fi and fantasy magazine. Whether you are a regular buyer or just read *SFX* on a casual basis, we'd like to hear from you. Complete the survey and you could be in with a chance of winning £200 worth of Amazon vouchers!

To access the survey, go to  
**[www.futuresurvey.com/sfxsurvey](http://www.futuresurvey.com/sfxsurvey)**  
 Password **sfx1** Closing date **12 February 2015**

Future

For full terms and conditions, please refer to: [www.futureplc.com/survey-prizedraw-terms-and-conditions/](http://www.futureplc.com/survey-prizedraw-terms-and-conditions/). All entrants must be aged 16 or over.





## JUDGEMENT DAY

**1** Ever wanted to get into Dredd but had no drokking idea where to start? Well good news, a brand new *Mega Collection* of the iconic lawman's most exciting stories launches this month. Published fortnightly in special edition hardback format, the 80-issue partwork groups Dredd's tales thematically, from the Democracy storylines to the Mega Epics. Think you've seen it all before? Every issue of the *Mega Collection* features exclusive collectable cover designs and is packed with previously unseen bonus features, cover galleries and concept sketches - including this *Judge Dredd: Debris* cover, pencilled by Lee Garbett.

# IMAGE BANK

We've seen things you people wouldn't believe...



## SPOT WHEELS

**2** It's less than five years until real life catches up with *Blade Runner's* 2019 LA, and the chances of the road being filled with flying cars before then is looking increasingly unlikely. Comfort yourself with Renaud Marion's *Air Drive* - a retro-futuristic photo series, now on exhibition in Switzerland, or available to buy online. The neat twist here: while their engines may be powered by future tech, the cars are based on iconic retro automobiles including Jaguars, Aston Martins and Porsches. For more information visit <http://bit.ly/AirDrive>.



## NEVERENDING ART

**3** With the endless remakes, reboots and sequels churned out by Hollywood every year it's only a matter of time before someone decides to bring back *The NeverEnding Story*. And if it looks anything like Nicolas Francoeur's stunning concept art for a dark and gritty reimagining of the 1984 family favourite we're fully on board. Atreyu and Artax are pictured here. Head to [www.vorace-art.com](http://www.vorace-art.com) to check out the rest.



AFTERLIFE #99

## Gigi Edgley

Chiana in *Farscape*



**M**ULTITALENTED Australian actress Gigi Edgley (www.gigiedgley.com) is a woman of many abilities: dancer, recording artist and proficient fire-twirler. But she's still probably best known for her role as Chiana, monochrome-skinned Moya crew member, across all four seasons of *Farscape* (and the *Peacekeeper Wars* mini-series). She recently hosted reality series *Jim Henson's Creature Shop Challenge* on Syfy. Next up, she's set to play X, an online celebrity lost in a world of modern technology, in *Hashtag*, a thought-provoking crowd-funded short film.

### WOULD YOU LIKE TO PLAY CHIANA AGAIN?

► Yes, absolutely. In a heartbeat. She was such an amazing character. I was a baby when they asked me to come onto the set of *Farscape*. I didn't want to be a human wearing alien make-up, I wanted to create a character that fitted into the world of Jim Henson. So I went all out, made these crazy movements and really wanted to explore the alien side of life.

### WHAT'S THE STRANGEST REQUEST YOU'VE HAD FROM A FAN?

► I've never really had anything that odd. I get so excited half the time that I fan out more on them and they end up having to walk away from me, because I end up telling them my life story and they're like, "Okay, we want to go see the Incredible Hulk now."

### IS THERE ANYTHING YOU THINK WAS UNFINISHED ABOUT CHIANA'S STORY?

► When I was working on *Jim Henson's Creature Shop Challenge* Brian Henson showed me a yellow envelope and he said, "Guess what this is?" And I went, "What?" And he said, "The script for the *Farscape* movie." And I went "[gasp]! Give it to me now!" And he said, "No, it's not finished." So I do know it does exist. I don't know if it's ever going to happen, or who's involved, but I did almost touch it!

### DID YOU GET ANY SOUVENIRS FROM THE SET?

► I got a set of the contact lenses and the furry boots that I wore in [season four episode] "John Quixote". I've had interesting things brought up to me at signings though, and I'm like, "Where on earth did you get that?"

### WHAT WOULD IT SAY ON CHIANA'S GRAVESTONE?

► I'm not dead yet!

## NEWS WARP

ALL FACT, NO FILLER



► BBC Worldwide and Paramount opening a £2 billion theme park in 2020. The Kent attraction will feature rides based on Paramount franchises (*STAR TREK*) and BBC shows (*DOCTOR WHO*).

► The first full-length, British sci-fi film, *A MESSAGE FROM MARS*, restored by the BFI.

► World's first officially licensed *BATMOBILE* sold at auction for \$137,000.

► *BILL AND TED* to return in a new Boom! Studios comic series.

► *THE WALKING DEAD* season five pulls in the highest overnight ratings in Fox UK's history.

► New *LETHBRIDGE-STEWART* novel series to launch in February.

► Dan Abnett penning new fantasy trilogy *THE WIELD* for Gollancz.

► Joss Whedon speaks out against "remastered" *BUFFY* re-runs in the US, saying "widescreen *Buffy* is nonsense".

► BBC Three online not commissioning genres like drama, docs and comedy, but shows branded "*MAKE ME LAUGH*" and "*MAKE ME THINK*". So drama docs and comedy then? Look, we're confused too.

DON'T QUOTE ME

"I would love to do a superhero movie! The problem is I don't want to be the girlfriend. I don't want to be the daughter. I want to wear a fucking cool costume, with a scar on my face, with fight scenes"

We like the sound of Jessica Chastain's superhero.

**SCI-FACT!**  
Chiana was set to appear in only one *Farscape* episode, but quickly became a regular.

SOMETHING COMING THROUGH

# Dependence Day

Paul McAuley's tale of strangely friendly ETs



**T**HE STARTING POINT WAS wondering what'd happen sociologically in terms of changing technology and attitudes, if suddenly supposedly benevolent aliens arrived and said, 'We're here to help you,' says Paul McAuley. The award-winning writer is poised to unveil the first of a two-part adventure when *Something Coming Through* lands in February.

McAuley's aliens, who offer mankind access to 15 other planets as part of their galactic aid package, are dubbed the Jackaroo, but he's not giving much else away. "I decided that they'd be fantastically enigmatic and deliberately wouldn't answer questions about who they were and why they were helping," he says. "With most aliens in SF the interesting thing about them isn't how different they are but actually how similar they are. All the most famous aliens, like Mr Spock, have human attributes that we can recognise. I thought, 'Let's go for some that don't really have anything you can grasp.' You don't even see them. They just appear through these hollow plastic-shelled mannequins that can assemble themselves out of air and water, then disassemble."

The story's human stars are Vic Gayle, a Birmingham policeman who's emigrated to Mangala, one of the worlds opened up by the Jackaroo, and twentysomething Londoner Chloe Miller. "She gets caught up in a search for a teenager and his sister who seem to be on the run from something and also seem to be possessed by a fragment of alien intelligence," says McAuley. Meanwhile, Gayle conducts a murder investigation tied to an ancient alien artefact... "Very slowly the two protagonists and the two story strands move towards each other."

*Something Coming Through* is out on 19 February.





# NICK SETCHFIELD'S DEVELOPMENT HELL

Your monthly glimpse into Hollywood's hoped-for future

## WATER GUY! AQUAMAN

► So just which incarnation of Aquaman will splash on to the big screen? The clean-cut, porpoise-riding golden boy of the Silver Age? The scuzzier, hook-handed anti-hero of the '90s? Or the guy whose credibility in superhero club was fatally torpedoed by all those gags in *Entourage*? Star **Jason Momoa** has no doubt. This King of Atlantis "will be a bad-ass – otherwise they wouldn't cast me for the role." And he has a point. 6'4" and 235 lb of point. Momoa reveals that he's contracted for no less than four

films as the maritime monarch. And if that includes *Batman V Superman* and *Justice League* Parts 1 and 2 then an *Aquaman* sequel may be a whole other discussion... Momoa wants **Zack Snyder** to helm this solo adventure but word is indie director **Jeff Nichols** (*Take Shelter*, *Mud*) is the favoured pick of Warner Bros.

## FORD ON BOARD! BLADE RUNNER 2

► **Ridley Scott** is clearly having one hell of an interior monologue. Reports of him bailing on directing duties for the *Blade Runner* sequel were premature, it seems – turns

out he's still in an active state of prevarication. "I don't know yet," he tells Yahoo. "The script is very, very good... It's a hard one to track because it's a very personal piece of my work." Definitely back for a bowl of radiation-soaked sushi is original star **Harrison Ford**, returning as Rick Deckard. "I sent him [the script]," says Scott, "and he said, 'That's the best thing I've ever read.'" Official: *Blade Runner 2* screenplay better than *Star Wars Holiday Special*. Scott also drops some spoilers about Deckard's involvement in the story: "It all makes sense in terms of how it relates to the first one," he tells

*Variety*. "Harrison is very much part of this one, but really it's about finding him. He comes in in the third act."

## BLOCK BUSTER! MINECRAFT

► Ah, creative differences. Where would we be without them? Watching **Shawn Levy's** *Goonies*-style take on *Minecraft*, that's where. The *Night At The Museum* helmer has dropped out of the movie adaptation of the monstrously addictive videogame – and he's taken writers **Kieran** and **Michele Mulroney** with him. "Warners asked me to develop how



## SUICIDAL TENDENCIES! SUICIDE SQUAD

► It may sound like a particularly improbable instalment of SFX's very own Wishlist but it's legit: Warner has revealed the cast of *Suicide Squad*, the movie set to smush the villains of the DC Universe into one giant, pulsating mass of bad-assery, anti-social tendencies and psychosis. Leading the team of black-ops bad guys is **Tom Hardy** as mentally unstable combat specialist Rick Flagg. Also drafted for this covert mission is **Will Smith** as master assassin Deadshot, *Divergent*'s **Jai Courtney** as Boomerang and **Carla Delevingne** as the sorcerously-inclined Enchantress. Hipster Jesus-a-like **Jared Leto** is cinema's new Joker with *The Wolf Of Wall Street*'s **Margot Robbie** as his adoring cutie-nut Harley Quinn. The studio is still to cast the crucial role of Amanda Waller, the squad's handler, but we hear **Oprah Winfrey**, **Viola Davis** and **Octavia Spencer** are in contention. And what a death-match that would be. Filming begins in Toronto this April.

might this ever be a story for a movie, because it's not a narrative game," Levy tells the *Wall Street Journal*. "We came up with an approach that felt good to us and I discussed it with Mojang, the game makers who make *Minecraft*, and they were like, that doesn't sound like what we want if we're gonna see a movie get made. I think Mojang is still figuring out what they want. We gave it a shot and it wasn't the right fit, and so these things happen." Time to respawn...

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ERNST! SPECTRE

► Be warned, world powers. The Special Executive for Counter-Intelligence, Terrorism, Revenge and Extortion (with a diabolical sideline in iffy acronyms) is back in business. Yes, as its title ever so subtly hints, 007 is about to confront the power of SPECTRE for the first time since 1971's *Diamonds Are Forever* (listen closely and you can hear shares in Quantum plummeting). Now you might imagine that cast member **Christoph Waltz** might be the perfect person to bring some creepy teutonic menace to the role of cat-fondling megalomaniac Ernst Stavro Blofeld but he's having none of it. Waltz insists he's playing a character named Franz Oberhauser. "That's a fact. I can guarantee," he tells *Screen Crush*. Has he heard the Blofeld rumblings? "Yeah, yeah. I have. The character is called Franz Oberhauser. F-R-A-N-Z, Oberhauser, and I don't need to spell that." He doesn't tolerate failure, you know...

## KING SIZE! THE STAND

► At 1152 pages **Stephen King**'s post-apocalyptic chiller *The Stand*

is a serious shelf-buckler of a book. Now comes word that Hollywood is slicing it into no less than four movies (well, if **Peter Jackson** can turn 368 pages of *The Hobbit* into a trilogy...). And that's just as much of a surprise to writer/director **Josh Boone**. "I sold them [Warner Bros] on a three-hour movie," the *Fault In Our Stars* helmer tells the *Hollywood Babble-On* podcast. "They came back and said, 'Would you do it as multiple films?' and I said, 'Fuck, yes!' I loved my script and I was willing to drop it in an instant because you're able to do an even truer version that way... We're going to do *The Stand* at the highest level you can do it at, with a cast that's going to blow people's minds." The first instalment aims to enter production this spring. Just think of that deluxe box set.

## OUT OF THE CHAIR... STAR TREK 3

► Captain's log. Stardate 2015. The Enterprise has encountered a cosmic phenomenon Mr Spock has identified as "A right wobble." Yes, just when it seemed the reborn *Trek* franchise was engaging thrusters for next year's golden anniversary comes word that helmer **Bob Orefi** is off the movie (in Starfleet parlance this is known as violating the prime director). Whispers insist Paramount wasn't happy with Orefi's choice of script – set to include a celebratory cameo by **William Shatner**. The studio's shortlist of replacement helmers is said to include **Rupert Wyatt** (*Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes*), Mortem Tyldum (*The Imitation Game*), **Duncan Jones** (*Moon*) – who's already ruled himself out – **Daniel Espinosa** (*Safe House*) and **Justin Lin** from the *Fast And Furious* franchise.

## ALSO BURNING



**BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH** confirmed for Marvel's *Doctor Strange*... Sony Pictures planning new animated version of *Super Mario Bros*... **TOM MIDDLESTON**'s King Kong caper *Skull Island* cunningly retitled *Kong: Skull Island* as it delays release to 10 March 2017... Disney open to more Indiana Jones movies... Japan's Toho Studios making their own *Godzilla* movie for 2016... New Line Cinema filming Stephen King's *IT* with *True Detective*'s **CARY FUKUNAGA** directing... **CHRISTOPHER NOLAN**, **PETER JACKSON** and **ROBERT ZEMECKIS** in the mix for adaptation of **ERNEST CLINE**'s virtual reality novel *Ready Player One*... *Insurgent*'s **ROBERT SCHWENTKE** directing *The Divergent Series: Allegiant Part 1*... *Pan and Ice Age: Continental Drift* screenwriter **JASON FUCHS** writing *Wonder Woman*... Disney developing a *Pirates Of The Caribbean*-indebted take on the Robin Hood legend... *Casino Royale*'s **MARTIN CAMPBELL** helming graphic novel adap *Sebastian X*, the story of a cop implanted with the memories of the world's most notorious terrorist... *Earth To Echo*'s **DAVID GREEN** helming the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* sequel... 20th Century Fox greenlighting *Independence Day 2*... **MATTHEW VAUGHN** producing YA adap *Ghostgirl*... **CORIN HARDY** replacing **F JAVIER GUTIERREZ** as director of *The Crow*... cinematographer **ANNA FOERSTER** helming *Source Code 2*...

# NEXT MONTH # 258

ON SALE  
WEDNESDAY  
4 FEBRUARY



## INSURGENT

The *Divergent* sequel is here!

## THE WALKING DEAD

New zombies, new danger...

## ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING

Simon Pegg in Python-powered SF comedy!

**PLUS:** *Agents Of SHIELD!*  
*The Last Man On Earth!*  
*The Signal! Robot Overlords!*  
*John Barrowman! Claire North!*  
*The Fly 2! Howard The Duck!*

● All contents subject to change. Unless you pay the sum of one trillion dollars by midnight. We have warheads. Go to [gamesradar.com/sfx](http://gamesradar.com/sfx) for details

## SUBSCRIBE NOW

Never miss an issue – see page 34.



# Wrong Notes

David Langford despairs for humanity. He really does



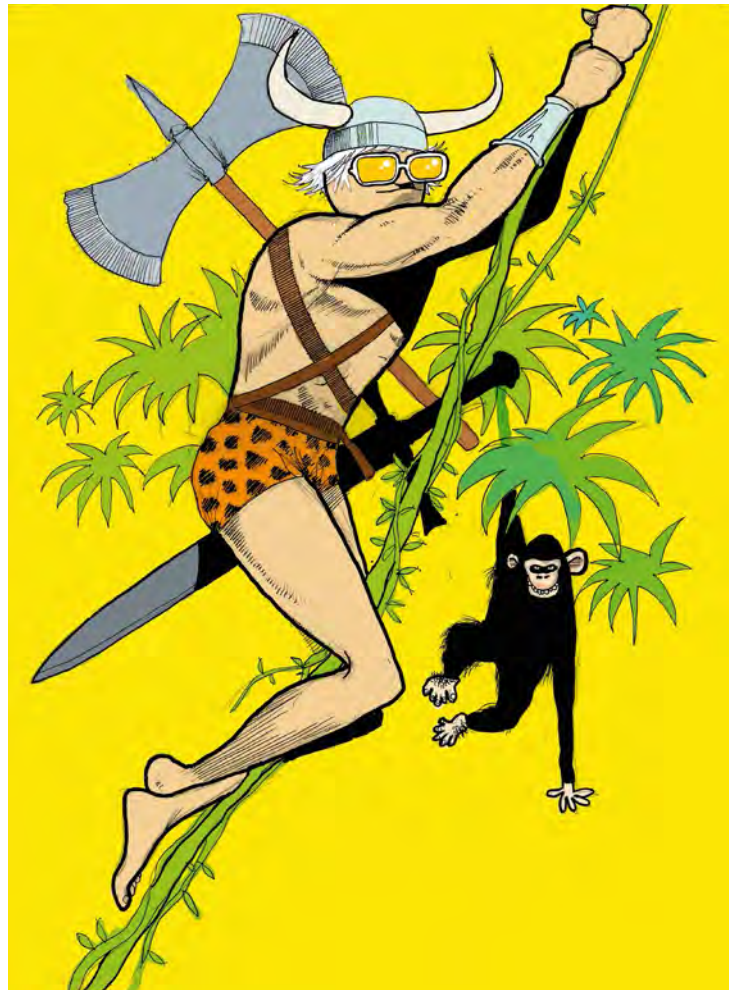
► SF writer David Langford has had a column in *SFX* since issue one.  
 ► David has received 29 Hugo Awards throughout his career.  
 ► His celebrated SF newsletter can be found at <http://news.ansible.co.uk>.  
 ► He is a principal editor of the *SF Encyclopedia* at <http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com>.

Our local charity shop is closing down, and I rescued a few reference books from oblivion. *Chambers Biographical Dictionary* is bound to come in handy some day... "Are you looking for your own name in there?" my wife asked. "No, no," I lied, quickly paging on to Ursula Le Guin, whose entry mentions the Earth Sea (not Earthsea) trilogy and morphs *Planet Of Exile* into *Plant Of Exile*. I remembered the bit in one of Robert Heinlein's SF novels where the young hero is shocked, shocked when his father scribbles corrections in a textbook.

You don't expect textbook standards from newspapers, not now they've fired all the researchers and fact-checkers. A recent *Independent* snippet broke the news that Morten Tyldum is to direct the film *Pattern Recognition*, "Based on the novel *Neuromancer* by William Gibson..." Fortunately sanity returned when the following *Ex\_Machina* thumbnail synopsis was of Gibson's novel *Pattern Recognition*. The *Indy* obituary for BBC producer/director Michael Hayes credits him with early *Doctor Who* stories and, before that, the 1961 SF classic *A For Andromeda* – or as the headline put it, "the sci-fi series 'The Andromeda Strain'". Duh.

Another Gibson namecheck from a *Sunday Herald* piece on the Glasgow Science Festival: "The whole basis of the internet was famously inspired by William Gibson's book *Neuromancer* and Isaac Asimov, who recently died, 'invented' earth-orbiting satellites in one of his tales." Poor old Arthur C Clarke, already forgotten.

The BBC website ran a story about that massive flop *John Carter*, "based on the books of *Conan The Barbarian* author Edgar Rice Burroughs". After the first 5,271,009 complaints, *Conan* magically became *Tarzan*. Our most reliable sources of SF/fantasy disinformation are quiz



shows, not covered here (with a nod to *Private Eye*'s "Dumb Britain") for over 50 issues. Put on your tinfoil-lined thinking caps...

*The Chase*: "In what novel by HG Wells does an inventor travel into the future?" Contestant: "Great Expectations."

*Cash Cab*: "What plant is said to deter vampires?" Contestant (after a long pause): "Well, I was gonna say garlic but that's not a plant, is it?" Host: "You've just won ten pounds!"

*The Weakest Link*: "In astronomy, a nucleus, a coma and a tail are all parts of which celestial body?" Contestant: "A horse."

*The Chase*: "Which Irvine Welsh novel features a monologue by a tapeworm?" Contestant: "Wuthering Heights."

## Quiz shows are reliable sources of disinformation

*Two Tribes*: "Who wrote *The Ballad Of Reading Gaol* after his incarceration there?" Contestant, surely with tongue in cheek: "Gary Glitter."

*In It To Win It*: "Dame Judi Dench played which character with a single-letter name in James Bond?" Contestant: "I'm thinking D or E. [Pause] D!"

*Tipping Point*: "In  $E=mc^2$ , what does the E stand for?" Contestant: "Einstein."

*The Weakest Link*: "The writer of *Watchmen* and *V For Vendetta* is Alan who?" Contestant: "Er... Ginsberg."

*Pointless*: "Which GO wrote *Animal Farm*?" Contestant: "I've got George Osborne in my head." What a ghastly SF concept.

*The Chase*: "On what day of the week did Robinson Crusoe find his companion?" Contestant: "Tuesday."

*The Weakest Link*: "Which 'T' is the wife of Oberon and Queen of the Fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?" Contestant, surely deserving half marks: "Tinkerbell."

My current all-time favourite is from, yet again, *The Chase*: "The Nun's Priest's Tale is a story by which fourteenth-century English author?" Contestant: "JK Rowling." **SFX**

**David Langford is not the answer – he's part of the problem.**



OFFICIAL TV, FILM, SCI-FI & SUPERHERO MERCH

OFFICIAL MERCHANDISE





# Small Wonder

Bonnie Burton sends dispatches from her invisible jet

When I was a little girl, I used to pretend I was

Wonder Woman in the playground. I'd fight injustices at school, stand up for the bullied kids and always try to do the right thing. I'd spin around my room imagining my boring school clothes transforming into Wonder Woman's patriotic red, white and blue costume. I'd squint up at the sky hoping to spot her invisible jet, despite it being, y'know, invisible. And imaginary.

I was a Wonder Woman fan for life. She represented everything I believe in today – truth, justice and girl power. I adored the *Wonder Woman* show from the '70s, but since then I've had to be satisfied with various *Wonder Woman* comics and animated specials. Why has a *Wonder Woman* movie taken so long?

Director Michelle MacLaren will be developing and directing the Warner *Wonder Woman* movie, starring Gal Gadot with Zack Snyder producing. But that doesn't hit until 2017. Gadot will debut her role as Wonder Woman in *Batman Vs Superman: Dawn Of Justice* out in 2016, but there's no guarantee that Wonder Woman will have a prominent role in the film. We may have to just be content with a mere cameo until then.

So why has it taken until 2017, if the movie stays on track, to get Wonder Woman on the big screen? She's arguably one of the most famous superheroes in comics, and just as worthy of her own major motion picture as her fellow costumed crusaders. Bruce and Clark have had numerous reboots and sequels, why not Diana?

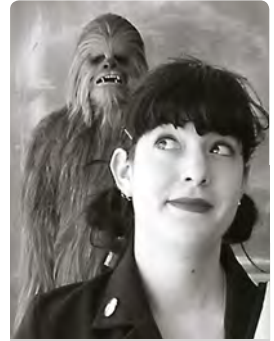
There were a few chances for the Amazonian to get her due but they never panned out. Joss Whedon had a 2007 *Wonder Woman* screenplay that portrayed her as a goddess-like character who learns to appreciate humanity through her love with the human Steve Trevor.



While fans were clamoring to read the script, Warner Bros didn't believe it was worth pursuing – which is still a sore spot with Whedon. Now that he's Marvel's golden boy after the success of *The Avengers*, I bet the executives at Warner are kicking themselves. Or at least, they should be.

And then there were all the TV attempts that got lost in development hell. An NBC pilot from David E Kelley in 2011 didn't get airborne, and a prequel for The CW called *Amazon* is apparently still spinning its wheels "in development".

So why do movie and TV executives think anything to do with Wonder Woman is so tricky? She's from a foreign land and connected to Greek gods. So how is that much different than being part of Norse mythology like Thor? She travels in



Our columnist Bonnie Burton, a San Francisco-based author, has written a number of books including her latest – *The Star Wars Craft Book*.  
Bonnie appears on the massive "Geek & Sundry" and "Stan Lee's World Of Heroes" YouTube channels.  
More of her writing can be found at [www.grrl.com](http://www.grrl.com).

## Why has it taken so long to get a Wonder Woman movie made?

an invisible jet, which isn't that much more ridiculous than the Batmobile and is surely cheap CG. Is the only reason it's taken this long for Wonder Woman to be taken seriously as a bankable superhero because she's a she?

Surely it's not because films like *Elektra* (2004) and *Catwoman* (2005) were box office bombs? Doesn't anyone remember how much money *Alien* (1979) and *Aliens* (1986) made with one of the most badass female heroes of all time?

Saying women heroes aren't desired in major films is a laughable argument after the

success of *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent*, not to mention the strong female heroes in such shows as *Lost Girl*, *Continuum*, *Agents Of SHIELD*, *Game Of Thrones*, *Sleepy Hollow*, *The Originals*, *The Walking Dead*...

Even the new *Ghostbusters* reboot might get an all-female cast if director Paul Feig and screenwriter Katie Dippold have their way, and I'm fine with that. Hopefully, movie studios will get the hint that audiences have been more than ready for female superheroes to take over as main characters – and not as mere love interests, femmes fatales or eye candy cameos. **SFX**

Bonnie will now pretend she's swapping out of work clothes into her crime-fighting costume.





NEW  
SHORT STORY  
COMPETITION!

# The Writing Dead 2

A new short story competition judged by **Darren Shan!**

It has clawed its way out of the soil...  
time to get writing again!

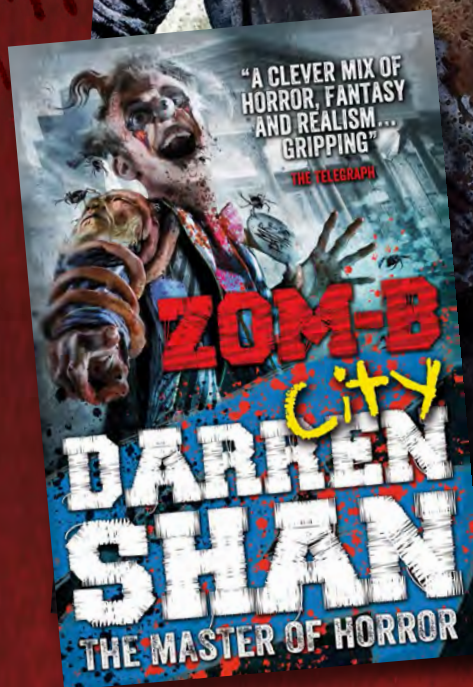
**B**itten by the urge to write? *SFX* has once again teamed up with top author and master of horror Darren Shan to find the best original zombie-themed short stories.

Entries must be no longer than 1500 words, be your own original work, include at least one zombie in a Santa outfit, and feature Christmas tree lights as a prop.

The latest instalment in Darren's 12-part series, *Zom-B Family*, is on sale now. The series chronicles the journey of teenage protagonist B Smith during a zombie outbreak in Ireland, to the death-filled streets of London. It's grisly, fast-paced and guarantees a high body count.

The closing date is Tuesday 3 February 2015; submissions received after this date will not be considered, so don't hang around. All entries will be reviewed by judges from the *SFX* team. The five best will be passed on to Darren to pick a winner.

All the shortlisted entries will receive a signed set of nine *Zom-B* books published by Simon & Schuster, and the incredibly talented winner will discover their fate when their story is printed in full in *SFX* issue 260, on sale Wednesday 1 April 2015. Plus, they'll get a weird zombie baby statue! Get writing, and best of luck.



## How to enter:

Entries should be submitted in Microsoft Word (either .doc or .docx files), via [www.gamesradar.com/writing-dead](http://www.gamesradar.com/writing-dead) or [www.futurecompetitions.com/WritingDead2](http://www.futurecompetitions.com/WritingDead2). Further details can be found at [www.gamesradar.com/writing-dead](http://www.gamesradar.com/writing-dead).

**Terms And Conditions** By taking part, you agree to be bound by the Competition Rules: [www.futuretcs.com](http://www.futuretcs.com). Entries must be submitted in the place and format specified above and be received by midnight (GMT) on Tuesday 3 February 2015. Late or incomplete entries, or entries in excess of 1500 words, will be disqualified. Entries are limited to one per individual. Open to all UK residents of 16 years and over, except employees of Future Publishing Limited ("Future") and any party involved in the competition. The winner will be selected by *Zom-B* author Darren Shan in his sole discretion from a shortlist of 5 entries selected by a panel of judges from the *SFX* magazine team. The judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. The winner will be notified by email or telephone. There will be four (4) shortlisted winners entitled to nine (9) signed books from the *Zom-B* series, and one (1) overall winner who will receive a set of signed books, a baby zombie statue, and their entry will be printed in Issue 260 of *SFX* Magazine. The prize is non-transferable and non-refundable. There is no cash alternative. You will retain all rights you have in the copyright and other intellectual property rights comprising your entry but, by entering the Competition, you grant Future Publishing and its licensees, and the Competition sponsor, the right free of charge to republish your Competition entry in any medium or format. You warrant that the Competition entry is entirely your own work and not copied or adapted from any other source.

# [www.sfx.co.uk/thewritingdead](http://www.sfx.co.uk/thewritingdead)



# SUBSCRIBE TO SFX

Subscribe to our print edition, digital edition or get the best value with our complete print and digital bundle



Here's why subscribing to *SFX* in print is a good thing. Not only do you get a shiny new

issue of *SFX* 13 times a year, you save loads on what you'd pay in the shops, it lands on your doormat every month (you don't even have to leave the house), and you get to enjoy our exclusive subscriber-only covers.

But here's where it gets extra exciting: you can now pick up a combined print and digital subscription which is still cheaper than the cover price of the mag in shops, so you can take advantage of having *SFX* with you on your phone or tablet, downloaded on the day it hits the shelves, and still enjoy the old-school feel of paper – it really is having your cake and eating it too.

Start a digital or bundle subscription now, and our boffins will let you download the issue currently on sale, so what's not to like? See you in the future – on this, and many other alternate Earths.

*Rich*

## CHOOSE YOUR SFX PACKAGE



Every issue delivered with subscriber-only covers!

**ONLY £17.99**

EVERY SIX MONTHS

Your subscription will then continue at £17.99 every six months – SAVING 45% on the shop price.

Get instant digital access on iOS and Android!

**ONLY £12.99**

EVERY SIX MONTHS

Your subscription will then continue at £12.99 every six months – SAVING 33% on the shop price.





# GET THE COMPLETE SFX PACKAGE

PRINT +  
DIGITAL

BEST  
VALUE!



- Every new issue in print *and* on iOS & Android
- Never miss an issue, with delivery to your door and your device
- Huge savings, best value for money, and a money-back guarantee
- Instant digital access when you subscribe today!

**ONLY £21.99**

EVERY SIX MONTHS

Your subscription will then continue at £21.99 every six months – SAVING 45% on the shop price and giving you a 79% discount on a digital subscription.

## TWO EASY WAYS TO SUBSCRIBE TODAY

**1 Online:** [myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/sfxsubs](http://myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/sfxsubs)

**2 Call:** 0844 848 2852

Please quote PRINT14, DIGITAL14 or BUNDLE14

Prices and savings quoted are compared to buying full-priced UK print and digital issues. You will receive 13 issues in a year. If you are dissatisfied in any way you can write to us or call us to cancel your subscription at any time and we will refund you for all unmailed issues. Prices correct at point of print and subject to change. For full terms and conditions please visit: [myfavm.ag/magterms](http://myfavm.ag/magterms). Offer ends: 7/2/2015



# YOUR SFX

# Post Apocalypse

## Contact us:

- Email [sfx@futurenet.com](mailto:sfx@futurenet.com)
- Write to Post Apocalypse, SFX, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA
- Facebook [Facebook.com/SFXmagazine](https://www.facebook.com/SFXmagazine)
- Twitter @SFXmagazine



## THIS MONTH'S LETTERS COMPILED BY

**Richard Edwards, Editor**

► We asked you what movies and TV you thought would come out on top in 2015, and unsurprisingly you're as excited about *Avengers* and *Star Wars* as we are. Happy to see that you're also hoping for something original too – another *Safety Not Guaranteed* would be most welcome.

## WRITE IN AND WIN!



Communicate with SFX using your medium of choice (letters, email, social media – we're not fussy), and you could find your bookshelves expanded to the tune of some goodies from our allies at the Black Library. This month, *Harry Potter*

advocate James Kinsley wins Dan Abnett's *Horus Rising*, the first book in Black Library's most popular series, *The Horus Heresy*. He'll also get audiobook *Master Of The First/The Long Night* from Gav Thorpe and Aaron Dembski-Bowden, a story with ties to *Horus Heresy*. If you share your thoughts with us, it could be you bagging Black Library goodies next month.



## HOT TOPIC WHAT WILL RULE 2015?

2015 will be the year of the Disney Civil War where *Avengers: Age Of Ultron* takes on *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. It is a given that Ultron will be a big blockbuster success, but *Star Wars* will be the biggest sci-fi event of the decade, with every teased detail scrutinised by geeks (including me) before it hits the cinemas in December. Mr Abrams, please allow us to erase from our memories Jar Jar Binks, trade negotiations and midi-chlorians.

Movies like *Ant-Man* and *Jurassic World* will be eagerly anticipated, but whether they are hugely successful will not be as important as the big two of *Ultron* and *Star Wars*.

The obvious omission from the big screens will be anything from DC: no Batman, Superman, Justice League or even a Wonder Woman – a serious scheduling error from DC.

But what about the upcoming *Fantastic Four* movie? Well, if the rumours are anywhere near correct about the evisceration of the Doctor Doom character then that is the one to be afraid of. Note to Fox Studios: just follow the damn comic – do that and it will be great!

*Jonathan Harvey, Hemel Hempstead*

## ► Will Star Wars beat Avengers?

**I'm not sure. Yes, most people over 30 are more excited about a return to that galaxy far, far away, but don't forget that for younger audiences, Marvel movies have become the *Star Wars* of the day.**

Superheroes will dominate TV as well as films, with *Agent Carter* and *Daredevil* next year. I've been



**Shouldn't Professor McGonagall get Harry to shave?**

## JK NOT OK

I'm getting sick of filmmakers taking liberties with their book adaptations. Last week me and the wife sat down to watch *Harry Potter And The Woman In Black*, and I was absolutely horrified at the way they'd trashed JK Rowling's work.

I understand you have to make some cuts, and even I support the fact they excised all the quidditch sequences, but frankly I don't remember any of those ghosts being in the books. They made Ron and Hermione an old married couple, while Harry remained the same age, with no explanation. There's no sign of Snape or Dumbledore, and for some baffling

reason they make Hedwig a dog instead of an owl. And I'm all for gender-blind casting, but having established that Voldemort's a man in the rest of the series, they suddenly make him a woman in this one. Worst of all, though, is the ridiculous decision to have Harry not do any magic in the whole film. It's as if he ditched Magic in his final year and switched to Law. I've no idea what JK Rowling was thinking letting them do this, but frankly it's ruined the whole series for me.

*James Kinsley, Norwich*

► **You're going to hate *Harry Potter And The Angel Of Death* – Harry isn't even in it.**

**THIS COULD BE YOU! EMAIL [SFX@FUTURENET.COM](mailto:SFX@FUTURENET.COM)**



**Go on, get all revved up for *Jurassic World*.**

saying for years that a live-action Marvel and DC comic universe could work well on TV and now it looks like it's about to play out. Still waiting to see spaceship sci-fi shows make a comeback and *Ascension* might be the start of it.

And of course there's *Doctor Who*. When it came back in 2005 I thought *Doctor Who* and sci-fi fans would love it but it would

## YOUR SFX CONTENTS

► 37 ASK THE SFXPERTS ► 38 SOAPBOX ► 39 WAHF ► 40 WISHLIST ► 42 EVENT HORIZON





Well, getting dressed up is always fun.

get killed in ratings by reality TV and soaps and would only last one series. Now nearly 10 years later it's still going strong. Plus there's *Game Of Thrones* to look forward to as well.

**Robert William Graham, Facebook**

► **TV seems an even more natural home for the long story arcs of comic books than movies, so I think the likes of *Arrow*, *The Flash*, *Agent Carter* and the rest will be on our screens for a long time to come. *Squirrel Girl: The Series*? We can't wait...**

I suspect *Terminator* and *Jurassic World* will both be awfully familiar as they both sound like they are revisiting old tired concepts and plots. *Star Wars* is edging out *Avengers* on my must-see list, but only because I want to see what *Star Wars* is like without George Lucas.

**Steven John, Facebook**

Really not looking forward to *The Fantastic Four*. Everything I've read seems to make it look like the director wrote a sequel to *Chronicle* and just shopped it around the studios until he found one who would attach a pre-existing property to it. More like



Is Ant-Man getting a touch of Vertigo?

a rights-retention exercise than anything else. Really there is not much new to get excited about. *Avengers 2* just needs to keep the boat steady for the Marvel-verse, DC is just putting out more of the same dreariness, and the BBC is combining *Doctor Who* and *Lark Rise To Candleford* to get *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*. Where is the new blood? The new properties?

**Belle Tain-Summer, Facebook**

► **You do know that *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* hasn't been made into a movie or TV show before? The Beeb can't win!**

I'm looking forward to *The Avengers* the most but I do like to keep an eye out for the low-budget gems you sometimes get. *Snowpiercer* was a personal favourite for this year. Also, while not sci-fi per se, *The Battery* was amazing.

**Marc Farmer, Facebook**

## "I want to see what *Star Wars* is like without George Lucas"



"I know, my back's killing me too."

I would like to see something new and fresh instead of reboots, remakes and the same tired formula. I will watch all of the big films, enjoy them no doubt and buy them. But there are thousands upon thousands of books out there waiting to be made into a film or TV show. People will eventually become bored of the same old thing and tune out. I've not been excited about a film in a long while. The term "flogging a dead horse" springs to mind.

**Darren Greenidge, Facebook**

► **My sci-fi movie highlight of 2014 was *Edge Of Tomorrow*, so I'm with you on the hunt for something new. I'd rather be wowed by something unexpected than watch the same old characters – unless it's *Star Wars*, of course.**

I've gone back to reading books, with little or no TV and I've not ➔

## THIS MONTH IN SCI-FI HISTORY

SFX 193  
April  
2010



5 YEARS AGO

*Clash Of The Titans* heads up a far-from-stellar month for films. Luckily, the Winchester keep things credible.

SFX 128  
March  
2005



10 YEARS AGO

A little show called *Doctor Who* declares "We've come to put you back behind the sofa!" It'll never work...

SFX 62  
March  
2000



15 YEARS AGO

We ask if *Roswell* is the next big thing in SF (turns out it wasn't), and showcase the worst hairstyles in sci-fi history.

## ask the SFXperts

If you can't remember it, we can! Your sci-fi problems solved...

### INDIAN SUMMER

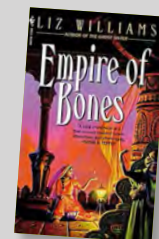
In the mid-'00s I read a book set in India (referred to throughout as Bharat) which had a female Indian protagonist. First contact had been made with aliens. The communication may have been

telepathic. The aliens had a force shield around their encampment.

**Gillian Coyle, email**

**RHIAN DRINKWATER SAYS:** Most searches for Bharat in an SF novel give you *River Of Gods*

by Ian McDonald – but it isn't that. Actually, this is *Empire Of Bones* by Liz Williams. Jaya Nihalani is the human contact for all communications with an alien race, and neither America nor the Indian government are happy about it. It's an expanded version of a short story originally published in *Interzone* called *The Unthinkables*.



Lost in a sea of sci-fi ignorance? Think you might be having a fantasy, er, fantasy? Send questions to [sfxperts@futurenet.com](mailto:sfxperts@futurenet.com). Want to be a guest SFXpert? Head to [www.gamesradar.com/ask-sfxperts](http://www.gamesradar.com/ask-sfxperts) to see a list of unanswered questions.



## SOAPOX SFX WRITERS' PERSONAL RANTS

**Ad manager Adrian Hill (and his tight wallet) have an issue with movie prices**



These kids are happy. But their parents are now destitute.

Going to the flicks isn't what it used to be. These days taking the family to watch a film can easily set you back the best part of £40 – and that's just to get through the door. Once you've thrown in popcorn, drinks, 3D, premium prices for blockbusters, peak-time pricing, posh seating and the rest, you're looking at a small fortune for your two hours of entertainment. I know cinemas need to make money, but it's getting silly.

It's shortsighted for cinemas to charge so much. These days, the DVD and Blu-ray release windows are so small that many people will happily wait for the DVD to come out and get the whole family around the telly for little more than a tenner. Or, far worse, they might decide to break the law and acquire a pirated version of the film. Neither are good for the future of the multiplex – cinema chains need to wake up to their competition, both legitimate and not-so-legitimate.

In the longer term, the cinemas should be thinking about the customers of the future. If parents decide they can't afford to take their kids to the pictures, those kids are less likely to catch the big-screen movie bug. Can the multiplex be

a sustainable business model if it isn't attracting new punters?

If cinema's going to survive, people have got to see it as great value. I know many cinema chains run clubs on weekend mornings with really good prices for kids, but are a limited number of screenings before lunchtime enough? Football clubs have realised they need to attract new fans by offering cheap kids' tickets for certain matches, and cinemas need to do the same, with deals like "two adults and

## Cinemas need to make money, but it's getting silly

a kid goes free" or similar. I love going to the pictures – there's still something special about seeing a movie on the big screen – but is it really worth what we currently have to pay?

Cinema chains need to realise they could be pricing out a large portion of their audience. Otherwise the exciting trip to the local picture house – something that used to be an easy-to-give treat on a rainy Sunday afternoon – could become a luxury that many decide they can no longer afford.

## "The new *Star Wars* trailer was enough to whet the appetite"

been to cinema in a very long time. Something original to restimulate the taste buds is required please.

*Richard Woods, Facebook*

Would love to see Brian Lumley's *Necroscope* books being made into movies. I'd also like to see big budget Warhammer 40k movies – there's so much material there.

*John Hewitt, Facebook*

Peak SF soon, it can't last. The 1950s had wall-to-wall Western and that died a death in the '60s. Soon they will produce too much. Perhaps very soon.

*Gerard Earley, Facebook*

► Okay, I'm biased, but I think suggesting we're at peak SF is a bit doom-mongery. With JJ Abrams, Joss Whedon, Christopher Nolan and more, so many of Hollywood's power players are sci-fi fans who grew up on *Star Wars* and its brethren that I don't think genre's going anywhere anytime soon.

## GAMES THEORY

I've finally managed to catch *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part One*, and as a big fan of the book I have to say that I'm really pleased that they've split it into two parts. Far from being a cynically commercial ploy (although, you know, it clearly is that too) it does instead give the more political and character-based aspects of the plot time to breathe. As far as YA fiction goes, *The Hunger Games* really

is the series that I want my stepdaughter to eventually use as a role model, rather than that insipid *Twilight* nonsense.

That said, I remain hugely disappointed at the complete lack of hippopotami in the film. Ah well, maybe in the final part...

*The Llama God, The Dark and Marble-Filled Lands Beyond the Wall*

► How could *The Hunger Games* expect to be taken seriously if it didn't split its final book in two? Even Hollywood has standards, you know.

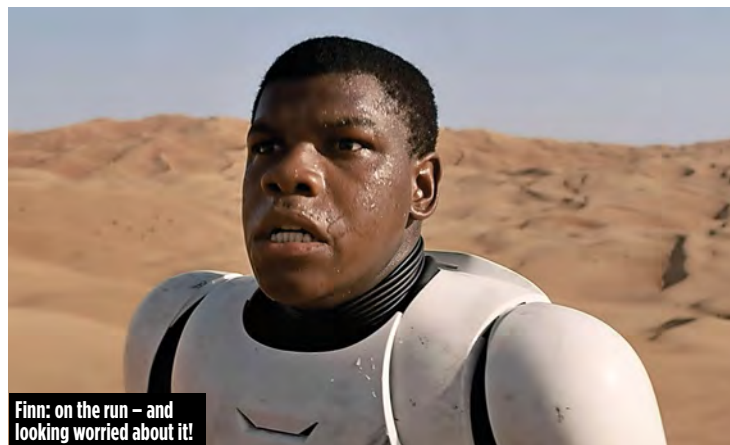
The new trailer for *Star Wars* was just enough to whet the appetite. Sure, the Falcon, the TIE Fighters and the X-Wings look little better than the CGI versions from the 1997 releases, however they are still the Falcon, TIE Fighters and X-Wings. And then there's that lightsaber. A great way to re-introduce *Star Wars* after the disappointments of the prequel trilogy.

*Keith Tudor, Romsey, Hants*

► I can confidently say that the *Force Awakens* trailer is the BEST THING EVER. I'm not one for needless hyperbole.

## THE HORROR, THE HORROR!

I read the *Ultimate Guide To Horror* and enjoyed it. However, there were two shows that were missing from the TV terrors. One was a semi-classic, the other a short-lived cult show. The cult show was *Special Unit Two*, a show that sort of combined *Grimm*, *Men In Black* and *The X-Files*. Set in Chicago, *SUT* chronicled the adventures of Detectives Nick O'Malley (Michael Landes) and Benson (Alexandra Lee), who



Finn: on the run – and looking worried about it!

IMAGES: ISTOCKPHOTO (1)





You didn't expect the young Penguin to have clean hair, did you?

hunted down monsters in secret in order not to panic the city. The show aired on the equally short-lived United Paramount Network (UPN) from 2001 to 2002.

The other show was *Night Gallery*. I don't see how you could forget Rod Serling's second series, that ran from 1969 to 1973. It featured Serling in an art museum after hours, with unusual paintings and sculptures that had unusual tales behind them. Some of the episodes were adapted from the works of HP Lovecraft, August Derleth and Fritz Lieber.

Willie Holmes, Chicago

► We blame those dastardly mind-rubbers for the omission. Seriously, I can't remember a

thing. In fact, what am I even doing here?

## THE RETURNED

I'm probably one of the older readers of *SFX* – I'll be 50 in 2015, so I can remember the negative reactions to a lot of the reboots of the day. Our parents would wonder why Flash Gordon, Buck Rogers and Batman all needed to restart when they were already "known".

Today's outcry is similar but some of the reboots are really rather good. *Casino Royale* was not, as I recall, a flop, and restarting the franchise worked spectacularly well. *Batman Begins* was 20 years after my generation's Batman began, but it's a great trilogy of movies, although

TALES OF WAR FROM THE GRIM DARKNESS OF THE FAR FUTURE

blacklibrary.com



LETTERS



Andrew Garfield's Spider-Man arrived with almost indecent haste after the Tobey Maguire version. It's done very nicely, mind.

So here's a suggestion. We wait until the reboot actually arrives, whether it's *Ghostbusters* or anything else. We might actually enjoy it. And kids, try not to be offended when, 20 years from now when I'm almost 70 years old, a new generation decides your favourite movie needs to be made all over again.

Guy Clapperton, London

► Stop getting uptight about a movie before you've actually seen it? Sounds reasonable, Guy, but what will people talk about on the internet?

## GET BAT

Am currently enjoying *Gotham*. I'm glad to see the makers have gone for a Burton-esque feel and not the boring Nolan pap! As for female superheroes (issue 255), no one will ever match Michelle Pfeiffer's Catwoman.

C Roberts, Hinckley

► Isn't that the great thing about Batman – that his hometown can be reinvented in any number of ways. I wonder, though, if you'd have been so emphatic in your praise if the producers had opted to use Joel Schumacher's neon-verse as their template.

## THE NEXT GENERATION

You're amazing.

Patrick Sproull (age six), Scotland

► Thanks Patrick. We think you're pretty cool too.

WAHF

WE ALSO HEARD FROM

► **John Worrall** (disputing Calum Waddell's take on *Dawn Of The Dead*'s Marxist credibility); ► **Ian Kirkham** (predicting that *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* will be the highest grossing film of 2015 – nice thought, but remember it's only got 13 days to do it!); ► **Simon Phillips** (loving *Edge Of Tomorrow* all the way from Japan); ► **Steve** (asking us if we've had a brain-swap – that's a very personal question, Steve. But no); ► **Craig Sheridan and Keith Tudor** (with some giggles about our new online home at GamesRadar.com/sfx – give it a chance, chaps. We think you'll come to love it); ► **Neil** ("still reeling" that Missy turned out to be the Master after all. "The Rani would have made more sense"); ► **John Hewitt** ("A wee mention for *The Lord Inquisitor* and *Exterminatus*. Two fan-based movies being made of the Warhammer 40k universe"); ► **Dave Normington** ("The next few years are going to be amazing for sci-fi fans"); ► **Keith Tudor** (again, enjoying an unexpected *Roots/Star Trek* crossover episode – honestly, who expected that?); ► **Terry Westmorland** ("I want *Dune*, with flying proper Ornithopters and fighting with the 'Weirding Way'. Shai Hulud!"); ► **Stephen Saul** (who wants to see *Avengers: Age Of Ultra Nate* – well, you're free to want what you want to want, Stephen); ► **Stefan Driver** (looking forward to "the Marvel stuff, dinosaurs and... STAR WARS!"); ► **Stephen Keene-Elliott** (wondering if Dave Langford has read Boom Studios' *Memetic* by James Tynion IV and illustrated by Eryk Donovan); ► **Keith Tudor** (again, again – this time Keith's enjoying season two of *Sleepy Hollow*. "It combines the horror and fantasy elements very well with humour and banter." Thanks for all the correspondence, Keith! You have won a gold star); ► **David Tobin** (wanting to see a movie version of Dean Koontz's *The Taking*); and many, many more...

## CALLING ALL COLLECTORS!

Do you have an amazing piece of sci-fi and fantasy memorabilia? Want to find out how much your most prized treasure is worth? You're in luck! *SFX* is launching a new regular feature called **Cash In The AT-AT**, where we'll give you the chance to get your favourite item valued by the experts at Vectis auctioneers ([www.vectis.co.uk](http://www.vectis.co.uk)). It's *SFX*'s answer to the *Antiques Roadshow*!

Send us a photo of your favourite item with a few words about what it is, where you got it and what it means to you to [sfx@futurenet.com](mailto:sfx@futurenet.com), using the subject line Cash In The AT-AT, and you could soon see your memorabilia on the pages of *SFX*. (Photos need to be in focus, well lit, at least 1,000 pixels wide, and preferably photographed against a plain background – otherwise we won't be able to use them.)



SPONSORED BY  
**Vectis**  
AUCTIONS LTD  
www.vectis.co.uk



SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS WITH THE SCI-FI WORLD!

Write in and you'll win some books if we feature you in the star letter slot. Email us at [sfx@futurenet.com](mailto:sfx@futurenet.com) or you can try Post Apocalypse, *SFX*, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA if you're not taken with technology.



# Wishlist

Illustrating what you want to see in new SF films and television.

**This Month:** The attack eyebrows are back in *Doctor Who* series nine

## Doctor Who

YOUR TOP 5 REQUESTS

### More Missy

**1** Though not the unanimous request we were expecting, the return of The Master was atop many people's lists. "More Missy please," says **Rob Monfea**. "The Psychotic Mary Poppins was one of the stand out things from this season." While **Neil Finlay** adds, "Michelle Gomez is strangely alluring. It's quite disconcerting fancying the Master."

### The Search For Gallifrey

**2** After "The Day Of The Doctor" there was surprise the hunt for Gallifrey wasn't more integral to series eight – something you'd like rectified. "The search for Gallifrey needs to be the series arc. There has been so much emotional investment in this since the return of the series that it needs to have a payoff," says **Justin Webb**.

### Make It More Alien

**3** **Tony Bufton** says, "A non-Earth-resident companion is a must. We need to go back to the Doctor travelling the galaxy." **David Stephens** has a great idea for a returning companion, meanwhile: "I always hoped Missy would be a peed-off Romana, let's bring her back."

### Two-parters

**4** "Dark Water"/"Death In Heaven" aside, series eight lacked cliffhangers. "More two-parters. I hate waiting a week to see what's gonna happen next, but they do allow for greater storytelling opportunities," says **Scott Henry**.

### Peter Jackson

**5** Series eight had one big name director in Ben Wheatley, but **Mark Thomas Langdon** wants to see the show go even bigger for series nine. "I'm eager for the proposed Peter Jackson episode. With *The Hobbit* finished he should be able to fit one in at some point next year. Fingers crossed!"

ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL GARNER



SEA DEVIL  
BRAD DOURIF

ROMANA  
EMILIA FOX





**THE MALUS**  
ALAN RICKMAN

**THE DOCTOR**  
PETER CAPALDI

**MISSY**  
MICHELLE GOMEZ

## ARE YOU LISTENING?

Who has a really good idea? These people do.

- One word: Valeyard. **Si Wright**
- I would love to see Fifth Doctor era monster The Malus return. I think *Who* is doing darkness and gothic horror better than it has since the Hinchcliffe era, so a monster like that would be perfect. **Jamie M Davis**
- Another Ice Warrior story, but make their voices less like the Judoon and more like classic Ice Warriors. **Cliff Chapman**
- Make the show about the Doctor again not the companion. For too long now it's been the other way around. Capaldi has been brilliant this season but Moffat has made it the Clara show. **Neil Perry**
- Bring back Jamie Mathieson as a writer. His episodes were among the best this season. **Kirsty Leanne**
- Some classic monsters: the Sea Devils, Yeti, Robots of Death, Axons, more Autons with creepy dolls and people-eating sofas. Or how about the maggots for a real fan pleaser? **Mark Cordory**
- The return of a classic companion for a two-parter - Susan, Tegan, Peri or Ace. **Neil Malcolm**
- I hope Clara returns. Jenna Coleman has given the best performance of any companion in the show's 50-year run this series. It's almost like people want rid of her because she's TOO good. **Paul Kirkley**
- I would love to see the Doctor take on the Sea Devils. **Russell Garland**
- The Doctor straightens out the British government, being helpful but using extreme language. I call the episode "Spin Doctor Who". **Pound Shop Godfather**
- As it's the 10th anniversary of New *Who*, do catch ups on characters such as Mickey and Martha. Don't have to appear, just a mention. Catch up with the *Sarah Jane* kids and Mr Smith. **Jonathan Madden**
- I would like a story that allowed Sean Pertwee to play his Dad's role. **Michael Wearing**

coming soon

## Wonder Woman and Highlander

All your wildest dreams can come true right here! *Wonder Woman* and *Highlander* are up next, so tell us your ideas.



Send in your ideas about our current Wishlist by visiting [bit.ly/SFXwishlist](http://bit.ly/SFXwishlist)



# Event Horizon

Because meeting up  
is every fan's right

FESTIVAL REPORT

## Thought Bubble 9-16 November 2014, Leeds

Steven Ellis reports from the popular  
Leeds comic arts festival



A fun day out for the whole family.

**T**HOUGHT BUBBLE IS BIG, really big. From humble beginnings it has grown to become a huge celebration of all things comic related. The festival, now in its eighth year, comprises a whole week of events at various sites around Leeds culminating in a two day comic convention. During the week you can find art and writing classes, talks by industry professionals and various comic book related screenings. But it's the weekend event that draws in the most punters.

The sheer number of comic creators in attendance over the convention weekend was impressive. From well-known, established names from all corners of the globe through to small independents, the whole range of sequential arts were represented.

Unfortunately this huge number of creators can be a little overwhelming at times; there's a lot on offer and it can be difficult to decide what to do with your time. It's easy to wander

round in a daze among the many creator tables and not have a clue where to start. If you can get past this, though, the best course of action is to just jump in and start talking to people: every creator we spoke to was friendly, chatty and eager to show off their work.

The whole convention had a welcoming atmosphere; from the big name creators right on down to the convention newbies there was a sense of relaxed camaraderie, with everyone wanting to share their love of comics and comic art.

A large number of cosplayers were in attendance too, of course, with characters from all walks of comic life wandering around and happily stopping for photos while generally adding a bit of colour to proceedings.

As both a week long festival and a two day convention, Thought Bubble was a terrific, positive celebration of all things comic related. Don't miss it in 2015.  
[www.thoughtbubblefestival.com](http://www.thoughtbubblefestival.com)



Some nearby time travellers joined in the fun.



Despite longstanding rivalries, the con maintains a friendly atmosphere.



The Law gets tough in Leeds.



But where are his eyes...?

IMAGES © BOB PETERS



## CON REPORT

## Arab Science Fiction

15 November, Science Museum, London

**Dave Bradley attended a panel of Eastern thinkers, writers and filmmakers**

**T**HE DIRECTOR'S SUITE AT LONDON'S WORLD famous Science Museum is a handsome two-tiered library with space for about 100 seats, a big screen and a panel area. And it was this venue that played host to a discussion, subtitled From Imagination To Innovation, organised by Sindbad Sci-Fi as part of Kensington and Chelsea's Nour Festival. Broadcaster Samira Ahmed hosted an informal chat between scientist and playwright Hassan Abdulrazzak; author and co-founder of Yatakhayaloon (The League Of Arab Sci-Fiers) Yasser Bahjatt; science writer and editor of Research Fortnight Ehsan Masood; and artist and filmmaker Larissa Sansour. There were story readings and a short film entitled *Nation Estate*.

The event aimed to unite many things: science and the arts, East and West, academia and popular culture. It may not have solved the perennial puzzler of world peace, but the evening did remind us that while modern SF tends to be regarded as a Western phenomena, there are important precursors from the Middle East including the fantastic legends of Sindbad the sailor. And there's a thriving interest in genre literature there today, despite censorship in places like Saudi Arabia, as revealed by Yasser Bahjatt. He contends that there's an important correlation between the sales of sci-fi in a country and the overall level of scientific advancement. "This year's theme [was] science fiction as an important link between the creative imagination and technological innovation," explains Sindbad Sci-Fi's coordinator Yasmin Khan. Samira Ahmed says: "Even SF can get bogged down in its own traditions. So exploring SF through the prism of the Arab imagination is fascinating. It's a great chance to listen to some powerful literary voices and rethink what SF is about and what it can do." The event included a prize draw and a pleasant, comfortable environment in which to sip orange juice and chat. More information about the annual Nour Festival at [www.rbkc.gov.uk/subsites/nour.aspx](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/subsites/nour.aspx)



So. Many. Books.



Author Yasser Bahjatt discussed Arab censorship.



Fancy a game of Where's Dave Bradley?



Filmmaker Larissa Sansour enlightens the crowd.

IMAGES © MIKE MASSARO/NOUR FESTIVAL

## DON'T MISS THEM!

## 2015 Convention Preview

**Steven Ellis looks at the year ahead in sci-fi and fantasy cons**

**E**VERY MONTH IN SFX, OUR EVENT Horizon pages say: "Because meeting up is every fan's right", and it looks like 2015 will be another good year for regular convention attendees, as well as anyone taking their first steps into the wonderful world of SF cons.

If you've got the time/money/patience for navigating a sea of punters nothing can quite match the colossal American festivals such as San Diego Comic-Con in July or New York Comic Con in October – the go-to events for big names and huge announcements. Alternatively, September's Dragon Con in Atlanta has a different flavour to the bigger cons, and is heavy on the cosplay.

On this side of the pond, London has its fair share of "comic cons" filled with big-name guests from film, TV and comics, including London Film and Comic Con (July), London Super Comic Con (March) and MCM Comic Con (May). Each has a slightly different feel and focus (guests, comics and cosplay, respectively) but whichever you choose, you'll be seeing a lot of the ExCeL Centre...

For slightly smaller conventions, Wales Comic Con in Wrexham has been getting better every year, and attracts some surprisingly big names. There's also no shortage of *Who*-related events, but you might want to attend one in aid of a good cause, such as the Bedford *Who* Charity Con in April, which is raising money for food banks.

After a hugely successful inaugural event, *Judge Dredd* fans shouldn't miss Lawgiver in Bristol in May – a small one-day event dedicated to Mega-City One's top law man. Also worthy of note is "young con on the block" Nine Worlds, which will be staging its third event near Heathrow at the beginning of August and is quickly becoming the year's hottest geek ticket. And there's no better way to end the year than by popping along to Thought Bubble in Leeds. You can see what we thought of the latest Thought Bubble opposite.

These events are just the tip of the iceberg; the con scene gets bigger and more vibrant every year and events can be found in most cities in some form or other. Whatever you're a fan of there's bound to be something to suit you. Who knows, we may even see you out there on the convention floor.







**10** Andre The Giant's most famous role was as Fezzik in *The Princess Bride*. But in which 1976 series did he play Bigfoot?

**11** Which musclehead battled Seven Of Nine as the Pendari Champion in *Star Trek: Voyager* episode "Tsunkatse"?

**12** Which gravelly-voiced grappler appeared as Space Ghost's grandfather in *Space Ghost: Coast To Coast*?

**13** The Shockmaster was WCW's greatest flop. What kind of sci-fi helmet had wrestler Fred Ottman covered in glitter as part of his costume?

Who is Hulk Hogan playing, and in which show/movie?



**17** Olympic gold medallist Kurt Angle played a fire chief in which fish-out-of-water sequel?

**18** Name the character played by Roddy Piper in John Carpenter's *They Live*.

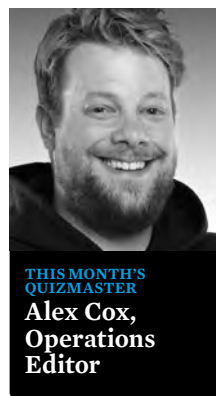
**19** Which *Star Trek* star guest hosted *Monday Night Raw* in 2010, reading the lyrics to entrance themes in his own inimitable style?

**20** And which star has tussled with both Dolph Ziggler and, er, "Magneto" inside a WWE ring?

**ANSWERS** 1 Kevin Nash 2 Tyler Mane 3 The Calamari Wrestler 4 Jesse Ventura 5 Brian Glover in *Alien* 6 Indiana Jones 7 See No Evil 8 Zeus 9 Goldfinger 10 The Six Million Dollar Man 11 Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson 12 Macho Man Randy Savage 13 Stormtrooper 14 Ramseis (Suburban Commando) 15 Shep 16 Blake (Santa With Muscles) 17 *Sharknado 2: The Second One* 18 Nada (credited, never referred to by name on screen) 19 William Shatner 20 Hugh Jackman

# Blastermind

Mix sports and acting and what do you get? Sporcting! And wrestling. Let's test you on grapplers in genre roles



**1** Which former WWF and WCW champion appeared in *Turtles II: Secret Of The Ooze* and *The Punisher*, but turned down the role of Sabretooth in *X-Men*?

**2** Which fellow grappler ended up in the role of Sabretooth, and later got behind the mask as Michael Myers in the 2007 and 2009 *Halloween* movies?

**3** Which strangely heartwarming movie, starring All Japan Pro Wrestling's Osamu Nishimura and directed by Minoru Kawasaki, preceded Kawasaki's *Executive Koala*?

**4** Who played the title role in the inexorable *Abraxas, Guardian Of The Universe*, and shall never be forgiven for doing so?

**5** "It kills on sight, and is generally unpleasant" – which Brit wrestler, which film?

**6** Britain's Pat Roach took on four different roles in which movie series?

**7** Which WWE Studios horror series features a character called Jacob Goodnight?

**8** The ironically named Tommy "Tiny" Lister – *The Fifth Element*'s hulking President Lindberg – appeared in 1984 movie *No Holds Barred* (and later in the ring) under which godly name?

**9** In which 1964 spy film did the wrestler with the ring name Tosh Togo – though he was credited under his real name – make his movie debut?

**HOW DID YOU DO?**  
Where are you on the card?



**0-5**  
Jobber



**6-10**  
Mid-Card



**11-15**  
Main Eventer



**16-19**  
World Champ



**20**  
Hall of Famer



# The World Of SFX

Don't stop here: there's always more for you to read...



## GAMESRADAR+

► SFX, Total Film and GamesRadar.com have teamed up to create the ultimate multimedia site. Bringing together the brightest minds in sci-fi, fantasy, movies and gaming, GamesRadar+ is the perfect complement to everything you love about the world of entertainment, straight from the experts. Besides hot news, the latest film and TV reviews and exclusive features, we'll bring you the best trailers as soon as they hit, and challenge your grey matter with the most fiendish screen quizzes on the planet. It's all at [gamesradar.com](http://gamesradar.com), and you can bookmark [gamesradar.com/sfx](http://gamesradar.com/sfx) to see only content from us.

## TOTAL FILM

► Every month SFX's sister magazine *Total Film* brings you fantastic coverage of all aspects of the movies. In the latest issue, the *TF* team looks forward to the massive movies of 2015 and looks back at the 60 best films of the year just gone – along with the best posters, the best trailers and the absolute worst lines ever put to page by professional screenwriters. All this and news from Duncan Jones on *Warcraft*, Mark Ruffalo talking *Age Of Ultron*, Ridley Scott dishing the dirt on *Exodus: Gods And Kings* and much more. Issue 228 of *Total Film* is on sale now.



## THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO SCI-FI MOVIES

► Our latest 148-page bookazine – made in conjunction with *Total Film* – has hit the shelves at last! It's full of profiles of the hottest sci-fi movies, interviews with the stars, and behind-the-scenes features that will teach even the most ardent fan something new. Want even better value? Pick it up as part of *The Complete Sci-Fi Gift Pack*; you'll get an issue of SFX, a digital download of *Total Film*, *The Ultimate Guide To Sci-Fi Movies* and one of five *Star Trek* novels, all for just £14.99! Check your newsagent, or we'll send it to your door (with free postage) if you order from [myfavouritemagazines.co.uk](http://myfavouritemagazines.co.uk).

PLUS! JOIN US ON

facebook

[Facebook.com/SFXmagazine](http://Facebook.com/SFXmagazine)

AND! FOLLOW US ON



[Twitter.com/SFXmagazine](http://Twitter.com/SFXmagazine)



ISSUE 257 | MARCH 2015

Future Publishing Ltd: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA  
Email: [sfx@futurenet.com](mailto:sfx@futurenet.com) Web: [www.gamesradar.com/sfx](http://www.gamesradar.com/sfx)

### EDITORIAL

Editor: Richard Edwards, [richard.edwards@futurenet.com](mailto:richard.edwards@futurenet.com)  
Art Editor: Jonathan Coates, [jonathan.coates@futurenet.com](mailto:jonathan.coates@futurenet.com)  
Deputy Art Editor: Catherine Kirkpatrick, [catherine.kirkpatrick@futurenet.com](mailto:catherine.kirkpatrick@futurenet.com)  
Operations Editor: Alex Cox, [alex.cox@futurenet.com](mailto:alex.cox@futurenet.com)  
Features Editor: Nick Setchfield, [nick.setchfield@futurenet.com](mailto:nick.setchfield@futurenet.com)  
Home Entertainment Editor (Reviews): Ian Berriman, [ian.berriman@futurenet.com](mailto:ian.berriman@futurenet.com)  
Community Editor (News): Jordan Farley, [jordan.farley@futurenet.com](mailto:jordan.farley@futurenet.com)  
US Editor (East Coast): Tara Bennett, [uswest@sfx.co.uk](mailto:uswest@sfx.co.uk)  
US Editor (West Coast): Joseph McCabe, [uswest@sfx.co.uk](mailto:uswest@sfx.co.uk)

### CONTRIBUTORS

Sam Ashurst, Lauren Beukes, Savon Bullock, Bonnie Burton, Dominic Carter, Paul Cernick, Nick Chen, Richard Cobbett, Maria Colino, Sarah Dobbs, Penny Dreadful, Rhian Drinkwater, Steven Ellis, Dean Evans, Tom Fordy, Paul Garner, Dave Golder, Kate Gray, David Grove, Guy Haley, Tom Hawker, Stephen Jewell, Stephen Kelly, David Langford, Russell Lewin, Mian McDonald, James Mottam, Jayne Nelson, Steve O'Brien, Andrew Osmond, Andy Ounsted, Mike Rampton, Bridie Roman, Will Salmon, Anthony Taylor, Alex Thomas, Calum Waddell, Damien Walter, Andy Watt, David West, Meg Wilde, Jonathan Wright

### FILM GROUP, LONDON

Editor (Total Film): Jane Crowther (maternity)  
Acting Editor (Total Film): Rosie Fletcher  
Acting Associate Editor: Richard Jordan  
Managing Editor: Kathryn Twyford  
Screenings Editor: Matthew Leyland  
News Editor: Matt Maytum

Cover photography: Kingsman: © Twentieth Century Fox;  
Black Panther: © Marvel; Agent Carter: © Marvel; The Walking Dead: © AMC;  
Daredevil: © Netflix/Marvel; Game Of Thrones: © Getty; Thunderbirds: © ITV PLC

Photography: Will Ireland, Simon Lees, Gavin Roberts  
Thanks to: Nichola Jewitt, Fiona Corlett, Brian Klotz, Sarah Patel

### ADVERTISING

For all advertising enquiries please contact:  
Adrian Hill, 01225 442244, [adrian.hill@futurenet.com](mailto:adrian.hill@futurenet.com)

### MARKETING AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Group Marketing Manager: Laura Driffield, [laura.driffield@futurenet.com](mailto:laura.driffield@futurenet.com)  
Marketing Manager: Kristianne Stanton, [kristianne.stanton@futurenet.com](mailto:kristianne.stanton@futurenet.com)

### PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

Production Controller: Keely Miller, [keely.miller@futurenet.com](mailto:keely.miller@futurenet.com)  
Production Manager: Mark Constance, [mark.constance@futurenet.com](mailto:mark.constance@futurenet.com)  
Printed in the UK by William Gibbons & Sons on behalf of Future  
Distributed in the UK by Seymour Distribution Ltd,  
2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1A 9PT Tel: 020 7429 4000  
Overseas distribution by Seymour International

### CIRCULATION

Trade Marketing Manager: Michelle Brock, 020 7429 3683  
[michelle.brock@futurenet.com](mailto:michelle.brock@futurenet.com)

### LICENSING

International Director: Regina Erak, [regina.erak@futurenet.com](mailto:regina.erak@futurenet.com)  
Tel: +44 (0)1225 442244 Fax: +44 (0)1225 732275

### THE SENIOR PARTNERS

Group Editor-in-Chief: Dave Bradley  
Group Art Director: Graham Dalzell  
Head of Content & Marketing, Film, Music and Games: Declan Gough  
Content & Marketing Director: Nial Fargusson

### SUBSCRIBE TO SFX

Phone our UK hotline on: 0844 848 2852 International: +44 (0)1604 251 045  
Online enquiries: [www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk](http://www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk)  
Email: [sfx@myfavouritemagazines.co.uk](mailto:sfx@myfavouritemagazines.co.uk)

Brought to you by: Spicy sausage stew, tiny Nerf guns, as much mulled cider as we can drink before everyone stops selling it, shouting at the telly during the ending of Teletale's first *Game Of Thrones* episode, not bothering with New Year's resolutions, The West Coast Pop Art Experimental Band, the *Ivor The Engine* soundtrack, spicy green peas, the mental world of Attack! Pro Wrestling, Team Double Dragon, fun-size chocolate bars, drinks vouchers, a thumping headache (related), sweet glorious rest, the honking sound of Rocket Pimp, meeting a spaceman



Print: 23,355  
Digital: 2,480

Want to work for Future?  
Visit [www.futurenet.com/jobs](http://www.futurenet.com/jobs)

The ABC combined print and digital circulation for Jan-Dec 2013 is  
**25,835**

A member of the Audited Bureau Of Circulations



Future is an award-winning international media group and leading digital business. We reach more than 49 million international consumers a month and create world-class content and advertising solutions for passionate consumers online, on tablet & smartphone and in print.

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR).  
[www.futureplc.com](http://www.futureplc.com)

Madame Hydra Zillah Byng-Maddick  
Non-executive chairman Peter Allen  
Chief financial officer Richard Haley

Tel +44 (0)20 7042 4000 (London)  
Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244 (Bath)

Gorge upon these wordy morsels, mortal, and repent: All contents copyright © 2015 Future Publishing Limited or published under licence. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be reproduced, stored, transmitted or used in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price and other details of products or services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any changes or updates to them. If you submit unsolicited material to us, you automatically grant Future a licence to publish your submission in whole or in part in all editions of the magazine, including licensed editions worldwide and in any physical or digital format throughout the world. Any material you submit is sent at your risk and, although every care is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents or subcontractors shall be liable for loss or damage.



When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

We are committed to only using magazine paper which is derived from well managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture. Future Publishing and its paper suppliers have been independently certified in accordance with the rules of the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council).

"All I've heard is 'moist' and 'do you fancy a bit?'"







THE

# SPY

WHO, BRUV, ME?

## FUN. STYLE. ULTRAVIOLENCE. NICK SETCHFIELD DISCOVERS HOW KINGSMAN'S KEEPING THE BRITISH END UP



### ATTHEW VAUGHN

has a mission.

It wasn't handed to him in a manila folder stamped EYES ONLY but it's every bit as vital: restore the lost spirit of the Great British spy flick, that unique brand of big screen espionage that prized flamboyance over thuggery, suits over brutes. The age of Connery and Moore, winks and quips, Union Jack parachutes and just a pinch of Bank Holiday-friendly filth.

"I was born in 1971, so they were formative films for me growing up," says Vaughn, director of *Kingsman: The Secret Service*, a cheeky, hyper-caFFEinated spin on the spy capers of old. "I loved those movies and this is a love letter to them. I just thought 'Why is no one making movies like this anymore?' And then I thought 'Well, I'll do it.' I was inspired by what Spielberg did with *Indiana Jones*, where he did what he called the modern version of the movies he grew up on. I thought 'Why don't I do the same?'"

"I was inspired by all of it. *The Avengers*, *Harry Palmer*, *The Prisoner*, *The Man From*

*UNCLE*, *In Like Flint*. All those things I grew up loving. Of course there's a huge shadow of Bond – Bond is the monolith of spy movies – but it's not just about Bond. There were a lot of other things that influenced me."

Vaughn co-plotted *Kingsman's* story with Mark Millar, who teamed with artist Dave Gibbons to create the comic book version in 2012. It's Vaughn's second collaboration with Millar – he helmed the equally energised adaptation of teen superhero tale *Kick-Ass*. Like many a great idea, it was born in the pub.



"I was in the pub with Mark and we were chatting about spies," Vaughn recalls. "Bond, Bourne, Jack Bauer... they're all so serious. We were talking about our favourite Bond movies and how Roger Moore was weirdly forgotten now. Those films aren't as celebrated as they should be."

Millar was just as determined to restore a touch of Moore to spydom. "The plan was to create a spy movie that didn't make us want to kill ourselves after it," he tells *SFX*. "Spies were always the British version of superheroes to me. Glamorous, aspirational figures that were as impossible to attain as a utility belt or a web-cartridge."

"Bond is basically the British Batman, but just as Batman went a bit miserable so did James Bond. The notion of kids playing with whatever gadget-laden car Bond was driving seemed a faraway memory by 2008 when Matthew and I started talking about this. Guns, gadgets, girls and gags were the building blocks of a good spy yarn for us and Bourne had cast a little raincloud over it all." ➔



## AN OFFENDER... TARON EGERTON EGGSY



### Did you know the comic book?

► I went out and bought it as soon as there was any suggestion Matthew Vaughn might be interested in me for this part. I went and did my homework. There are slight differences but I think our film is very, very true to the spirit of the comic.

### How demanding were the fight sequences?

► It takes forever, forever, because it all has to marry together in a certain way. Your fist has to turn here, land here, the stuntman can't be there because he has to be here, but meanwhile the camera has to do this... For me, having never made a film, let alone an action film, it was a bit of a baptism of fire.

### How was it working with Colin Firth and Michael Caine?

► When you come to work with these guys, you've kind of deified them in your mind – they are these icons. And then you realise they're just normal blokes who are just as friendly as you would hope to be to anyone else in the profession. Colin's not the kind of person who would ever presume to give advice. He's too humble for that. There was a day on set where we had a scene together and for whatever reason I wasn't getting it and Matthew couldn't quite understand why. It went on for some time and I was getting more and more frustrated. Colin was silent the whole time, never said anything, until the point where I said, "Colin, you've got to help me out here, mate, I don't know what I'm doing!" And then he went "Okay, here's what I think you should do." And that's the loveliness of him. He was there ready to give advice but he would never have forced it on me had I not asked him.

GETTY (1)



We sense Colin Firth disapproves of that much fast food.

## “PEOPLE WANT ESCAPISM AND FUN AT THE MOMENT”

So why did that style of spy film fall from favour? Why did we board up the volcanic lairs and decommission the orbital lasers? When did the cool wows go the way of the Cold War?

“Why did superhero films go out of favour?” asks Vaughn. “Why did the Western die? Everything's on trend and people get bored of things. And then history repeats itself. I'm sure that in about three years' time everyone will be sick of superhero films. I think things are circular. People want escapism and fun at the moment. Look at the success of *Guardians Of The Galaxy*. I think Nolan kickstarted a very dark, bleak style of superhero escapism and I think people have had enough of it.”

### FROM STREET TO SPY

Fusing the adolescent spunk of *Kick-Ass* with the spy-chic trimmings of Vaughn's Bond-homaging *X-Men: First Class*, *Kingsman* tells the tale of Eggsy (Taron Egerton), a streetwise deadbeat recruited to a clandestine intelligence agency by Colin Firth's Harry Hart, a dapper and deadly gentleman spy whose fists are as sharp as his tailoring. It's *Chav And Let Die*.

Vaughn claims “a mixture of inspirations: watching the kids riot in Tottenham and hearing them say ‘We're doing this because we've got nothing else to do.’ And then we read the story of Terence Young, who directed *Dr No*, who spent a couple of months transforming Sean Connery into a gentleman because Ian Fleming was going bananas, saying ‘Cast David Niven, not Connery!’ We thought there was something in there. And then Mark had the idea – which I thought was fascinating – of the Earth being an organism and that we're a virus that keeps fucking it up. I thought ‘This is cool.’”

With Samuel L Jackson going full Blofeld as globe-threatening billionaire Valentine,

the snaggle-toothed spectre of Mike Myers looms large. How fine is the line between tribute and pastiche?

“Very fine,” says Vaughn. “As fine as can be. Finer than 35 mil film. As a script no one really understood what the fuck it was. The studio was like ‘What is this – *Austin Powers*?’ It was a balancing act but I think we pulled it off. It's not a comedy but it's full of laughs. It's got action, it's got drama, it's got pathos, it's got everything. It's what I did with *Kick-Ass* – it's a proper movie but we're allowed to have a bit more fun with it. Its aim was to be entertaining but not silly.”

Vaughn's taste for blackly comic ultraviolence gives *Kingsman* much of its energy. “The studio did say, ‘You can't have heads exploding in that church sequence – no one's going to enjoy it.’ I said, ‘Trust me, when it's finished, it'll put a smile on their face.’ And they all thought I was insane. And then they saw it and said, ‘Okay, you're right, this is weirdly enjoyable. It's not gratuitous. It's just fun. Even though we're watching thousands of people get killed we're smiling, and we don't know why!’ Well, I don't know why either, but I know how to do it!”

“There was some stuff where I went, ‘That's taken it too far, dial it down.’ There were a few shots that didn't make the final cut, let's put it that way.” ➔

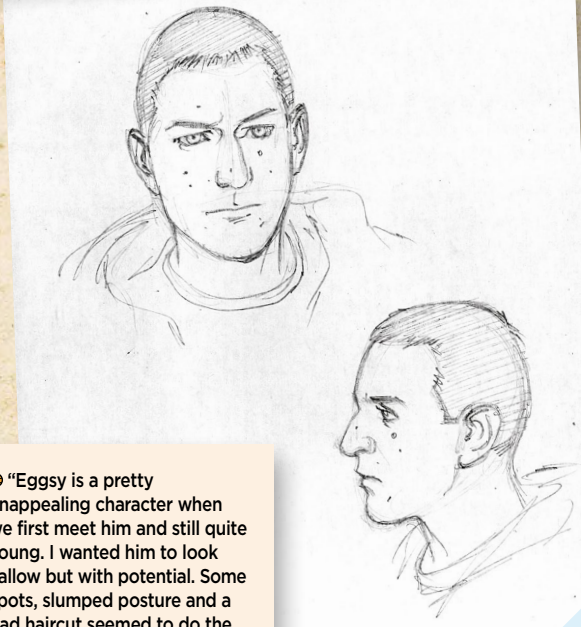


Anywhere else, lying down on the job would get you sacked.

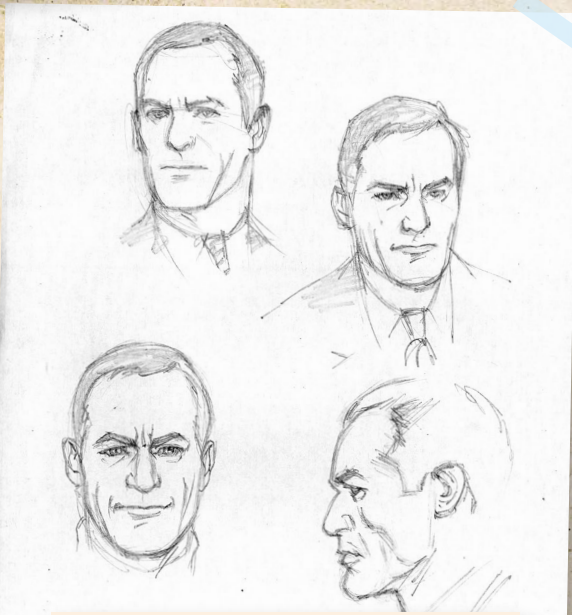


# SPYCRAFT

Artist Dave Gibbons declassifies the art of *The Secret Service*

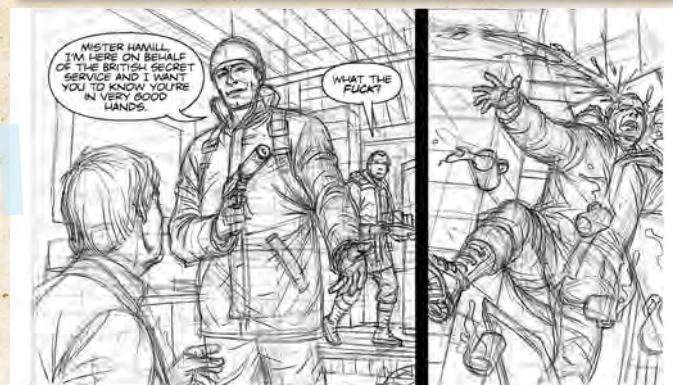
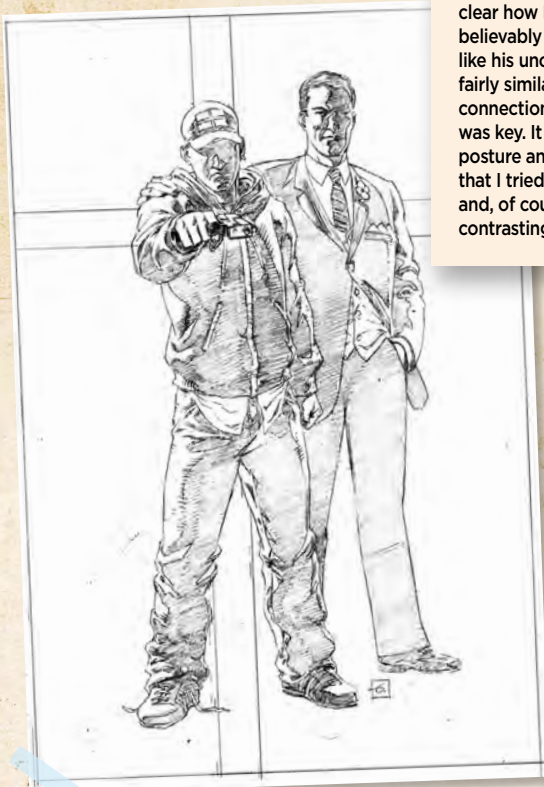


☺ "Eggsy is a pretty unappealing character when we first meet him and still quite young. I wanted him to look callow but with potential. Some spots, slumped posture and a bad haircut seemed to do the job. He shares the family nose with his mother and uncle. A hoodie, ball cap and baggy jeans complete the look."



☺ "Jack (renamed Harry in the movie) is a tough guy but very controlled and suave. I wanted him to look like he'd been in a few fights and might have been a squaddie, hard and honed. His look is timeless; classic clothes, well-matched accessories and a neat haircut. I wanted him to have the vibe that Sean Connery had when he played Bond although he more closely resembles Jason Isaacs."

☺ "I love the way Mark wrote the relationship between Eggsy and Jack and wanted it to be clear how Eggsy might believably grow into someone like his uncle. I made them look fairly similar as the family connection and resemblance was key. It was really through posture and body language that I tried to differentiate them and, of course, their wildly contrasting fashion sense."



*The Secret Service: Kingsman* is published by Titan Books.



...AND A GENTLEMAN

## COLIN FIRTH HARRY HART



**There are traces of Bond and Steed in Harry. Are you channelling your childhood heroes?**

► Yes, we all are, and it doesn't stop at Bond and Steed. That's part of what Matthew's work is all about – what the joy for us all was. An awful lot of us grew up fantasising about being that guy, whether it's Bond or Batman, and then you get older and you fantasise about seeing films with those guys, that give you the buzz you had when you were 10. And Matthew's got the skill to do it. I think he's got some sort of hotline to what we want to see. It's a bit like a superpower, really.

**Were you ever in the frame for Bond?**

► No. Never had that phone call. I know that I was on gossip lists in other people's minds but no, they never approached me.

**You had a rigorous training programme for this. Do you feel tempted to continue it?**

► I do, but I don't have the ten guys handy! I'm not being facetious – I would love to keep it up, but what we learnt for this isn't really applicable anywhere else. It's not the same as a martial art. It's more of a dance. It's choreographed fighting, with a purpose. I've been going through my mind as to how to pursue this. I can't get the same guys and say let's all stage a fight... well, I could, but I'm sure the Jackie Chan training team have got better things to do than dance with me every morning!

**What tricks can you do with an umbrella now?**

► None. I've forgotten it all. You should see me the other day, actually, just struggling to get one up when it was raining. I don't know if these fight moves would help us if we got into a fight. I have wondered.

GETTY (1)



## “WE CREATED IT TO SAVE BANK HOLIDAYS IN THE FUTURE”

And then there's Colin Firth, shedding Middle-England heart-throb status to unleash his inner Jackie Chan in a Savile Row suit.

“That's why I cast Colin,” says Vaughn. “In my mind I imagined David Niven kicking arse – and who's the modern day gentleman who'd be a total surprise to see do this? Colin was the first guy in my head. And he trained his arse off. He did brilliantly.”

Vaughn says longtime screenwriting colleague Jane Goldman brought “sanity” to *Kingsman* – “She grounds my nuttiness.” He also relied on Firth and Egerton to keep it real.

“I was always saying, ‘Bring it down, play it straight. Don't go for the laughs – the laughs will come.’ And they understood it. I said, ‘You've got to play it for the reality of the drama and nothing else. The crazy shit I'll put around you guys.’”

Joyrider turned world-saver, Eggsy is a potentially starmaking role for Egerton. It's also his first lead in a feature film. It must have been daunting for him stepping into the ring with not only Firth but screen legend Michael Caine, cast as secret service mandarin Arthur.

“You'd imagine,” laughs Vaughn. “If it was he didn't show it. It should have been!”

Vaughn admits Caine's casting is a tribute to his turn as downbeat intelligence operative Harry Palmer, a role that defined the word iconic, underscored it in red ink then locked it in a box marked *Property of Michael Caine*.

“When Caine first walked on set I thought it was a gaffer taking the piss, doing a bad Michael Caine impression! And then I looked round and it was actually him. His voice is so iconic that when you hear it you cannot believe that it's real. But he was lovely. It was a total honour.”

And how did Caine find stepping into *Kingsman*'s high-throttle madness? “I think it's rather effortless for him,” says Vaughn. “The guy's seen it, done it, a million times. Although I showed him the scene in the church and said,

‘Look, you've got to react to this.’ And he went ‘Jesus! I never fucking imagined it'd be like that! Thank god you showed it to me!’”

A decade ago Vaughn was in talks to direct a bona fide Bond film, one that would hand the Walther PPK to his friend and *Layer Cake* star Daniel Craig. He never directed *Casino Royale* but has bringing *Kingsman: The Secret Service* to the screen finally scratched that itch? Or does he still have 007 in his cross-hairs?

“Never say never is all I'll say to that,” he laughs. “But I think there's more chance of them asking me to direct *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang!*”

The Bond dream aside, if *Kingsman*'s a hit then Vaughn is willing to re-enlist in Her Majesty's secret service.

“I know exactly where it's going. We've got it all plotted out. If people want to see another one we're ready to go off and make it.”

Mark Millar, meanwhile, is thrilled by *Kingsman*'s transition from page to screen. “It's my favourite movie of the year and I haven't even seen the competition yet. Matthew directing, Jane writing, Colin Firth beating up chavs in pubs. It's everything I'd pay a tenner to see.

“We created this to save Bank Holiday Mondays in the future.” **SFX**

*Kingsman: The Secret Service* is released on 29 January and reviewed on page 98.





# THE OFFICIAL BBC DOCTOR WHO SHOP

## GET 10% OFF & FREE UK DELIVERY

ENTER CODE **SFXJAN15** AT CHECKOUT  
OFFER ENDS 31 JANUARY 2015

### EXCLUSIVE PRODUCTS & NEW RELEASES



DVD BACK  
IN STOCK  
MID-JANUARY



BLU-RAY  
BACK IN STOCK  
MID-JANUARY



PRE-ORDER  
NOW



EXCLUSIVE



PLUS  
FREE SONIC  
SCREWDRIVER



PRE-ORDER  
NOW

FOR THE FULL RANGE VISIT  
**BBCSHOP.COM/DOCTORWHO**

**BBC** SHOP

#### TERMS & CONDITIONS:

DISCOUNT CODE ENTITLES YOU TO 10% OFF DOCTOR WHO PRODUCTS AT THE OFFICIAL BBC DOCTOR WHO SHOP, BBCSHOP.COM. OFFER ENDS 11.59PM 31 JANUARY 2015. ENTER CODE SFXJAN15 ON THE ORDER SUMMARY PAGE AT CHECKOUT. OFFER IS NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER PROMOTIONAL DISCOUNT OR OFFER AND SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. ONLY ONE USE PER PERSON. BBC SHOP RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CHANGE, AMEND OR DISCONTINUE THE OFFER AT ANY TIME WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. NON-TRANSFERABLE AND NO CASH ALTERNATIVE. FREE DELIVERY TO UK ONLY. STANDARD BBC SHOP TERMS & CONDITIONS APPLY. PROMOTER: BBC WORLDWIDE LTD. CONTACT (UK) 01788 821107 (CHARGED AT BASIC RATE) WITH ANY QUERIES. SEE WEBSITE FOR FULL TERMS & CONDITIONS



# UNMISSABLE

# THE

HELIX  
TATAU  
iZOMBIE  
12 MONKEYS  
DAREDEVIL  
ORPHAN BLACK  
GAME OF THRONES  
DA VINCI'S DEMONS  
THE WALKING DEAD  
THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO!

JONATHAN STRANGE & MR NORRELL

# PREVIEW

NEED SOME COMPELLING REASONS TO STAY INDOORS? *SFX* HAS THE INSIDE WORD ON THE MOST BUZZ-WORTHY SHOWS HEADING YOUR WAY...



# THE WALKING DEAD

The survivors are still determined to be hunters rather than prey in the second half of season five...

SEASON 5.2

US: AMC from February

UK: FOX from February

## Q&A

### DENISE HUTH, CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

**How will the remainder of season five change things for Rick and his friends?**

● Every season of the show, almost every half season, changes quite a bit. It's always a different version of the story as the characters progress and find new places to be. So I think it's gonna be exciting. [Season five] is the first time in a long time they haven't had a home base. So it'll be keeping them constantly on their toes.

**How comfortable — and how shellshocked — will the group become within the safe zone of Alexandria, Virginia?**

● I think it's just that this is a very different environment. So not understanding that environment, like any new place they've found, they automatically are very suspicious. As they are when they meet anything new. That's all I'll say. "This is nice. This is so civilised for us. We don't know what to do with ourselves." [Laughs.]

**Will there be a shift in tone for the second half of this season?**

● There always is. I think every half season it shifts dramatically as far as the story, the overall goal, where they are, what they're aiming to get to. Every eight episodes it kind of resets... In a way it's new beginnings, but it's new endings, as it always is. They're always, always balancing the worst kind of loss versus finding that thing that gives them hope. Because if they lose their hope, they're all done. If they don't have hope, they all die. So the fact that they're all still here, they haven't lost hope.

Joseph McCabe



Is that the Human Centipede Rick Grimes is hiding from...?



Get him nice and smart – THEN SLAY HIM IN BLOOD!

# GAME OF THRONES

More bloodshed, betrayal and heartbreak await in the fifth season of HBO's fantasy phenomenon

SEASON 5  
US: HBO from spring TBC  
UK: Sky Atlantic from spring TBC

**W**INTER IS HERE AND that can only mean one thing: a new season of *Game Of Thrones* will soon be upon us.

If the TV show was following the books to the letter then this would be a very slow season. Luckily watchers of George RR Martin's epic saga won't suffer the same absence of characters that readers did, as events from both *A Feast For Crows* and *A Dance With Dragons* (the latest book) will feature. There's also a likelihood of us seeing beyond the timeline of the books, a precedent already set in season four.

Major events to look out for include the introduction of the Sand Snakes, the bastard daughters of season four favourite Oberyn Martell, and their intrigues in Dorne. We'll also see Cersei's walk of shame and maybe even some revelations about her childhood during the first flashbacks of the series. With Charles Dance confirmed to be returning this

seems like a strong possibility. That or we'll just get a good long look at his corpse.

We'll also see Arya across the Narrow Sea and Tyrion on the run. If season five catches up with the books then Tyrion's plot will introduce Young Griff, who we can't say more about as even mentioning him feels like a spoiler. Sadly there will be no Hodoring this year as Bran and co are confirmed to be taking a break in season five. Hodor!

The biggest shocks of the year could come at The Wall and would make an excellent way to end the season on a cliffhanger taller than the icy behemoth itself. One major challenge the writers face is the infamous Mereenese Knot that is Daenerys's plot in Essos. Will we see fire and blood, or will the plotline continue to meander at a glacially slow pace? Right now we know less than Jon Snow, but we can't wait to find out... **Bridie Roman**

© EUROPA PRESS/GETTY (1)



Wonder how many out of five the takeaway got from the Food Standards Agency...

## iZOMBIE

SEASON 1  
US: The CW TBC  
UK: TBC

Are zombie fans ready to embrace an undead heroine who solves crimes – and only reluctantly eats brains?

### Q&A

#### DIANE RUGGIERO, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

With traditional zombies so popular just now, was there ever a concern that a lighter spin on the genre could land like a dead body?

● To be honest, it scared the crap out of me at first because I was worried zombie fans were going to hate us. But once we got into it, [we realised] the concept is so unusual and cool. I loved what we were coming up with. And why not open it up? I'm a huge *The Walking Dead* fan, but we're not trying to do that. I think our spin is really cool. First of all the main character is having a quarter-life crisis and she's dead. And this thing is happening to her she can't tell anyone about.

**So Liv Moore (played by Rose McIver) is your cute, undead heroine who was turned into a zombie but she can still pass as human by eating brains?**

● Yeah, it's like doing a zombie show with really attractive people [laughs]. You want a sexy show. We're not ever going to compete with *The Walking Dead* with gore and violence.

**She's a med student, so she gets her meals on the job, and solves their unresolved deaths?**

● Yes, the procedural aspect of her getting the memories of the person whose murder you are trying to solve is unique. The investment is so personal. She's experiencing what the person experienced. For example, if a person was pushed off a balcony to their murder, she feels what it was like to take the splat. And then she has to, as a layman, pursue justice for that person.

**Does she get full memories?**

● No, she gets little inspired splashes of memory. Usually the flashes that she gets are intense moments, not like someone scrambling an egg, or like in *Being John Malkovich* and jumping into him when he's on the toilet [laughs]. **Tara Bennett**





# JONATHAN STRANGE & MR NORRELL

The BBC adapts Susanna Clarke's epic novel about magicians in an alternate 19th century England

MINISERIES  
UK: BBC One  
spring TBC  
US: TBC

## Q&A

### PETER HARNESS, WRITER

**The original novel is huge – over 1,000 pages. How much did you have to cut it down for TV?**

● I'm hard-pressed to think of anything that we left out, actually. Lord Byron isn't in it, and that's about the only thing. But I don't really think there's anything that happens in the book which doesn't happen in the TV series, though it doesn't necessarily happen in the order that it happens in the book. For some reason, it's been easier to get it all in, and I can't really understand why!

**It was originally planned as six episodes, not seven, wasn't it?**

● Yes, but it became clear it wouldn't fit into six without chopping some big bits, and no one really wanted to chop it, so we've ended up not doing that. I can't actually think of any compromises we've made.

**To what extent have you drawn on the dialogue from the book?**

● Susanna Clarke writes such fantastic dialogue that it's a shame not to use it when you can, so well over half of the dialogue is Susanna's. There's a lot of humour in it. I've also tried to preserve her narrative voice, here and there.

**What's the approach to the magic? Can we expect much in the way of CGI spectacle?**

● We've always been very aware of doing magic for magic's sake. Whenever there's been a sequence which doesn't feel that it's got an emotional reason to be there, it's ended up going. You can spend £10 or £100 million on a sequence like that, and that often happens in films. And it just falls totally flat. It's not as exciting as two people having an argument, or something like that. We've tried to really tie it into the characters and the emotions of the characters. **Ian Berriman**

Lack of chairs could be a problem in the 19th century.



The debate about whether to paint a woman called Mona Lisa continued.

SEASON 3  
US: Starz TBC  
UK: FOX TBC

# DA VINCI'S DEMONS

A new showrunner promises less fanciful fantasy and more realistic character drama...



Silly religious costumes are nothing new.



That's the quiet stroll on Hampstead Heath bugged.



You'd look nervous too if Becher's Brook was your next jump.

## Q&A

### JOHN SHIBAN, SHOWRUNNER

#### What changes have you brought to the show?

● Its been like launching a new show, and we've looked at it that way. Everyone from creator and original showrunner David Goyer to the actors were like, "Look, we've mastered the action/adventure Leonardo thing but this series still has a lot of potential in a lot of areas. What's your take on it?" So I came in and told them and they said, "Yeah, let's do that." I wanted to ground it a little. I wanted this show to get a little more realistic and less like a fantasy. To bring the audience deeper into the story so that instead of watching a movie and you're outside watching superheroes, you're on the inside watching people you can understand in situations that are dangerous – *truly* dangerous. Also I wanted to look into the character relationships. I like to think of the characters in the first two seasons as in a kind of adolescence. Because when you're in your adolescence you think you're invincible, you can do anything, you can run around the world to do crazy stuff.

**There was certainly a lot of crazy stuff in season two, with Leo going to South America to become a kind of Renaissance Indiana Jones...**

● Right. But then when you make that transition into an adult, you have to take responsibility for what you do. So season three is when they grow up.

**Season two ended on a cliffhanger. Were you left with any instructions on how to get out of it?**

● No. That was a challenge. They left us with "The Ottomans are coming, Leo's going to blow them up but look, there's Leo's mum right in the middle of them!" And it was like: "What are you gonna do with that? Go!"

**Dave Golder**



Stag night japes that went wrong, number 429.



"Who stole my tent?!"

# TATAU

SEASON 1  
UK: BBC Three  
from March TBC  
US: TBC

Sun, sand and one gnarly tattoo: meet BBC Three's New Zealand-set Maori murder mystery...

## Q&A

### RICHARD ZAJDLIC, SHOWRUNNER

#### So where did your interest in Maori culture come from?

● All my life I've been obsessed with ancient cultures like the Egyptians, the Mayans, the Greeks and the Maoris. I love those mythic landscapes and I think that whole area, those legends, it feels really untapped at the moment. This show will introduce us to that world in a whole new way.

#### How did the idea for a TV show spring from your interest in Maori culture?

● I originally had an idea about two guys backpacking in the Cook Islands where one of them is snorkelling in the sea and basically gets involved in a murder mystery. From there it mushroomed into something more than just a murder mystery – something elemental. It starts quite normally, but slowly opens up and peels back the layers to reveal a much darker and deeper side to that culture, to those myths, to the whole sense of island life.

#### Who are backpacking best buds Kyle and Budgie?

● They're just two average Joes and really great mates. Go to any pub in England and you'll meet them. But both of them have secrets in their past that slowly come to light. The actors have a good double act going between them, so there's humour throughout, but it does get dark because the stakes are really high. They risk everything to try and discover the truth of what's happening. And it becomes increasingly apocalyptic towards the end...

#### How central is Kyle's tattoo to the mystery?

● So Kyle has this tattoo, which he designed himself, because he thought it looked good, but when he gets to the island he realises from the reaction of the locals that the symbols he's drawn on himself actually mean something he had no idea about. It's a rites of passage, where he wakes up in a big way and realises that there's a whole area of stuff he had absolutely no idea about, not only about the island, but about himself.

Jordan Farley



# HELIX

SEASON 2  
US: Syfy from 16  
January  
UK: 5\* TBC

Year 2 of *Helix* heats up, taking the show's scientist heroes to a jungle island...

"A ladder? Nope, we've looked everywhere and can't find one."

## Q&A

### STEVEN MEDEA, SHOWRUNNER

***Helix's* first season felt inspired by *The Thing*. Season two seems to be in the tradition of *The Island Of Doctor Moreau*...**

● Yeah, absolutely. Our idea going in was, "Let's try to mix it up and take our same cast — add some new characters — and bring the group into a new place, dealing with a new pathogen." Last year we discovered these immortal characters were behind the whole thing. We've brought all that with us for a really interesting season, learning more about this company that these immortals run and what's going on on this island.

**You have two major new cast additions this season — Matt Long and Steven Weber.**

● Matt Long is a new member of the CDC team, and like everyone else on our show has ulterior motives.

Steven Weber's character lives on the island and has a murky background and is tied into some of the things from the first season. He plays the leader of this cult, this quasi-religious movement that has lived on the island for generations. He's conducting all sorts of unsavoury experiments.

**Will each episode of the show continue to represent a day in the lives of its characters?**

● Correct. We're doing a 13-day story, because we really like the intensity of doing it one day at a time. But we're also going to be playing around in time a little bit. We're going to be jumping forward and back, filling in some backstory, but also flashing forward to events. One of the great things about doing a show with immortal characters is that they look the same in future years!

**Joseph McCabe**



Why have a garden outside when you can have one in the house?



BBC

# DOCTOR WHO EXPERIENCE

PORTH TEIGR - CARDIFF BAY



THE NEW ADVENTURE  
HAS LANDED

**BOOK TICKETS NOW**

[DoctorWhoExperience.com](http://DoctorWhoExperience.com) **0844 801 2279**



# DAREDEVIL

Marvel's radar-powered crusader opens up a new front for the mighty Marvel empire...

Well, they worked for Elton John.

SEASON 1  
US: Netflix from May  
UK: Netflix from May

**G**ET SET TO EXPLORE ONE of the less desirable zipcodes of the Marvel Universe in new Netflix show *Daredevil*.

It's the first strike in Marvel's scheme to build a grittier, more street-level world for its heroes, far removed from the cosmic stakes of its blockbuster movies. And *Daredevil*'s an obvious choice to bring urban justice to the small screen: the Man Without Fear operates in Hell's Kitchen in New York, setting for some of the most brutal and evocative tales in comic book history. The show has been filming on location in the city, favouring the decaying alleyways of Brooklyn and Long Island for that authentic Frank Miller vibe.

Developed for television by Drew Goddard – who's written the opening episodes – and showrun by *Spartacus* supremo Steven S DeKnight, *Daredevil* also promises to bring us a more morally complex take on the Marvel milieu, filled with flawed, ethically ambiguous characters.

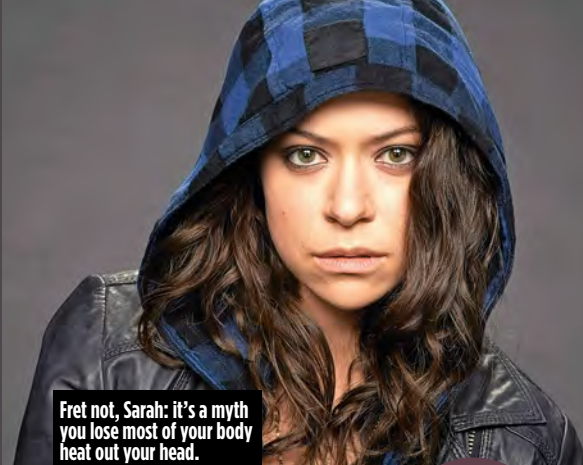
"There are no heroes or villains," says DeKnight. "It's just people making different choices."

*Boardwalk Empire*'s Charlie Cox is lawyer-turned-vigilante Matt Murdock, blinded by radioactive waste as a boy but using his enhanced senses – and lethal way with a billy club – to fight the rotten core of the Big Apple. *True Blood*'s Deborah Ann Woll is enigmatic love interest Karen Page while Elden Henson brings the bromance as Foggy Murdock, Murdock's law partner and best bud.

While De Knight may claim it's a villain-free zone there are certainly some familiar antagonists from the comics world. Vincent D'Onofrio is Wilson Fisk, aka the Kingpin, a businessman with designs on Hell's Kitchen. And Bob Gunton is Leland Owlsley, known as supervillain the Owl in the comic books.

Here's the good news: all 13 episodes of *Daredevil* will drop simultaneously. Binge without fear!

**Nick Setchfield**



Fret not, Sarah: it's a myth you lose most of your body heat out your head.

SEASON 3  
US: BBC  
America TBC  
UK: BBC  
Three TBC

# ORPHAN BLACK

A new group of clones complicate things for Sarah and her sisters in *Orphan Black*'s third season...

## Q&A

### GRAEME MANSON & JOHN FAWCETT, SHOWRUNNERS

**You unveiled the idea of a male clone at the end of season two. How many will we see in season three?**

**JF:** Well, obviously it's Project Leda and Project Castor – they're bound to be vastly different. These guys are military. So I doubt that they've been raised with the same sort of social metric as the other clones. They're probably not at all like that. They probably have been monitored and coddled in the same kind of way.

**GM:** Our story, though, is kind of Sarah's story, most often from her point of view, with her trying to solve the mystery. So this is a new puzzle piece and it's about how this allows us to add more clues to the bigger picture of her backstory.

**Will Sarah get more involved in trying to learn more about the conspiracy?**

**JF:** I think that the desire to run is still strong. We'll just have to see what lines up to keep her here on their story. I don't think it's any less dangerous at all [laughs].

**GM:** No, it's no less dangerous. But she does have a new, fairly powerful ally in [Michelle Forbes'] Bowles. So that's kind of helpful in terms of feeling like there's a little bit of a safety net, even though... Do we trust Marion Bowles? Do you trust anyone on our show really?

**In season two, we found out there's a bit more to Kira than we were expecting. How will that unfold in season three?**

**JF:** We've begun talking about digging a little deeper into what it is that makes Kira special. Is it scientific? Is it more esoteric? Is it the human intangibles, or is it her biology? They're all fascinating things that we're bouncing back and forth really. But it's definitely something we want to look into. **Joseph McCabe**



# 12 MONKEYS

Can a big-screen classic be remade into a time-travel thriller worth revisiting?

SEASON 1  
US: Syfy from  
16 Jan  
UK: TBC

## Q&A

### TERRY MATALAS & TRAVIS FICKETT, CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

**Terry Gilliam's *12 Monkeys* is so well-loved – were you concerned that you were trying to adapt hallowed ground?**

**TF:** Our initial instinct was “Don’t do it”, because we were huge fans of the movie. But when we started to dig into it and go back and read David and Janet Peoples’ original script and look at the thriller aspect of what is really a whodunit conspiracy, we figured out there is a way to do this as a serialised, gritty time travel show that’s very different from the movie. It’s not Terry Gilliam’s dissertation on sanity.

**TM:** You can’t do the movie again. It’s a finite story that’s close-ended. Even if we remade that into a pilot, we’d have nowhere to go. We had to open up the story and that world and make some key changes to the mythology and the characters.

**What are some of those changes?**

**TF:** In the movie you don’t spend a lot of time in that future and in the series you will. We open up the post apocalypse and dig into the story of Cole [Aaron Stanford]. In the movie, he is plucked out of this prison and you aren’t sure why he is there. We have a similar set-up here but his backstory, and his arc, are pivotal to the redemption story that we are trying to tell in the series.

**Is the global virus still in play?**

**TF:** Yes, Cole is out to save the lives of seven billion people and stop this plague. But what you quickly realise is that in order to survive this apocalypse he had to do these horrible things to survive. It’s really about saving himself. If he changes history and time, he’ll undo about 30 years of really horrible living. But what you will find out at the end of the first season is that the plague and the virus is not the worst thing to happen to humanity. Something else was... **Tara Bennett**



“I wish I was holding a mobile phone right now!”



Unfortunately, someone had forgotten to order a boat.

# THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO!

SEASON 1  
UK: ITV and CITV  
from spring  
US: TBC

Fifty years on, International Rescue returns as ITV relaunches the Gerry Anderson classic.

## Q&A

### RICHARD TAYLOR, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

#### What's been the most challenging aspect of recreating *Thunderbirds* for a new audience?

● The biggest challenge for me has been my fandom. It would be easier if I wasn't a fan of the original show because I wouldn't be torn between the realities of modern-day television and what's required of it to meet a child's expectations and what was done originally by the Andersons. That's an ongoing inner turmoil when you're a fan trying to bring something new, a reinterpretation, to life.

**We know the Tracys are still the same and that Lady Penelope and Parker are still around, but what about some of the other characters**

#### – Tin-Tin, the Hood, etc?

● Yes, the Hood is still the Hood. He's not as specific racially as in the original, but I feel that we've created a very dynamic "baddie" in our Hood. Tin-Tin is an interesting one. She's a challenge because of how name aware the Herge Tintin has become in the world. That's the one character we've had a name change on.

#### Will we see any nods to original characters or situations from the original series?

● Everything has been inspired by the bible for the original show, but we can't be canon to the original show. With the International Rescue costumes, we've kept to the iconic

sash, the iconic colour ranges, and we just turned what was decorative in the original show into an ergonomic part of their rescue kit. We've taken the trouble to design our vehicles within the accepted design aesthetic of the original series and incorporate many of the recurrent features seen throughout the show – the overhanging noses, the large wheels, the skirtings covering the wheels – without quelling the creative ardour of our designers.

#### Any sequels planned for episodes from the original series?

● [Winking] I can't talk about that right now.

**Anthony Taylor**



# One Site To Rule Them All

The quest is over: you've found the ultimate online destination for all your film, TV, sci-fi and games needs

Visit the new home for the best reviews, news, features, interviews and more



Bookmark [GamesRadar.com/SFX](http://GamesRadar.com/SFX) now!



# MARVEL'S '40S FIREBALL BRINGS FEMALE POWER TO THE SMALL SCREEN. TARA BENNETT TALKS **AGENT CARTER** WITH STAR HAYLEY ATWELL

# FEMME

**W**HERE HAVE ALL THE great TV spy women gone? Emma Peel. Nikita. Sydney Bristow. That singular breed of female hero who effortlessly combined courage and style, glamour and a killer right hook. Good news: she's back. Meet the heir apparent to the she-spy genre: Agent Peggy Carter.

You know her already, of course. Peggy was a major player in *Captain America: The First Avenger*, tore our hearts out with a cameo in *The Winter Soldier* and had an acclaimed One-Shot solo adventure on the *Iron Man 3* Blu-ray. More recently she appeared in flashback on *Agents Of SHIELD*, helping to found that clandestine agency in the wake of Captain America's wartime disappearance.

Embodied by Blighty's very own Hayley Atwell, Peggy may bring a unique dose of British reserve to the Marvel Universe but she can wipe the floor with anyone who gets in her way. Now she's earned her own eight episode series. Debuting this month in the US, ABC's *Agent Carter* is set in 1946 and relocates Peggy to the States where she's working for

the Strategic Scientific Reserve (SSR). Still grieving the loss of Steve Rogers, she finds there's more than enough bad guys and nefarious schemes to keep her occupied.

"She's actually a triple agent," Atwell tells *SFX* by phone, sitting in the make-up chair for her transformation into a noirish '40s heroine. "She's got the telephone company [as a front job], the SSR and then she's asked very quickly to go undercover with Howard Stark (Dominic Cooper) to secretly assist him. She's constantly in survival mode, having to make sure she covers herself at all costs."

If that's not challenge enough, Peggy's also got post-war era sexism and social conventions to fight. "Although she's meant to be an agent, she's been demoted to doing admin and getting lunch and coffee for people so she's having to prove her worth again in the office. It's another obstacle for her from doing what she's destined to do, which is be a spy and to carry on the work of Steve Rogers, who is her great love and someone she aspires to be. She's capable of going on missions and doing great work yet you have some pedantic frustrations ➔



# FATTALE





from the men around her who won't give her the work that she should be doing."

Atwell says Peggy is careful "not to lose her job, so she has to placate them yet does that in a witty way. She pokes fun at them without getting into too much trouble. She's highly intelligent so she uses her wit to counteract their remarks without them realising it. It's fun to watch."

Two men in the series she doesn't have to kowtow to – in fact they're her strongest allies – are Stark and his fussy valet, Edwin Jarvis (James D'Arcy). With Stark on the run from a trumped up weapons trafficking charge, he enlists Jarvis to assist Peggy in helping to clear his name. "She's very close to Stark in that she respects him as a pilot and an inventor," Atwell says of their complex friendship. "She knows his worth but she hates his womanising. But that doesn't interrupt the fact that she has tremendous respect for him and he does for her. For Stark, she's probably the only woman in his life that he doesn't see as a sex object. She just happens to be a woman and that's a special relationship."

As for Jarvis, Atwell admits their relationship is shaping up to be one of the highlights of the series. "The crew has been enjoying watching as we improvise lines of banter back and forth. We're sparring, I suppose, with language. We're also both British and incredibly sarcastic and cynical towards each other. She makes fun of him being a stiff upper lip British man who is in no way capable of the things she is capable of, but at the same time he's the one who starts to ask, 'What cost is this mission putting you through?' He encourages her to remember that she is human. And he recognises how lonely she is deep down. He brings those moments out of her but then she has to go back to work mode Peggy because she knows if she breaks, she might not come back again."

## THE AGENDA

Exploring those moments of vulnerability is another hugely satisfying aspect of the series for Atwell. "What makes her stand alone is that she doesn't have any superpowers. She's an exceptional spy and code breaker. She has a lot of military training from her experience in the war. Her intelligence is that she has to use her environment and the props around her to counteract her enemies. She's trained in combat and artillery training to escape situations but there's also her blind courage. But that also means she can't really get close to anyone."

"We also see there's a cost for being so strong. And that's exciting for me as an actor because I get to show different sides to her. I think I've cried about four times already as Peggy. You see her break down because of frustrations at work, from Steve or being misunderstood. Plus a very big thing will be revealed to her and she feels an element of



Peggy turns up the noir style in *Agent Carter*.

"IF PEGGY CARTER HAD HER OWN FILM, I WOULD BE 100% ON BOARD"



Atwell managed to sneak Peggy in to *Agents Of SHIELD*.

betrayal that so affects her core she goes on a rampage. It's what makes this series so special and powerful. We get to see she's not always strong, because no one is. She is very human and underneath the surface of someone with that British reserve, she's paddling like crazy all the time. It has to be released somewhere for it to be real otherwise people will see her as a robot."

Atwell says she's grateful that her showrunners, Tara Butters, Michele Fazekas and Chris Markus, share her desire to reveal these different facets of Peggy. "Tara and Michelle are two powerhouse women who are very funny and very sharp," Atwell enthuses. "To have them as showrunners feels like women are well-represented here. Fans will also see strong characters in Angie Martinelli (Lyndsy Fonseca), who is my friend and roommate and a couple of other characters who are fantastic women, including Carter's landlady (Meghan Frye) and Dottie (Bridget Regan)."

Sounds like *Agent Carter* will be powered by a strong female ensemble, still a comparative rarity in today's TV landscape. "Funnily enough, on social media there were still some comments like 'It's still such a man's world' and 'There are only a few women in a whole cast of men and I thought it would be

different show!'" SFX senses Atwell bristle. "What they don't know is the number of female crew that we have. In a scene yesterday, there were 17 people in this one office scene with cast and crew. For some reason, I counted and there were 10 men and seven women who were in really strong positions in the crew. There are a lot of women running this show and we are well represented and I think we will grow. We've got a female hero and that's a quiet revolution in Hollywood which will hopefully encourage other women to step forward in essential roles."

Atwell also hopes a Marvel TV show focused on a female character might impact, gender-wise, on the studio's big screen strategy. "What's great about the television show is that it's essentially four films of screen time. It also gives me a chance to have a stronger arc for the character. I do think it's going to start the ball rolling on having other roles for women in the Marvel Universe, even though they have strong females already with Black Widow and Pepper Potts. I wouldn't be surprised if more came along and had their own features. And if Peggy Carter was invited to have her own film, I would be 100% on board with that because it's a much needed and supported idea."

Marvel is already committed to placing Peggy in upcoming movie adventures *Ant-Man*





Even in her pyjamas, Peggy manages to keep her hair just fabulous.



Howard Stark: like father, like son. Except for the mechanical suit.



The One-Shot from the *Iron Man 3* Blu-ray cemented the character's future.



The *Winter Soldier*'s aged Peggy assures us there's a lot of life in her yet.

and *Avengers: Age of Ultron*. How much does Atwell know of her place in the bigger picture?

"I'm not privy to a lot of it because they are creating it as they go along. They don't have a five-year plan with Peggy so they take it step by step, listening to what the audience responds to. It's a dialogue between Marvel and the audience and how they can exceed expectations by giving them even more. For example, we just started episode six, which I got the script for two or three days ago. I still don't know what's going to happen in seven or eight. It's not me being coy or just saving my ass by saying I don't know. I really don't and I quite like that because I can just focus on the work ahead of me."

Atwell knows that Peggy Carter is a character with an enviable amount of potential. "It makes me feel hopeful because we've seen in *Winter Soldier* that she's 96 and she says she's had a full life. She had a family so we know she not only survived but she lived an extraordinarily rich and varied life. What that means is that she can always pop up. That's exciting to me because you don't get that in any other franchise really. What other job allows you to revisit a character over years and years and years?" **SFX**

**Marvel's Agent Carter is shown in the US on ABC. British broadcaster is still TBC.**

## THE HEROINE TRADE

Executive Producer Jeph Loeb talks *Agent Carter*

**Audiences know Peggy Carter from the movies. How did bringing her to TV differ from the development of *Agents Of SHIELD*?**

There were a lot of chefs but in this case I think it helped bring together an extraordinary story and dialogue. And because it's an eight-part series, you could tell a story with a beginning, middle and an end. It's very different when you're looking down the tunnel of 22 episodes which is a standard broadcast window.

**Does this show integrate with the wider Marvel universe or is it another One-Shot?**

Both and neither. As we have often said, it's all connected. We're telling a story in that world if the studio was involved or not. It's a big boon for our fans but at the same token *Agent Carter* needs to be, and is, a television series that if you have never seen anything by Marvel – and we know there are two or three people in Borneo that haven't – then you still understand it and enjoy it.

**Are you confident there'll be a second series?**

At the end of the day, it's the network's decision of whether they want to continue and it will be made in conjunction with how big of an audience we have. Creatively in terms of the writing staff, our showrunners and our extraordinary cast, we'd be happy to do two more or 100 more.

**Peggy has an epic life. Are you committed to the '40s/'50s setting or will you jump decades?**

It's a really smart question. The short answer is yes, we've talked about trying to figure out if the next one would take place next day or years later. **Tara Bennett**





# Candice Patton

*The Flash's* Iris West on nerdy yearnings and Grant Gustin's tight red costume

WORDS BY JOSEPH MCCABE

Launching the Silver Age of comics alongside super-speedster beau Barry Allen in 1956, few leading ladies have had the longevity of Iris West. That's a fact not lost on Candice Patton, the fresh-faced actress who plays the beloved comic book character in TV adaptation *The Flash*. When *SFX* first meets Patton during a break in shooting the hit show, she welcomes us with a smile that generates just as much lightning as a certain particle accelerator explosion. And after we mention we've met her character's co-creator, the late comic artist Carmine Infantino, her eyes widen and her hand races to her mouth as though we've demonstrated superpowers of our own. Patton herself has little need for such powers, having already appeared in 20 different TV shows and movies by the age of 26. But of all the roles she's played, it's the woman behind *The Fastest Man Alive* who most closely matches her own fervour for life...

## BIODATA

► **OCCUPATION:** Actor  
► **BORN:** 24 June 1988  
► **FROM:** Jackson, Mississippi  
► **GREATEST HITS:** *The Young And The Restless*, *Entourage*, *Castle*, *Heroes*, *One Tree Hill*, *CSI: Miami*, *The Flash*  
► **RANDOM FACT:** She was scouted for a CBS Soap Star Contest while still at college.

## As a blogger, Iris has come to represent fans of *The Flash*...

► That's the perfect description of what Iris represents. In episode six, the villain Girder even refers to Iris as a fangirl. She's such a fan of *The Flash*, and she's a blogger. I can see how that speaks to the fan who tweets and blogs about our show. Iris is just so passionate. She is a fangirl, and that's fun to play. It's great to see her have something she can be proud of waking up and doing every morning. It's great to see Iris find her passion.

## Are you a fan of science fiction or fantasy?

► Yeah, of course. I'm not gonna say that I'm a huge sci-fi nerd. I know there are people who can totally out-nerd me. [Laughs.] But I love shows like *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*. I was a huge *Lost* fan. I love anything that deals with time travel. I'm a big nerd for that kind of stuff. I'm excited to maybe get to do that on our show. I look up to actresses like Zoe Saldana. I want to be in movies like *Star Trek* and *Guardians Of The Galaxy*. I want to play Storm one day.

**"We can actually be brave in our lives without superpowers"**

These are all things that I've dreamed of doing. So to be on a show like *The Flash*... When this audition came in, I was like, "I want this so bad."

## What was your reaction upon first seeing Grant Gustin in his *Flash* costume?

► "Are you" — expletive — "kidding me?!" Because we'd been working on the show and had ideas about what the Flash suit was gonna look like, but I'd only seen him as Grant. Then to see him in the suit... I had an Iris moment where I was kind of geeking out. I was like, "Oh my God, I'm standing next to *The Flash*! This is the coolest thing ever!" When I'm shooting scenes with Grant in the suit it feels very different than when I'm shooting scenes with him as Barry. There's something very sexy and exciting about being next to *The Flash*.

## In real life, would you be drawn towards Barry or *The Flash*?

► I probably would be more intrigued with Barry, to be honest. I'm not really into the show-stopping kind of guy. I think Iris is too, and that's why she's attracted to the Flash. The Flash is almost a heightened version of Barry, with the confidence he seems to lack at this point in his life. She's attracted to both of them. She just doesn't know that it's both of them.

## Should Iris learn Barry's secret sooner rather than later?

► Yeah, only because I see Iris as such a smart and assertive young woman. It's only a matter of time before she puts two and two together. Unless Barry, the STAR Labs team, and her father Joe can do a great job of covering his tracks. But I'd love to get to a point where Iris is in the know and starts to help more in her own way. It'll come down the line. You can't give away too much too soon or you'll have nowhere to go.

## If you were a metahuman, what would be your power of choice?

► I guess it would be to be invisible. To disappear when I needed to. I have a tendency to stick my foot in my mouth, and think, "I'd love to not be here right now!" [Laughs.]

## We've seen that Iris knows how to throw a punch. Would you like to see her get more involved in the show's physical action?

► That's something fans can relate to — we can always dream about being *The Flash*, but we can actually be Iris West. We can actually be brave in our lives without superpowers. That's something I love about her: she offers a reality people watching can identify with.

## Some of the show's other characters have metahuman alter egos in the comics. But would you prefer to see Iris remain human?

► Yes and no. Yes, because I think it's important to the show. Joe West and I are important to the show because we ground it in reality, and you need that. But I'm not gonna lie — I'd love to have super powers. I don't know that we'll ever do that, but it would be nice to have a suit made of... some kind of leathery material. [Laughs.] **SFX**

*The Flash* is shown in the UK on Sky 1.









# TO THE INFINITY WAR AND BEYOND!

**F**OR ALL THE FIERCE competition Warner's slate of DC movies is about to deliver in the superhero movie stakes, Marvel Studios is entering the next stage of its masterplan with a brash level of confidence. The recently unveiled Phase Three of Marvel's Cinematic Universe is bringing us big surprises and long-awaited character debuts alongside some inevitable but welcome sequels. After the risky *Guardians Of The Galaxy* paid off, it seems like there's nothing Marvel can't do, and it's going to be pushing that enviable chutzpah to the limit over the next five years...

## CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR

✦ **RELEASE DATE** 6 MAY 2016

✦ **DIRECTORS** Anthony Russo, Joe Russo

✦ **THE PITCH** While searching for ex-sidekick Bucky, Steve Rogers finds that a new government initiative to control superheroes pitches him directly against Tony Stark...

✦ **THE PROMISE** *Civil War* was one of the most



ALL IMAGES © MARVEL

MARVEL JUST CLAIMED YOUR FUTURE. SAXON BULLOCK HAS THE LOWDOWN ON **PHASE THREE** OF ITS BIG SCREEN MASTERPLAN



Concept art for *Black Panther*.





popular comic events of the 2000s and fits perfectly with the mix of superhero action and political thriller the Russo Brothers achieved in *The Winter Soldier*. *Civil War* was also an immense saga that'd be difficult to condense into a single movie, so we're likely to get a very loose adaptation, especially since the "revealing secret identities" plotline isn't really an issue in the MCU. With Robert Downey Jr signed on in a significant capacity, *Civil War*'s Captain America/Iron Man conflict will seemingly be the heart of the film – and with Chris Evans approaching the end of his current six-film contract, it's not impossible for this plotline to eventually lead into the MCU's own take on the *Death Of Captain America*.

## DOCTOR STRANGE

✦ **RELEASE DATE** 4 NOVEMBER 2016

✦ **DIRECTOR** Scott Derrickson

✦ **THE PITCH** Disgraced surgeon Stephen Strange finds a new lease of life when he discovers the magical arts and becomes the Sorcerer Supreme...

✦ **THE PROMISE** Strange is already being referred to as a "key character" in the MCU, but the tonal shift to full-on mystical fantasy could give Marvel its biggest potential challenge since *Guardians Of The Galaxy*. While reports suggest this isn't being pitched as an origin film, the writers will undoubtedly look to the mind-bending mid-'60s stories that introduced villains like Baron Mordo and Dormammu – tales you might imagine may be *too* bizarre for mainstream audiences to handle (but then they said that about talking raccoons...). Steve Englehart's run in the '70s hinted at ways of balancing psychedelic fantasy with traditional superhero action, while 2007 miniseries *The Oath*, written by Saga's Brian K Vaughan, probably gives the best idea of how to bring believable emotional depth to a character prone to declaring "By the Hoary Hosts of Hoggoth!" ➡







## GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY 2

★ **RELEASE DATE** 5 MAY 2017

★ **DIRECTOR** James Gunn

★ **THE PITCH** Peter Quill, Gamora, Drax, Rocket and Groot encounter more intergalactic mayhem, while Thanos continues his plans for conquest of the universe...

★ **THE PROMISE** This much-anticipated follow-up will explore the identity of Star-Lord's father, although Gunn has already confirmed that he won't be using Quill's comic book origin, where his dad is King J'son of Spartax. Gunn also stresses that he won't be laying groundwork for 2018's *Avengers: Infinity War* here, but he'll doubtlessly be looking to expand Marvel's cosmic frontier. Remember the mysterious cocoon spotted among the Collector's artefacts that matches the one used by Adam Warlock in the comics? A space-bound super-powered messiah with some notable identity issues, Warlock was a pivotal character in the original *Infinity Gauntlet* storyline from the 1990s, and the looser, wackier world of the *Guardians* could be the ideal place to introduce him. Now all we need is a longer appearance from Howard the Duck and we'll be happy.



Left to right: Marvel supremo Kevin Feige, Robert Downey Jr, *Black Panther*'s Chadwick Boseman and Chris Evans.



We hope Groot will be this size again by 2017.

## THOR: RAGNAROK

★ **RELEASE DATE** 28 JULY 2017

★ **THE PITCH** The nefarious Loki is presumed dead but secretly ruling Asgard in disguise as Odin, and it's time for a conclusive showdown with his adoptive brother Thor...

★ **THE PROMISE** With a title referencing the mythic Norse apocalypse, and Chris Hemsworth nearing the end of his current contract as Thor, this Marvel sequel has a potential air of finality to it. There's no shortage of epic conflicts in the *Thor* comics, but if the screenwriters are sensible they'll look to writer/artist Walter Simonson's acclaimed run in the 1980s, and especially the battle between the Thunder God and the fire demon Surtur. Of course, Ragnarok was also the name of the dangerous Thor clone created during the *Civil War* storyline, meaning Marvel could potentially be adding an "Evil Twin" plotline into the mix. Whatever happens, there's the opportunity for further developments in the quest for the Infinity Gems, while Tom Hiddleston will once again get the chance to steal the show.

## BLACK PANTHER

★ **RELEASE DATE** 3 NOVEMBER 2017

★ **THE PITCH** In the isolationist, technologically advanced African country of Wakanda, T'Challa is the super-smart, powerful warrior king known as the Black Panther...

★ **THE PROMISE** With Marvel's previous record in onscreen diversity featuring a lot of white guys named Chris, it has been in need of a project like *Black Panther*, and by casting the impressive Chadwick Boseman as T'Challa Marvel has taken a big step in the right direction. We'll first see Boseman in action in *Captain America: Civil War*, and since *Black Panther* has been a Marvel regular since 1966 (making him the first mainstream American black superhero), there's no shortage of source material. The late '90s run from Christopher Priest features plenty of potential storylines, but the likeliest inspiration is the 2005 story "Who Is The Black Panther?" Written by filmmaker Reginald Hudlin, it's one of the best modern-day jumping-on points for the character – and Hudlin is also already being rumoured as a possible *Black Panther* director.





## INHUMANS

✦ **RELEASE DATE** 2 NOVEMBER 2018

✦ **THE PITCH** A race of powerful superhumans lives among us, descended from alien experiments, and ruled over by a mysterious and cunning royal family in the city of Attilan...

✦ **THE PROMISE** Currently pitched as the Marvel Universe's answer to the familial conflict and backstabbing of *Game Of Thrones*, the Inhumans are one of Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's oddest creations. They've been around since 1965, and there's definite movie source material in the impressive 1998-9 *Inhumans* miniseries by Paul Jenkins and Jae Lee. Marvel has recently used the ongoing title *Inhumanity* to angle the Inhumans as possible substitutes/replacements for the X-Men (potentially getting around the tricky issue of screen rights to the word mutant...). 2013's *Infinity* saw the Inhuman race greatly expanded thanks to a "Terrigen Bomb", a plot device which could easily end up in the film, and this would also open up a potential appearance from Kamala Khan, the latest and hugely popular incarnation of Ms Marvel.

## AVENGERS: INFINITY WAR PART TWO

✦ **RELEASE DATE** 3 MAY 2019

✦ **THE PITCH** Everything ends here, as the final showdown between the heroes of the Marvel Universe and the forces of Thanos brings Phase Three to a close.

✦ **THE PROMISE** It's a safe bet that this will not only be the finale to the *Infinity War* two-parter, but also something of a climax to the MCU's previous 11 years of adventures. If the groundwork has been laid correctly, there's the chance for this to be a gigantic blockbuster that truly captures the sense of epic scale and multi-stranded plotting featured in a typical Marvel "event" comic. Of course, event comic storytelling can sometimes backfire, and there'll also be the issue of keeping all these disparate elements from cancelling each other out. But we have confidence. This is the studio that made the impossible expectations of the first *Avengers* film work, after all. Whatever happens, Marvel is going to have a hell of a challenge working out what to do next... **SFX**



## AVENGERS: INFINITY WAR PART ONE

✦ **RELEASE DATE** 4 MAY 2018

✦ **THE PITCH** Thanos will likely complete his search for the Infinity Gems here, meaning trouble for the whole Marvel Universe...

✦ **THE PROMISE** The first two-part saga from Marvel Studios has a tremendous amount of set-up to pay off, and will undoubtedly riff heavily on the 1991 miniseries *The Infinity Gauntlet* and its sequel *The Infinity War*, as well as 2013's epic Thanos-centric event *Infinity*. Current rumours suggest Downey Jr may be the only member of the established Avengers line-up present here, and that this film may see him recruiting an all-new band of heroes to face Thanos. With Joss Whedon likely to move on from Marvel after *Age Of Ultron*, the favourite directorial choices are *Captain America 2* and *3* helmers the Russo Brothers, and this could be the start of an amazing blockbuster adventure – as long as they can make Thanos truly scary, and not just a strange purple bloke sitting in a space-chair.



## CAPTAIN MARVEL

✦ **RELEASE DATE** 6 JULY 2018

✦ **THE PITCH** Ambitious airforce pilot Carol Danvers is caught in an explosion with one of the alien Kree and inherits its powers, becoming the superhuman Captain Marvel...

✦ **THE PROMISE** Danvers first appeared in 1968 and gained superpowers as Ms Marvel in 1977, but some of her history shows the dodgier side of superhero gender politics – we still shudder at the infamous "Rape Of Ms Marvel" plotline in 1980. She finally ditched the Ms Marvel tag and became Captain Marvel in 2012, and Kelly Sue DeConnick's acclaimed run since then is sure to be the main inspiration, particularly *Avengers* crossover story "The Enemy Within". Danvers' current appearances in the *Guardians* comic also suggest that an eventual onscreen team-up may not be out of the question. As for casting, fan-favourite choice Katée Sackhoff may be a long shot but Emily Blunt would be potentially brilliant.



Captain Marvel proving that Lycra is indeed stretchy and colourful.



# BACK TO THE NEAR FUTURE

10 THINGS THAT NEED TO HAPPEN BEFORE OCT 21, 2015

WORDS BY TOM FORDY ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL CEMMICK

**S**O, AFTER 25 YEARS, THE hoverboard is finally a reality (though it still doesn't work on water), transporting us slightly closer to *Back To The Future II*'s vision of... well, the future. But before we reach 21 October 2015, the date Doc and Marty travel to in the movie, there are many advances humankind still needs to make. And we'd better hurry up about it – we're less than a year away from that fateful date...

## DEHYDRATED PIZZAS

**IT'S THE FUTURE** A CD-sized pizza is easily enough to feed a family. Two seconds in the Black & Decker Hydrator (a kind of anti-microwave) and it expands to a whopping 15-incher.

**BACK TO REALITY** Astronauts have been tucking into dehydrated grub since the 1960s. Domestically, it hasn't progressed much past the Pot Noodle.

**THINKING FOURTH-DimensionALLY** We're probably better off without them. A possible cure for the world hunger crisis might quickly turn into a world obesity crisis. Mmmmm, stuffed crust...

## DOMESTIC FUSION ENERGY

**IT'S THE FUTURE** Garbage-guzzling Mr Fusion answers our energy and environmental problems, converting everyday waste into the 1.21 gigawatts needed for time travel.

**BACK TO REALITY** Fusion energy – replicating the power of the sun – has been in the works for decades, though boffins admit they're a long way from harnessing it, let alone sticking it on the car roof.

**THINKING FOURTH-DimensionALLY** Scientists be warned: don't rush the experiments on this one. Fusion accidents usually lead to the creation of a radioactive supervillain.

## SMART CLOTHES

**IT'S THE FUTURE** Don't worry about lacing your shoes or even buying clothes that fit properly – they'll sort that out for themselves.

**BACK TO REALITY** Wearable technology (mostly pocket phone chargers) is certainly a thing but self-tying shoelaces remain elusive, despite Nike registering a patent and releasing replica trainers for charity in 2011.

**THINKING FOURTH-DimensionALLY** Until the fashion world catches up, we can meet it halfway by wearing trousers inside out and rocking two ties at once.

## A RETURN TO ANALOGUE TELECOMS

**IT'S THE FUTURE** The McFlys circa 2015 might use videophones (or Skype, as some future people call them), but they still have a fax machine in every room.

**BACK TO REALITY** Even adding such futuristic features as, erm, scanning and copying won't bring the fax machine back from retro tech hell.

**THINKING FOURTH-DimensionALLY** Of course, there's always the chance the latest iOS update will finally send everyone over the edge and the ensuing meltdown will cause a technological devolution.

## PERSONAL SOUND FX VESTS

**IT'S THE FUTURE** A wearable development in 21st century trash-talk, punctuating every insult with an appropriate sound effect – a chicken, for example.

**BACK TO REALITY** Like everything else, there's an app for it, rendering the waistcoat keyboard thingy redundant before it's started.

**THINKING FOURTH-DimensionALLY** Don't completely rule them out. It'll only take one hipster to model the sound FX vest round London-town and it could seriously take off (cue rocket launch noise).







# PREPARING TO ASCEND

THE MAKERS OF THE MATRIX ARE BACK IN THE SF BLOCKBUSTER GAME. JOSEPH MCCABE ENTERS THE UNIQUE UNIVERSE OF **THE WACHOWSKIS...**

**I**T ISN'T EASY REALISING a new vision of the future. But for producer Grant Hill it's just part of the job description of working with the Wachowskis.

From the *Matrix* trilogy through *V For Vendetta* and *Cloud Atlas*, Hill has turned the filmmaking siblings' grand dreams and dark nightmares of tomorrow into some of the most ambitious SF movies of our time. Now he's helping to deliver *Jupiter Ascending*, the Wachowskis' latest epic in which Mila Kunis stars as Jupiter Jones, an ordinary Russian immigrant who, with the help of a wolf-human hybrid (Channing Tatum), learns she has an extraordinary destiny as the next saviour of the universe.

Though the finished film finds the directing duo pushing new boundaries, Hill tells *SFX*

the project began with a simple request from its studio.

"We were approached maybe four years ago by Warner Brothers. They wanted a Wachowski-made-and-conceived world, and they wanted it in the form of a big summer movie. They wanted to create whole worlds. They wanted to really push the creative and visual and storytelling elements. So we started on that. We wanted to come up with a different aesthetic, because of the nature of the story we had to invent, in very high detail, these different worlds. There was a lot of study of movement. How do these crafts move? How do people move around? What's their technology? We did that very exhaustingly. I think it turned out incredibly well."

Hill says one of his team's biggest tasks was to create a CG-enhanced universe grounded in the tactile reality of 2015.

"It had a long R&D side to it," admits the producer. "A year of design, experimentation, previz, storyboarding, and constant refining. But while it was going to be a picture that had a lot of visual effects in it, we made a deliberate decision to try and up the level of actual practical photography within the visual

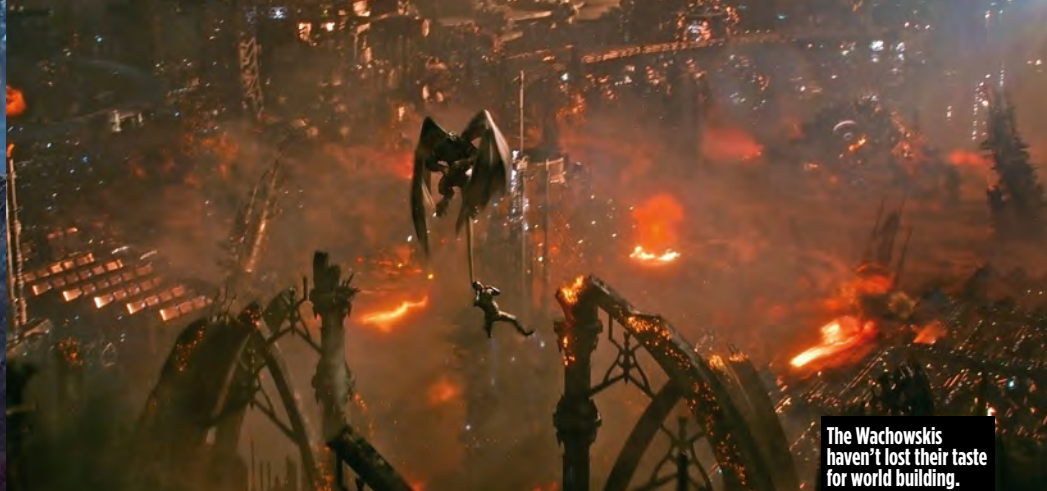








Toothbrush, sir?



The Wachowskis haven't lost their taste for world building.

effects, to levels we hadn't used before. We wanted to do our best in a way that was as seamless as possible. That took quite a bit of training, research, choreography. To be able to really get a practical base in a lot of the stunt work, the visual effects work. We had to work out Channing's character, Caine. We knew we wanted him to be able to propel himself through the air. But we wanted to do it in a way that hadn't been seen before. Then we came up with this anti-gravity boots concept. Once we'd done that, we said, 'Fine, we have a concept. How does the body move?' Because we wanted to be able to capture a lot of that, and then build the visual effects around it.

"We created this huge half-pipe over in Berlin, and we had some of the best skaters in the world. We had rollerbladers, we had surfers, whatever. Just studying motion. Then we created practical machines, most notably two huge revolving treadmills that were 15 feet in the air, with which you could actually move in three dimensions. We got to a point where that worked, then we had to get Channing trained up, get his bodywork working, get his double's. Because in the movie you see Channing flying through the buildings of Chicago. We didn't have Channing hanging up there, but a lot of that was based on a stunt double doing all of that stuff. There was a way to do it with digital people, and that's been done very well before. But by having Channing doing a lot of his own work, and having his double doing the more difficult stuff, and then just layering it together with visual effects, it gave us an old school physicality to the work."

Hill says it's the scene in *Jupiter Ascending* most likely to blow audiences away – an adrenalinised six and a half minute action sequence that occurs shortly after Caine and Jupiter meet.

"Our big chase through Chicago," Hill says proudly, "is just stunning to look at. This is where we find that Channing is able to move himself around through space. It was challenging in a number of areas. In the visual effects world, we were gonna have twenty-five hundred visual effects shots, but we wanted to use more physical things for the visual effects to build on. Since they were both going to be flying through the canyons of the city, we wanted to make that practical. So we commissioned a new multi-camera rig. Then we put that in a helicopter and trained a stunt man to actually

do the movement of Channing, and put him on the end of a tether line and dropped him down under a helicopter. We actually did fly that person through all of that. At the end of it we ended up with a real Chicago, and everywhere we went, with any of the digital ships that were chasing each other around in there, the environment was totally practical, and all of the points of view of the city were practical.

"We also did some old-fashioned enhancement there. It's a six and a half minute sequence, and we decided we wanted to do it at sunset. It meant for those twelve or so days we'd get up and we'd shoot for an hour as the sun rose, then we'd go away, and come back later in the day and shoot for another hour as the sun set. To give it that wonderful afterglow look. It's a lot of planning – to shut the city down and get helicopters in there all the time. Then we sort of stitched it all together with visual effects."

It's not all eyeball-bruising widescreen spectacle, though. Hill is keen to stress that *Jupiter Ascending* also has an occasionally wild sense of humour. This is, after all, a film in which Sean Bean plays a man who is half-bee... "We knew what we wanted to create. We knew we had the narrative, and we hoped that we had all these environments. We wanted it to be fun, and we wanted it to be obvious that some of it was a little tongue-in-cheek. The humour came out of the naturalism of the dialogue, and the interaction of the family. Both the Russian family at the centre of things, and the Abrasax family. We had fun with it. The humour is intentional, and a lot of it was spontaneous on the day. It just adds to the complexity of the film."

## HEADING TO THE STARS

Hill tells *SFX* the Wachowskis' lifelong love of SF and fantasy cinema fed into the universe of *Jupiter Ascending*.

"They obviously have a great interest in, and grew up watching, a lot of stuff. There are a lot of space-based films. There are a lot of elements that come into the whole sci-fi



thing, and they've seen it all, know it all, and are very conscious of what came before them. But they also wanted to try and envision a lot of those things, as well as bring in things that had made some impression and were formative to them when they were younger. They drew on pictures like *The Wizard Of Oz*, which, when they first saw them, were so fantastical and so out there and so charming. There are definitely elements of that in it."

**"WE WANTED IT TO BE FUN, AND WE WANTED IT TO BE OBVIOUS THAT SOME OF IT WAS A LITTLE TONGUE-IN-CHEEK"**





Channing Tatum plays Caine, a wolf-human hybrid.

With *Guardians Of The Galaxy* a box office phenomenon and *Star Wars* returning to rule cinemas this December, *Jupiter Ascending* seems poised to ride the crest of a new wave of big screen space opera.

"There is a great interest in seeing something new," says Hill. "As long as you can run a solid narrative through it, so you have those other elements that you need as well as spectacle. There's an extraordinary amount of creation and design and excitement in *Jupiter*, but at its core is a sibling rivalry story. At the end of the day it's a family out to do each

other in for fame and fortune. Under that is this wonderful love story. That's what makes a positive cinema-going experience. That's the other thing these movies can do — given the proliferation of various platforms and ways in which films can be seen, you come up with something that justifies the trip to get out there and go and sit in front of a 75 foot screen and be blown away. It's an experiential thing at that point. It's fun! What could beat that?" **SFX**

*Jupiter Ascending* is released 6 February



The creature above her had a serious case of dandruff.

## MESSIAH COMPLEX

**MILA KUNIS' JUPITER JONES HAILS FROM A LONG LINE OF SF SAVIOURS. HERE ARE FIVE OF OUR FAVES...**



### ANAKIN SKYWALKER

▶ *Star Wars'* Tatooine orphan, destined by prophecy to restore balance to the Force, falls from grace and terrorises a galaxy — before destroying his evil master, redeemed by the faith of his Jedi son.

### NEO

▶ The Wachowskis' original Chosen One from *The Matrix*. Think of him as a Kung-Fu Jesus, sharing a penchant for martyrdom and — if the sequel trilogy rumours are correct — a possible rebirth.

### PAUL ATREIDES

▶ A reminder of the dark side of messianism, Frank Herbert's "Muad'Dib" uses his powers to lead and inspire, but his followers want nothing less than a blood-soaked jihad. His burden is passed on to his children in *Dune's* sequels.



### SUPERMAN

▶ The ultimate messiah figure in comic books, informed by religious figures like Moses, Hercules, and Samson. Kal-el, the last son of Krypton, is his father's dying gift to a planet he believes destined for greatness.

### VALENTINE MICHAEL SMITH

▶ The protagonist of Robert Heinlein's *Stranger In A Strange Land* comes to Earth in order to save it as the cost of his own life, inspiring later stories like *The Man Who Fell To Earth* and *ET*.



# Neal Asher

A time of change. Neal Asher talks transformative fiction and personal politics

WORDS BY JONATHAN WRIGHT PORTRAIT BY WILL IRELAND

For much of the year, Neal Asher lives in the mountains of Crete, a place where “food and drink are relatively cheap, the temperature can climb into the 40s and the light is intense.” In the garden, he grows chili peppers and “all sorts of weird and wonderful flowers and fruits.” There’s no internet connection.

In 2014, though, the rhythm of Asher’s life, both on and off the island, changed irrevocably. “My wife died of bowel cancer last January,” he says. “I spent a lot of time walking in the mountains, and swimming and kayaking in the Libyan Sea. This was mostly to try and hold depression at bay. I have struggled to write, and to care about much at all.” Caroline Asher was just 54 years old.

But you have to find a way to carry on. Asher has kept working, and this month brings the first novel in a new trilogy set in his Polity

universe, *Dark Intelligence*. At its centre lies a dangerous rogue AI named Penny Royal, which previously showed up in the short story “Alien Archaeology” and the novel *The Technician*. “My readers rather liked that creation, and I like it too,” says Asher. Plus, having written a dystopian trilogy, the “Owner” sequence that began with *The Departure* (2011), he wanted to “return to the Polity and do something sprawling”.

It’s a novel in which characters undergo startling and often terrible physical changes (see our review on page 110). Along with immortality, the theme of transformation is one Asher says has been present in his work from the off – early short story “Spatterjay”, for instance, featured an “immortality-imparting virus, spread by the bite of a leech.”

*Dark Intelligence* is also a book where many of the scenes have a visceral power. “My desire is to entertain and the horror elements, and the violence – the conflict – are a large part of that,” says Asher. “Simply flick through the pages of *SFX* and point to a book, film

or game that doesn’t contain them. I think you’ll find that difficult. I guess my problem developed from when, from a book about writing, I read that there should be conflict on every page. I thought that meant exploding spaceships...”

**“My perspective on what is important in life has changed a great deal”**

As a novelist, Asher was a relatively late starter. “I had no idea what I wanted to do when I left school, beyond get some money in my pocket and go down the pub,” he says. “I did, however, have many interests: biology, also specifically mycology, chemistry, electronics, physics, painting and sculpture. I used to flit from one interest to another but not achieve much beyond learning a little more.”

In his mid-20s, he says, he realised “that writing was something that could incorporate all my other interests and only then did I really focus on it completely.” Gradually, he inched towards being able to work full-time as a novelist, a tale of having his stories rejected, then having pieces accepted by non-paying magazines and “novels taken by small publishers who crashed and burned before publication.”

Along the way, he undertook some jobs you really wouldn’t want to do. So which would he least like to revisit? “I guess that delivering coal for two weeks in the freezing rain just before Christmas was the worst. Nothing like having to use a scrubbing brush to clean parts of the body that should never see such a brush at all.”

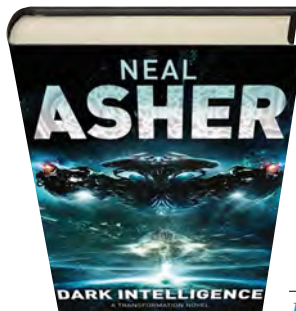
His breakthrough came when publisher Macmillan took *Gridlinked* (2001). The first in his “Agent Cormac” series, it was the tale of a secret agent that combined elements of the thriller, hard SF and cyberpunk, a template for much of what’s followed. “I swiftly learned that getting a book with a big publisher doesn’t mean champagne and big cars thereafter,” he remembers. “What it means is your publisher/editor asking what you are going to produce next year, which is a step many fall flat on their faces over.”

It was a more-or-less instant hit and two years later Asher was able to quit the day job. But for all his success, he’s sometimes seemed like an outsider among SF novelists. In part, this is because he’s been criticised within the community for his apparent climate change scepticism (he declines to answer a question about his position here). It’s also about politics. The overriding allegiance among Brit SF writers is – or certainly appears to be, *SFX* has never taken a formal poll or anything – soft left-leaning.

When *SFX* suggests that Asher, in contrast, is politically conservative, he first criticises Westminster’s denizens as “divorced from reality by massive salaries, pensions and an over-privileged lifestyle” before going on to describe himself as a “libertarian in the sense of ‘classic liberal’ and not ‘a gun-toting bible-belter’”.

“I do sometimes feel like I slipped under the fence and got into the SF world before anyone could release the dogs,” he concludes. “I once chatted with an SF writer who was ‘politically conservative’, whatever that means, who was amazed that I didn’t just keep my mouth shut and my head down. But my contention was that, even if you are writing some way out stuff, truth is one of your most important tools. However, I do tend to be more close-mouthed now simply because, over this last shitty year, my perspective on what is important in life has changed a great deal.” **SFX**

*Dark Intelligence* is on sale 29 January.







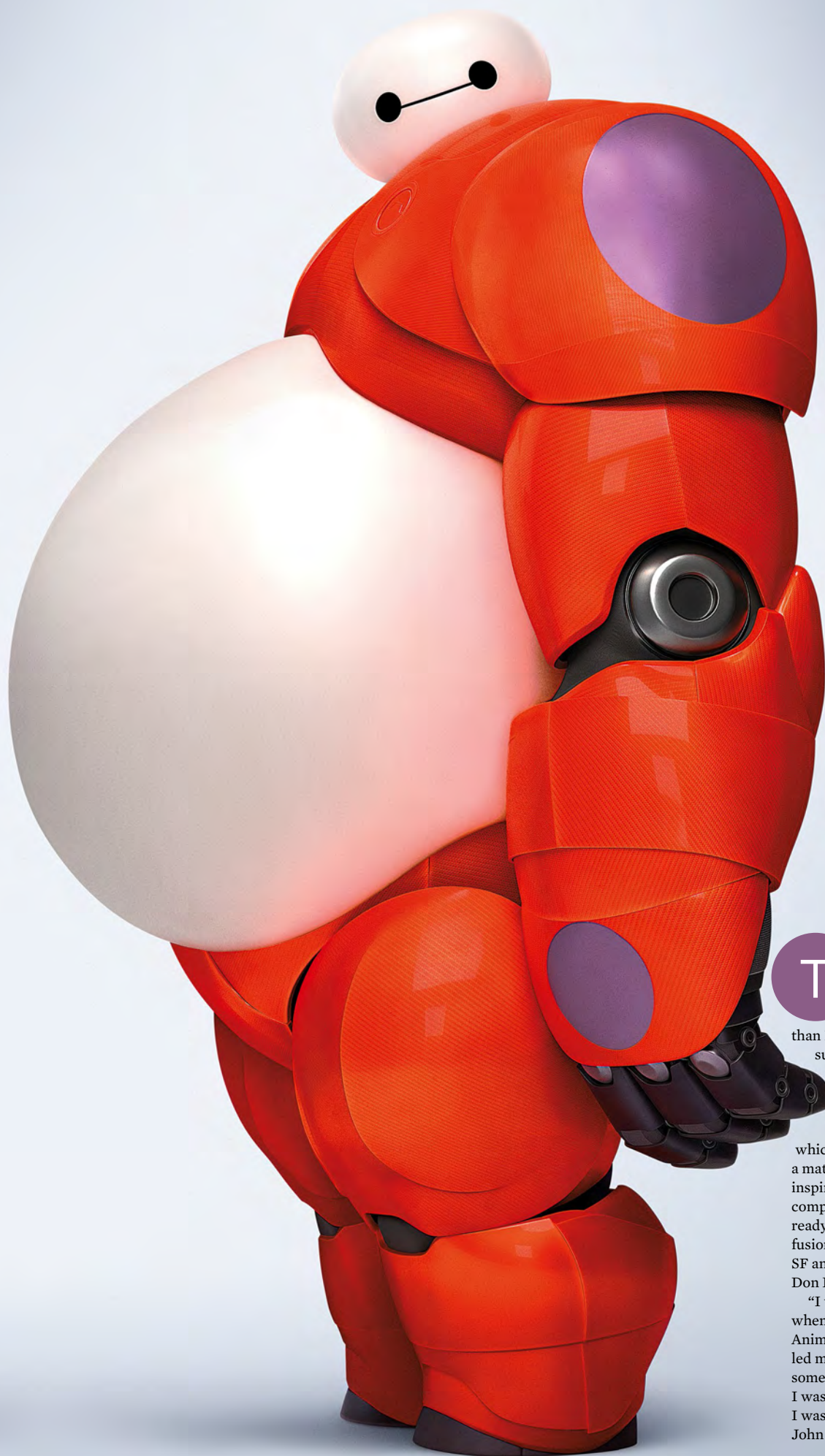


THE  
JOY  
OF

—●——●—  
READY FOR THE  
UNLIKELIEST SCREEN  
SUPERHEROES YET? EAST  
MEETS WEST AS JOSEPH  
McCABE DISCOVERS  
THE FUNKY FUTURE  
OF **BIG HERO 6**  
—







**T**HE SUPERHERO GENRE dominates the 21st century box-office, and no company is more successful at making super-movies than Marvel. From 2008's *Iron Man* to this summer's *Guardians Of The Galaxy*, each Marvel film has powered its way to becoming a worldwide smash.

Of course Marvel made its name publishing the superhero comics on which its films are based. So it was only a matter of time before one of those comics inspired the animation division of its parent company, Walt Disney. But are audiences ready for a movie that represents the ultimate fusion of eastern and western approaches to SF and superheroes? *Big Hero 6* directors Don Hall and Chris Williams think so.

"I was a big comic book fan," Hall tells *SFX* when we chat with him at the Walt Disney Animation Studios in Burbank. "That's what led me to go down the path of inquiring about something of Marvel's and bringing it over. I was just reliving my childhood passions. I was a huge Marvel comics fan as a kid. John Buscema and John Byrne were my ➡"



The *Ghostbusters* reboot didn't quite have the same Marshmallow Man budget.



## SOFT MACHINE

● “The challenges in designing Baymax,” lead character designer Shiyoon Kim tells *SFX*, “were to make him appealing and to make him unique, a robot that we’ve never seen before. And huggable. I don’t usually think of robots and ‘huggable’ at the same time... Our team went to Carnegie Mellon University and they found out about soft robotics. So the idea came up, ‘What if Baymax was inflatable?’”

“[Director] Don Hall, on his research trip to Japan, took a picture of these bells [on which there are] two circles connected with a line. Something about that iconography was really interesting. I thought, ‘That could be a really cool face for a robot.’ In the beginning I put a mouth underneath, and I thought it might look better without the mouth. We pitched that idea to John [Lasseter], and John really loved it. It felt more robotic that way.”



two favorite artists. That inspired a love of drawing. *How To Draw Comics The Marvel Way* was right up there with *The Illusion Of Life* as far as tomes that inspired me as a kid. So the idea of combining those two passions was really what led to *Big Hero 6*.”

Hall — who got his start at Disney as a writer on 1999’s *Tarzan* — recalls approaching chief creative officer John Lasseter about his urge to work with characters from the company’s newly acquired Marvel Universe.

“We had a five-minute conversation where he was like, ‘That sounds great. I think it’s really cool. Why don’t you find something that you think would be appropriate to bring over?’” That “something” turned out to be a super-team title even more obscure than Marvel’s *Guardians Of The Galaxy*.

“*Avengers* hadn’t come out yet. I don’t think *Captain America* had come out yet. But I knew *Captain America* was gonna be in *Avengers*, from being a dork and reading stuff. I knew all that was in the works. So I tried to stay away, when I was putting a list together, from stuff I thought would be hands-off. I spent lunch hours combing through their website. And when I found *Big Hero 6*... It was the title that drew me to it originally. Then I saw it was a Japanese superhero team, and I bought the comics and loved them.”

Co-director Williams brought with him a love of fast-paced thrills and streamlined character stories that perfectly suited *Big Hero 6*’s tale (loosely adapted from the comic *Man Of Action*) of Hiro, a young robotics expert (voiced by Ryan Potter) who, after suffering a tragic loss, is befriended by Baymax (actor Scott Adsit), an inflatable robotic healthcare companion. The two soon discover that a mysterious kabuki-masked villain, known as Yokai, has stolen one of Hiro’s inventions

— countless miniature multi-purpose droids known as microbots — and is using it to threaten the entire city.

“I’ve always been inspired by action movies,” says Williams, best known for helming (with *How To Train Your Dragon*’s Chris Sanders) the 2008 Disney feature *Bolt*. “I love *The Road Warrior* and *Princess Mononoke*. Really well put together action scenes are so inspiring to me. But I also love really sweet little stories. I think you see a little bit of that in *Bolt*. *Bolt* is a movie that has these really big action scenes, but *Bolt* himself is such a simple and pure character. I really like that kind of innocence and that naive quality. I responded to that in Baymax.”

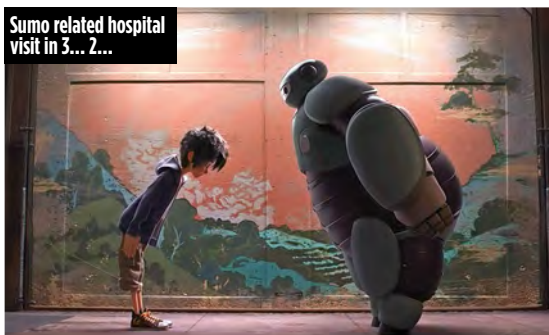
## SQUISHY EMOTIONS

Working with screenwriter Jordan Roberts, Hall fused the story of Hiro and Baymax’s new friendship to that of the titular superhero group, university students specializing in various fields of science and technology who join Hiro in battling Yokai: electromagnetics whiz GoGo Tomago (Jamie Chung), laser expert Wasabi (Damon Wayans, Jr.), chemist Honey Lemon (Genesis Rodriguez), and the school’s mascot and resident comic-book junkie Fred (TJ Miller).

“That was the bulk of our effort in story,” admits Hall. “It was something that I recognised early on was gonna be one of the specific story challenges. I think we all did. We saw the merit in making it work, but it wasn’t until the emotional story between Hiro and Baymax was worked out that that became the spine of the movie. Then it was very clear that the team should hang on that. And how to do that really came out of Baymax being a little more pro-active. His mission is to heal this kid



Sumo related hospital visit in 3... 2...

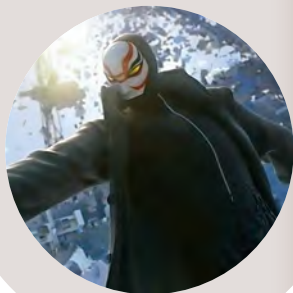


The standard tabloid A-level results day poses never change.

## MAKING MICROBOTS

● Of the many challenges faced by *Big Hero 6*'s visual effects animators, none was greater than that of Hiro's microbots — miniature robots that, when magnetically connected, are capable of almost any task.

"We did a lot of research on the latest technology being developed for robots," says effects head Michael Kaschak. "We knew they needed to connect together. So we looked at nature and studied things like how ants will build a bridge and then use themselves to cross over to another area. But we didn't want them to feel like they were some kind of creature. You might think the easiest thing for them to do to throw a car is to build some kind of arm and grab and throw it. But we decided to stick with their mechanical nature and have the microbots come underneath the car and create something like a catapult."



emotionally. Part of the treatment for this is to surround him with friends and loved ones. Then it was like, 'Oh, that's how they're going to be incorporated into the movie.' It sewed them into the movie in an unbreakable way."

With their story in place, Hall and Williams turned to production designer Paul Felix (another veteran of *Bolt*) to develop the complex megalopolis of San Fransokyo.

"It was always Don's inclination to make sure that it was something wholly original," says Felix, taking a break from the lighting stage of production to tell us a little about *Big Hero 6*'s look. "That's why he didn't want to set it in someplace too recognisable. The hope is that this would be the near future, like, ten years out. But that it was recognisably San Francisco was definitely the idea. We wanted to make sure that the parts of the city that you expect to see are where you would imagine them to be."

To create the film's setting, a cultural hybrid appropriate for its characters, Felix and his team undertook an intensive study of anime.

"It helped us get a sense of how Japanese cities organise space; and the kinds of spaces you don't find in American cities. Like marketplace walkways, and the way they cram air conditioning ducts and dense detailing into those parts of the city. That was important, because it felt specific to a place."

Examining Japan's animation culture, *Big Hero 6*'s artists soon found themselves incorporating its minimalistic approach to character design, despite its challenges.

"The characters," explains Felix, "are so stripped-down — not just the costumes but their features — that it was really important everything get placed in the right place. If one thing is slightly off, you know it. There were fewer opportunities to put a mass of detail on and hope that something that doesn't get resolved isn't noticed. There were times that I could have taken a different design direction. Early on, we had this idea that they wouldn't have access to a lot of the machinery they would need to make their costumes, so they would be more of a ragtag band.

Which is a cool aesthetic in and of itself, but in

**"JOHN LASSETER  
WANTED BAYMAX  
TO FEEL BIG,  
IMPOSING AND  
INFLATABLE"**

the end it started to feel better that they were more unified. They're all geniuses, and 3D printing seems to be a big part of the show. So it just made sense.

"When Shiyoon Kim — our lead character designer — took his first pass at the costumes we have now he really wanted to come up with something that unifies them all. He came up with the circle motif that you'll find between their shoulder pads and their breastplates and on their helmets. That kind of curvilinear aesthetic was the one thing that we hoped would tie them together. We really wanted a more minimalistic approach to it, kind of Apple-like.

"Something John Lasseter wanted," laughs Felix, "was to keep Baymax a little bit more relatable, and not just a perfect V shape. To feel big and imposing but keep a sense of the inflatable inside. So he still has that kind of rounded swell to his abdomen."

In the end, it's Baymax who, ironically, symbolises the spirit of *Big Hero 6*, revealing a core of humanity even while buried under layers of technology.

"I just fell in love with the characters," says Hall, remembering his first encounter with the comic books, "and the potential for what we could do with them." **SFX**

*Big Hero 6* is released on Friday 30 January.



Do 3D printed parachutes work? Baymax and Hiro are about to find out.



# HIGHLANDER II

## THE QUICKENING

DIRECTOR RUSSELL MULCAHY TELLS DAVE GOLDER WHY THE SEQUEL THAT NOBODY WANTED WAS “HELL ON WHEELS” TO MAKE

**T**HERE'S A PIECE OF trivia about *Highlander II: The Quickening* that's repeated so often on the internet it sounds like it must be an urban myth. But no. Director Russell Mulcahy confirms to *SFX* that he did indeed walk out of the film's world premiere after 15 minutes. “I think I heard a few rumblings in the audience, like, ‘What the fuck’s this?’” he recalls with a self-mocking chuckle. “To be fair, I was thinking the same thing and I knew the worst was yet to come. I didn’t want to be there at the end. I left for safety reasons because I would have been murdered.”

*Highlander II* is a regular fixture in “Worst Movies Of All Time Lists” and you won’t find Mulcahy – who also directed the first film – defending it. The man who made his name shooting some of the most memorable pop videos of the '80s for the likes of Duran Duran, Ultravox (oh, indeed yes, Vienna) and Queen – describes the shoot as “hell on wheels” and claims never to have watched it again since that premiere. Which may surprise owners of the radical Renegade Cut version of the movie released on DVD in 1995, which purports to be a “director’s cut”.

“I may have given the producers some notes,” says Mulcahy, revealing that he had little direct involvement with that release. “I think I said, ‘I don’t really know what you can do to save it.’ I definitely asked them to get rid of that Planet Zeist stuff.”

Ah yes. Zeist. Poor, ultimately retconned-out-of-the-franchise Planet Zeist, a severe symptom of unwanted-sequelitis, eventually cured by surgical removal. In a way it stands for everything that’s wrong with *Highlander II* – a plot decision driven by that basic human urge: to make more money.

Because nobody behind the original *really* wanted to make a sequel. *Highlander* – the tale of immortals who must battle each other through the ages until only one is left – had

become an unexpected cult hit in Europe but had tanked in the US, so its distributor, 20th Century Fox, had no interest in making another one. But as producer Peter Davis recalls in the making-of documentary *Seduced By Argentina*, “We got such support from the foreign distributors. We would go to Cannes and they would come up to us saying, ‘When are you doing this? We want this for our marketplace.’”

Eventually funding was raised through a private bonding company. The trouble was, as Mulcahy points out, *Highlander* was a film that didn’t lend itself to sequels. “It was written as a complete story. There can be only one. He got a prize when he won – he became mortal. Blah, blah, blah, end of story, ‘It’s A Kind Of Magic’. But then it became a hit in Europe and suddenly there was a scramble for a sequel.”


The producers, Bill Panzer and Peter Davis, had to find a way to bring the characters and concepts back, including Sean Connery’s Ramirez who was inconveniently dead (“the distributors were not interested in Sean Connery being a cameo; they wanted him as a major character in the piece,” says Davis.) Mulcahy remembers being sent various concepts: “One was like *Rollerball* meets *The Hunger Games*. They were all futuristic.” ➔











Connery and Lambert do their best not to make eye contact with the camera.

Mulcahy wasn't impressed with what he was reading but ultimately discovered that he had little choice in the matter: "Scripts were coming in and I was going, 'That's crap, that's crap, that's crap.' Eventually I rang Peter Davis and he said, 'Well, I've already signed you.' 'And I went, WHAT?' I changed my agent after that film. But they said Christophe wanted to do it, who I really liked, and Sean had already signed. So I thought, 'If Sean's signed to it maybe it can't be that bad? Maybe I'm missing something.'"

What he may have been missing was that Connery had been brought on board with a fee of \$3 million for six days' work.

That's when legendary *Avengers* scriptwriter and *The Professionals* creator Brian Clemens came on board. "*Highlander II* came about because my American agent said the producers will give the job to the writer who can explain who the bloody hell the Immortals are," Clemens told *SFX* way back in issue 51. "So I invented the planet Zeist and all that nonsense, where one year is 50 on Earth, and they went for it."

He was, to be fair, only doing as asked. "The fans wanted to know where the Immortals came from," says Panzer. "We shouldn't have listened to them."

The script, then, was a mish-mash of get-out clauses, rewriting (or ignoring) the rules set in place in the first film. In *Seduced By Argentina*, star Christopher Lambert, who played the immortal Highlander Connor

MacLeod, admits to being sceptical about the whole Zeist angle. "The more cornered we were in trying to come up with ideas, the more stupid things we came up with."

## THE GATHERING

So, it's 2024 and the world is protected from solar radiation by a giant shield. Our now-aged Highlander, Connor, (who, we learn, created the shield) suddenly and inexplicably becomes a youthful Immortal again when a villain from his own planet turns up. This, equally inexplicably, allows Ramirez to come back to life, only to die what seems like a few minutes later. Connor falls in love with an eco-terrorist he's known for five minutes. The shield comes down because it hasn't been needed for years (it's been kept in place by a corrupt company). The baddie is decapitated. Happy ending. It's difficult to imagine this script making a much better film if Mulcahy had had a Jim Cameron-sized budget to play with.

The next step on the road to disaster was the choice to make the film in Buenos Aires, capital of Argentina. The move seemed to make financial sense at the time: film crews were a lot cheaper in South America and the producers' spreadsheets – lacking a column labelled "reality check" – suggested that the film could be made for \$8-10 million less than if shot in the US. Mulcahy even convinced himself that this cost-cutting measure could have artistic benefits. "I wanted a neo-classical

## "WE CUT IT AND WENT, 'OH GOD, IT'S DREADFUL'"

futuristic look. Argentina has that old world look with a combination of modern stuff too. They also showed us these extraordinary locations; some waterfalls on the border with Brazil where *The Mission* was filmed, and this extraordinary lunar-like landscape that would have been used for Zeist."

Argentina proved to be a false economy, though. Partly because the country suffered from a period of rampant inflation just as filming commenced. "One morning you'd have breakfast in the hotel and the orange juice was 30 cents, and the next day it was \$3, so I was thinking, 'Okay, there's something going on here,'" says Mulcahy.

There were other problems with the Argentinian location. "It wasn't really staffed up to do a film of this style. So we ended up bringing in people from Australia and the UK and America. As preproduction was going on, more and more people were coming in from the rest of the world. So with shipping the crew in and the economy going upside-down,





A typical afternoon on the Bakerloo line.



It's okay, Chris. There's always Highlander III...



A one-sided sword fight if ever there was one.

## FALKLANDS SHADOW

Mulcahy: "The film was shot after the Falklands conflict. I would mention very loudly as often as possible how I was Australian, just to make it clear. But I do remember that the street where the train went through was called Avenue Belgrano – the name of the ship the British sunk. That didn't go down well. Although no pitched battles broke out, at lunchtime little bread fights would start. And after a few glasses of wine – because red wine at lunchtime was part of the Argentinian culture – bottles could start flying too."



A moody Russell Mulcahy points the lens at Sean Connery.

what was supposed to have been a cost effective move was actually a disaster. We couldn't use the locations we had planned to use because they were too far away from Buenos Aires and we couldn't afford to put the crew up anywhere. So all that was scrapped and the film became all about interior sets. A lot of scenes weren't shot, a lot of sets weren't finished. It became very cardboard-looking. We had grand ambitions but it ended up looking cheap and tacky."

## ITS UNDOING

One of the biggest losses was a huge battle scene on Zeist. "That was storyboarded to hell," says Mulcahy, "by a wonderful artist called Brendan McCarthy. He's a good friend, and we had this incredible battle scene planned for the opening. It was going to be like nothing you'd seen before. Instead we ended up with 30 people running around Zuma Beach – very quick and non-eventful."

With Argentinian inflation causing production costs to rocket, the bonding company financing the film unceremoniously pulled the plug. Mulcahy was distraught. It wasn't just lavish action scenes that hadn't been filmed but vital narrative scenes as well. But he was powerless to do anything about it, and after struggling for 12 weeks to get even a trace of his vision on screen, he actually felt a sense of relief on the way to the airport. "I decided I was never going to do a film again just for money, because it's too hard work to

wake up every morning morning going, 'Fuck this shit.'"

The nightmare wasn't over. "When we got back, we cut it together and went, 'Oh god, it's dreadful.' Then the finance company took it over, brought in their own editors and butchered it even more."

They also compromised on the post production and effects, so that the all-important shield, which was always supposed to be blue, was suddenly transformed into red, even though all the sets had been lit in blue.

Everyone hated the bonding company's cut, and according to the *Seduced By Argentina* documentary, it was never released. Instead, UK film distributor Entertainment stumped up the money for an additional edit which was the one eventually released. If this was an improvement, then the mind boggles at how



Connery's Ramirez: \$3 million for six days. A... bargain?

incoherent the cut it replaced must have been: flashback sequences that were supposed to be spread throughout the film (like the ones in *Highlander*) were instead re-edited into a kind of chronological "Story So Far" sequence at the start of the film. Two sword fights were merged into one, to make the climax longer (though resultingly full of continuity errors). Vital exposition was clearly missing as one scene lurched inelegantly into another.

## THERE CAN BE MORE

It was released. It was panned. It flopped. Yet amazingly there were more sequels. After *Highlander III* came out in 1994 producers Davis and Panzer re-edited the second film along the lines of Mulcahy's original intention with the flashbacks in the correct places, two sword fights and a specially reshot action scene re-inserted (not the big battle, sadly, but a fight on a van roof). They also followed Mulcahy's advice, redubbing and re-editing the Zeist scenes so that they took place in Earth's distant past instead; though this created a few plot holes of its own, it seemed to placate fans. This was the Renegade Cut.

Then in 2004 came the special edition, with all new CG effects, a few minor alterations and, after all this time, a blue shield to match the set lighting.

"I hear it's an improvement," Mulcahy tells *SFX*. You'll have to take our word for it; he doesn't sound at all convinced. **SFX**



# PENNY DREADFUL



What's happening in the world of horror movies this month...




New year and a new horror slate, largely consisting of sequels and remakes. But worry not! Two humungo multi-movie Stephen King adapts are on the way as well as a host

of creepy offerings set to debut at the Sundance film festival. Plus: time to move over *Leprechaun* – here comes *Gnome Alone!* Groan.




## MY TIME CRIME

 Morally speaking, how long do you have to endure a horror film before you're allowed to switch it off? I ask because I've just sat through the whole of award-winning Spanish language ordeal *Kidnapped* (aka *Secuestrados*) out of some misplaced sense of duty even though it turned out to be just as relentlessly, pointlessly, unchangingly unpleasant as I *knew* it was going to be. Made up of just 12 long tracking shots, occasionally using split screen to contrast the dual ordeal of the father – dragged off to a cash point by one of the opportunistic Eastern European kidnapers who break into his home – and his wife and daughter stuck back at the house with two

more predictable maniacs. It's sparse, nasty art-house torture-porn. Plot? Negligible. Emotional engagement? None. Terror? I wish. It's 85 minutes long and I made it to the end but for anyone who's not on board after 15 mins: Quit! I won't judge. Also out now: Kimo Stamboel and Timo Tjanjanto's *Killers*. I like Timo Tjanjanto but this was outdated sub-*I Saw The Devil* dirge that's over 2 ¼ hours long. I did 45 minutes. I don't care how it ends.


## KING OF THE WORLD

 Stephen King's *The Stand* is a gargantuan opus of a novel, a post-apocalyptic tome where King re-constructs a world where humanity is all-but wiped out by a pandemic. It's a great book – King

always wanted it to be his answer to *The Lord Of The Rings* – and it seems like the time for a really good adap of *The Stand* – split into four – has come at last. Rumours buzz about the possible casting of Matthew McConaughey as icon of evil Randall Flagg and dream casting (I'm dubious) of Christian Bale as hope for humanity Stu Redman. At last we could see a horror franchise turn into a true big bucks mainstream blockbuster. In the meantime *True Detective* director Cary Fukunaga is prepping in March for a summer shoot for the first part of a new *IT* adap. It'll be split in two with *IT Part 1* a coming of age tale about the kids terrorised by Pennywise the Clown (*Part 2* will focus on the adult reunion decades later). Apparently King's happy with the

script saying "this is the version the studio should make".

## JANUARY SALES

 By the time you read this you'll know whether *The Woman In Black: Angel Of Death* has become a box office bonanza to match the first film (the most successful British horror of all time) or not. Pre-*Annabelle* I would have said "no" but I'd probably have been wrong. Like *Annabelle* to *The Conjuring*, the stars aren't as famous, the director's not as experienced and the reviews aren't as positive but "sequel" and "spinoff" seem to trump "logic" and "quality". Don't get me wrong, *Angel Of Death* is vastly superior to *Annabelle* (which wins the prize for my most hated film of last

## DREADFUL THING TO DO

Take a night class, horror style. The Miskatonic Institute Of Horror Studies – a Canadian venture founded by *House Of Psychotic Women* author Kier-La Janisse – is launching a London branch in the new year with a series of screenings and lectures from established genre stalwarts. Monthly classes start in January focusing on obscure and cult horror including sessions on Jesús Franco, sado-masochism and classroom safety films. Head to [www.miskatonic-london.com](http://www.miskatonic-london.com) for tickets and details.



*The Nightmare: You'll be glued to your, er, bed.*





## DREADFUL A-Z OF HORROR

Penny's monthly dictionary of doom

### L IS FOR... LOVERS

#### NATURAL BORN KILLERS

Oliver Stone, 1994

► Damaged nutters Mickey and Mallory go on a murderous rampage and become cult heroes bolstered by the press in Oliver Stone's highly controversial killer road movie, based on a story by Quentin Tarantino. A twisted Bonnie and Clyde which made stars of Woody Harrelson and Juliette Lewis.



#### ALLELUIA

Fabrice Du Welz, 2014

► A con artist meets a single mother who falls deeply in love with him and pretends to be his sister so he can swindle rich widows out of their cash, in this bizarre horror based on the true story of The Honeymoon Killers. From *Calvaire* director Fabrice Du Welz it's a brutal and beautiful weird middle-aged love story.



#### BRIDE OF CHUCKY

Ronny Yu, 1998

► Fourth part of the *Child's Play* franchise, starring Jennifer Tilly as squeaky voiced former girlfriend of Brad Dourif's serial killer Chucky, transformed into a psychopathic goth-doll. Marked a turning point in the franchise from straight horror to black comedy, revitalising the series. *Seed Of Chucky* followed.



#### ONLY LOVERS LEFT ALIVE

Jim Jarmusch, 2013

► External love is a vampire staple – this one's a wry arthouse version starring pasty-faced waifs Tilda Swinton and Tom Hiddleston as the centuries-old blood drinking couple reunited across continents, hopped up on old vinyl and first edition novels. Slinky, sexy (bit slow).



"Knock Knock." "Who's there?" "Gun." "Oh."

year), and Phoebe Fox is both promising and likeable – it's just not terribly adventurous. As an old fashioned ghost story of creaking floorboards, dashing young airmen and doe-eyed kids, it's fine – it might even get a part three. But in ten years no one will remember it.

### JANUARY SALES 2



I hate to be the prophet of doom, but right now the horror release list for 2015 looks about as exciting as *The Woman In Black: Part 3*. Sequels, remakes, reimaginings, things vs other things... But fear not (or rather "fear more") – January marks the Sundance film festival, the first big cinema event of the year which always comes with an armful of new nasties (last year premiering *The Babadook* and *The Guest*). Here's three to look out for. **1** *The Hallow*: dark Irish-set monster movie described as "*Pan's Labyrinth* meets *Straw Dogs*" by debut director Corin Hardy, who's just signed on to pick up comic-book hot potato *The Crow*. **2** *The Nightmare* – docu-horror about sleep paralysis following eight people who

get stuck between dreams and waking. **3** *Knock Knock*: Eli Roth's latest starring Keanu Reeves as a married man who messes with the wrong girls in this psycho-sexual thriller. Fatale attraction meets, well, Eli Roth...

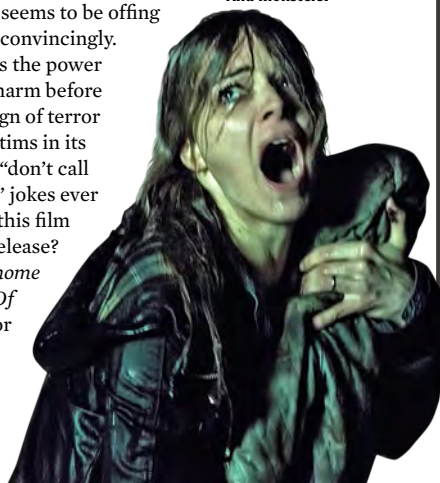
### NO GNOME UNTURNED



What there definitely isn't enough of is garden gnome horror starring *Austin Powers*' Mini-Me Verne Troyer. Problem solved! *Gnome Alone*, out in the US from Lionsgate in January, sees a college girl acquire an amulet that awakens a malicious hat-wearing homunculus (fishing rod and tiny watering can TBC), who seems to be offing her enemies unconvincingly. Can she harness the power of the cursed charm before the gnome's reign of terror leaves more victims in its wake? Will the "don't call me leprechaun" jokes ever be funny? Will this film ever get a UK release? Look out for *Gnome Alone 2: Curse Of The Fishpond* for 2016. **SFX**



*The Hallow* depicts typical Irish weather. And monsters.





The best selling UK zombie horror series

# R.R.HAYWOOD


# THE UNDEAD

The First Seven Days  
Compilation Edition

"The British  
Walking Dead..."



AVAILABLE ON  
**amazon**kindle

WWW.RRHAYWOOD.COM 



# Rated

edited by Ian Berriman

The best reviews section in the universe

★★★★★ Superb ★★★★★ Good ★★★★★ Average ★★★★★ Poor ★ Terrible



## Ex\_Machina

The human face of technology

96

## Contents

- 94 Cinema
- 100 DVD & Blu-ray
- 110 Books
- 116 Comics
- 118 Videogames
- 119 Miscellaneous
- 120 Collectables

## Highlights

94



### The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies

Does Bilbo Baggins get there and back again in one piece?

100



### Lucy

Scarlett Johansson gets her hands on many, many more superpowers than she does in the Marvel movies.

110



### Dark Intelligence

Neal Asher returns to his Polity universe for a space-set tale of vengeance and the quest for power.



# The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies

End of the road

★★★★★

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!

12A | 144 minutes

Director: Peter Jackson

Cast: Martin Freeman, Ian McKellen, Richard Armitage, Luke Evans, Evangeline Lilly, Orlando Bloom, Aidan Turner, Billy Connolly

## OF ALL THE HOBBIT

trilogy, *The Battle Of The Five Armies* was arguably Peter Jackson's biggest challenge. With most of the standout moments from the book already out of the way (Gollum, the spiders, the barrel chase, the natter with Smaug), this was a film based around a skirmish many consider a footnote that takes place *after* the real story is done. How could Jackson possibly base an entire epic movie on such narrow foundations? Surely this would be where the folly of splitting a brief source novel into three movies would be well and truly exposed?

We needn't have worried. While it's not up there with his Tolkien cycle's best, this is a fitting end (or should that be middle?) to Jackson's saga, one that manages to mix blockbuster spectacle with some intimate, tender character moments. That it works at all is down to two key filmmaking decisions: making sure this is the shortest jaunt to

Middle-earth yet (there's no room for unnecessary filler here), and holding back the end of Smaug's story to open this movie, even though dramatic logic tells you it should have been wrapped up last time out.

It's a choice that proves bang on the money, because while it left us with an unsatisfying cliffhanger for *The Desolation Of Smaug*, the dragon's assault on Lake-town opens this third film with the killer hook it needs. Without wasting time on any kind of flashback or prologue, we're launched straight into the silver-tongued lizard's fiery bombing raid, as the soon-to-be-former resident of the Lonely Mountain lays waste to the town below. It's a wonderful sequence (albeit one that's over too quickly) that instantly seizes your attention, even though it feels like it's a leftover from a different movie – it's like opening *The Empire Strikes Back* with Luke Skywalker blowing up the Death Star.

And there's the conundrum. Had the dragon not been in *The Battle Of Five Armies*, the movie wouldn't have hung together. Once Smaug departs (and surely that can't still be a spoiler after nearly 80 years), we're launched into nearly an hour of posturing, arguing and reflecting as various armies get ready for war. (We know they're getting ready for war because they say so. Many times.) It's an effective crescendo to battle, but in a film that's effectively one long final act, it would have made for a pretty mediocre opening.

When things do finally kick off, the fight proves worth the wait. With

several factions camped outside the newly freed Dwarf stronghold of Erebor, the scale is pitched somewhere between the tense siege of Helm's Deep and the sprawling scrap of Pelennor Fields. Okay, there's a little bit of *Anchorman 2* to the way more and more groups join the battle – you almost expect Wes Mantouth and his Channel 9 Evening News team to trash talk an Orc – but it's marshalled effortlessly by Jackson, who pulls all the disparate elements together in a way few directors could match.

The battle is endlessly inventive, with the Orcs, Elves, Men, Dwarves

and Eagles displaying numerous ingenious tactics, and riding enough steeds to sustain pretty much every verse of "Old MacDonald". Also, Jackson knows when to punctuate the carnage with a gag or a tender moment, making this the antithesis of Michael Bay's humourless, confusing *Transformers: Age Of Extinction*.

Yet despite the warmongering title, focusing on the action would be doing *The Battle Of The Five Armies* a disservice. Even at its most talky, it's compelling stuff, reaping the rewards of characters built-up over two-and-a-bit movies



**Even at its most talky, it's compelling stuff**





Gandalf, so tough he'll bring a stick to a bow fight.

(sometimes more), all of them flawed and with a convincing agenda.

With Martin Freeman's ever-excellent Bilbo more of a bit-part player this time out, the stage is set for others to stand out: Luke Evans, as Bard, becomes a reluctant leader of men, whose single-minded desire to protect his kids makes him one of the most human characters ever to grace Middle-earth, while Kili and Tauriel's romance is undeniably touching. However, it's Thorin's movie, as Richard Armitage takes the Dwarf king to the edge of madness. With the "Dragon Sickness" that plagued his grandfather taking hold, Thorin is a

danger to everyone under his rule, yet Armitage never allows him to become a monster, allowing glimpses of the good man he was before to shine through.

And while you're always conscious that bridges with *The Lord Of The Rings* are being built, this trilogy closer is way less preoccupied with being a prequel than it could have been. Yes, come the end Bilbo has his Mithril shirt and all the key players are where they need to be when Sauron goes on the prowl for his famous trinket, but only one moment – a random mention of one of *Rings'* leading

lights – feels shamelessly crowbarred in.

As for the ending, Jackson manages to be much more restrained than he was on *The Return Of The King*, wrapping things up with a suitably low-key return to the Shire that effectively brings the saga full circle. As a farewell to Middle-earth, it's pitched perfectly – bad things are happening in Mordor, but we don't have to worry about that. Not yet, anyway...

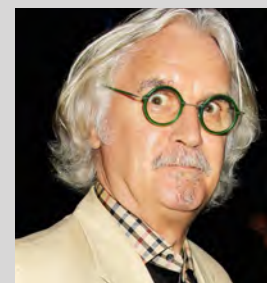
**Richard Edwards**

? "The Last Goodbye", the song over the closing credits, was written and sung by Billy Boyd, Pippin in *The Lord Of The Rings*.

## MINDPROGE •

### Billy Connolly

Dáin in *The Battle of the Five Armies*



#### ► Can you describe your experience of working with Peter Jackson?

Peter Jackson is an absolute gas to be around. Of course, he has a lot of responsibility on these movies but he also creates a very relaxed and fun environment. We shot in the most beautiful areas of New Zealand and when he isn't directing *Hobbits*, Peter collects planes. So the best thing for me was being able to fly around in these old World War 2 planes with Stephen Fry!

#### ► How did you get involved in the cast of *The Battle Of The Five Armies*?

They actually asked me – for some reason Peter Jackson thought I would be ideal to portray this hardened old warrior. It all arrived totally by surprise! I thought I better say yes because I knew Sean Connery had turned down *The Lord Of The Rings* and I didn't want to be the second Scotsman to walk away from something so successful!

#### ► Although you are on record as saying you can't stand Tolkien...

That is absolutely true – I never was a fan of Tolkien. And I never liked the people who liked these books either! I was part of the folk scene when I was younger and there was a big distinction between the two: the Tolkiens and the non-Tolkiens. I was into blues and bluegrass music and they would be into corduroy jackets and stuff! So we would always be opposed to one another – and now, of course, all of that is quite ironic.

**Calum Waddell**



## Ex\_Machina

She, Robot

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 23 January

15 | 108 minutes

Director: Alex Garland

Cast: Domhnall Gleeson, Oscar Isaac, Alicia Vikander, Sonoya Mizuno

### THERE'S NO SHORTAGE OF

big-screen stories about the birth of artificial intelligence, but few have pulled them off with the success of Alex Garland's *Ex\_Machina*. The veteran genre writer steps into the director's chair for the first time here, and the result is a suspenseful, paranoia-fuelled thriller that also manages to squeeze a thoughtful exploration of the nature of human consciousness into its taut runtime.

Effectively a three-hander, it's set five minutes in the future and almost entirely in the isolated home of tech prodigy Nathan (Oscar Isaac). Under the pretence of having won a competition, Caleb (Domhnall Gleeson) is flown out to administer the Turing Test to Ava (Alicia Vikander). But Ava isn't a faceless chatbot, she's a remarkably advanced android complete with see-through robot bits. Their sessions start off pleasantly enough, but Caleb quickly learns that Ava isn't happy about her imprisonment...

Gripping from its opening minutes, *Ex\_Machina* has "cult classic" running

through it like a stick of rock. In spite of its single location setting and miniscule cast it never feels stagey, and is loaded with compellingly smart ideas. Rather than chronicle a conventional robot uprising, it turns this idea on its head and makes it increasingly clear that Ava is not the one to be feared. Or is that just what she wants you to believe?

The battle lines are constantly shifting, all three cast members selling the subtle psychological warfare with standout performances. Vikander has the biggest impact, portraying a machine that's convincingly human despite her graceful, robotic movement and speech patterns.

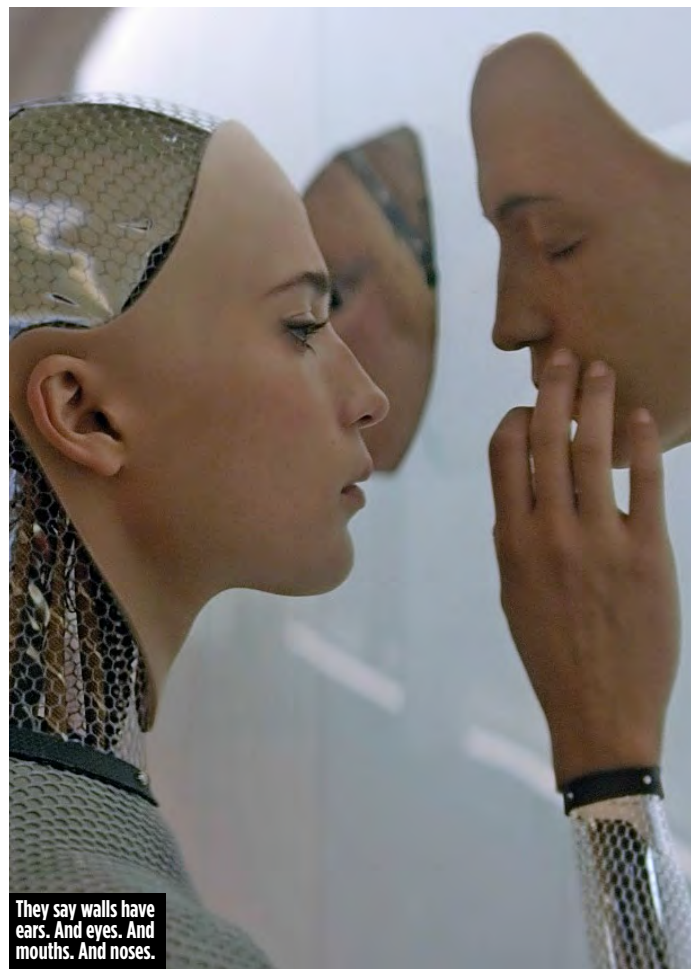
British effects house Double Negative deserve special mention for the sensational job they've done bringing Ava to life – there's never a moment where the effect is anything less than flawless. It's a handsome film too, the serene surroundings contrasting with the sterile interiors of Nathan's home-cum-research-laboratory to striking effect.

A couple of the film's twists are too clearly telegraphed but otherwise it's a hugely impressive sort-of debut for Garland.

A must-see.

**Jordan Farley**

Isaac and Gleeson were both cast in *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* shortly after filming *Ex\_Machina*.



They say walls have ears. And eyes. And mouths. And noses.

## Big Hero 6

Please state the nature of the supervillain emergency

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 30 January

TBC | 102 minutes

Director: Don Hall, Chris Williams

Cast: Ryan Potter, Scott Adsit, James Cromwell, Alan Tudyk, Maya Rudolph

### THERE EXISTS A

possibility that, many years from now, parents will sit down with their children to watch a dusty old movie from 1999 called *The Iron Giant*. Halfway through the film, the sprogs will turn to the adults and moan, "Hey, this film totally ripped off *Big Hero 6*! That giant robot is just like Baymax!"

This is because *Big Hero 6* will probably be remembered long after *The Iron Giant*, not because it's better – it's actually just as good – but because it's going to be a honking great big hit, whereas *Giant* wasn't. And yet both films use the same gimmick: taking an emotionless,

hulking robot and making him adorable through the use of charming, hilarious and exquisitely observed slapstick that would put Buster Keaton to shame.

*Big Hero 6*'s Baymax isn't from another planet, though: he's a robot doctor, in the vein of *Voyager's* EMH,

designed by the big brother of little tech genius Hiro (Ryan Potter). When tragedy unfolds and Hiro finds himself on a mission of revenge, Baymax soon becomes an armoured fighting robot that knows karate and can fly. Basically, Baymax goes from cute to cool, as do Hiro's pals as they take on superhero personas to battle a supervillain – thus allowing the film to homage everything from the aforementioned *Iron Giant* to *The Incredibles*, *The Avengers*, *WALL-E* and a vast potpourri of the anime canon.

A Transformer who turned into a beanbag was surprisingly successful.



## Its mashed-up world is dynamic, vibrant and filled with life

Aside from the robot, it's the latter element that makes *Big Hero 6* so compelling. Set in a city named San Fransokyo – yes, it's a cross between San Francisco and Tokyo – the film's visual style is a satisfying blend of neon/sunlight, East/West that feels gloriously fresh. This is partly down to the fact that the original Marvel comic it's based on was set in Japan (Baymax was a robot dragon!), but it's still a pleasing change from the America-centric Disney formula that's become a little stale over the years. This new, mashed-up world is dynamic, vibrant and filled with life – as is the genuinely hysterical script.

Oh, and hang around after the end credits. It's *really* worth it.

**Jayne Nelson**

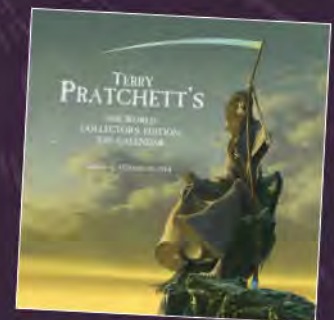
After researching everything from babies to koalas, the makers chose penguin chicks as the inspiration for the way Baymax moves.



# THE PERFECT GIFT FOR THE DISCWORLD FAN IN YOUR WORLD



“A sequence of  
unalloyed delight”  
— *Guardian*



Out now where all good books are sold



# Kingsman: The Secret Service

The King's Peach

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 29 January

15 | 123 minutes

Director: Matthew Vaughn

Cast: Colin Firth, Samuel L. Jackson, Michael Caine, Mark Strong, Taron Egerton, Sofia Boutella

## MATTHEW VAUGHN'S THIRD

comic adaptation in a row returns him to the creator of his first, Mark Millar. While *Kick-Ass* riffed on superheroes, *Kingsman* takes on the superspy. Inspired by old-school Bond, there's a yearning here for the days before 007 got all serious.

The story revolves around elite espionage team Kingsman. Our guide is Harry Hart (Colin Firth), but he's not our main man; that's teenage tearaway Gary "Eggsy" Unwin (Taron Egerton), the son of a fellow agent, who died due to a mistake Harry made. Raised on an estate by his mum, he's heading for reform school. But Harry's kept an eye on him, even giving him a number to ring when in trouble. After a spell in custody, Eggsy finally dials the digits.

And so Harry takes Eggsy under his wing. Watching the plummy Harry tutor the

hoodie-wearing Eggsy is a delight: think *My Fair Lady* meets *Moonraker*. With the agency a man down after an agent's killed, Eggsy is put forward for intensive training.

Like Millar's original, *Kingsman* is defiantly self-aware – although Vaughn tones it down. While Millar's story saw celebrities kidnapped, opening with Mark Hamill plunging to his death, Vaughn ditches the famous faces, although he nods to it, with Hamill cast as a boffin snatched by biotech pioneer Valentine (Samuel L. Jackson). Jackson's lisping baddie is good value, even if he's not quite on the Blofeld level. But it's Harry's relationship with Eggsy that draws you in. The plot is a bit daft, and when that takes over *Kingsman* begins to lose its lustre. As good as Egerton is, he's not quite able to sustain our interest for two hours.

Vaughn, however, has hit on a great twist on the action flick – a pinch of *Lock, Stock* cheekiness with a dash of '80s retro. It's not perfect, but there's enough to keep the blood pumping.

**James Mottram**

As he's a well-spoken lad, to prepare for his role Egerton watched movies like *Harry Brown* and *Ill Manors*.



# Into The Woods

Once upon a Sondheim

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 9 January

PG | 125 minutes

Director: Rob Marshall

Cast: Meryl Streep, Emily Blunt, James Corden, Anna Kendrick, Johnny Depp

## THERE'S A MOMENT IN

this film in which Chris Pine – as Cinderella's immaculately charming Prince – sings at the top of his lungs about how tortured he is to have lost the woman who danced with him at the ball, then ran away. As he laments, he melodramatically tears open his shirt to reveal his rippling muscles. Whether it's an intentional homage to Pine's Starfleet alter ego or not, it's glorious; the fact it takes place in the middle of a singing contest with the Prince from "Rapunzel" only makes it funnier. Two Princesses having a sing-off about who's the most distraught? That's *Into The Woods*: a tongue-in-cheek collection of fairytales shaken together like a mythical cocktail into a dazzling single story.



Disney have finally brought Stephen Sondheim's acclaimed 1986 musical to the screen, and it's a stunning success. There's the star-packed cast; there's the music, whose playful lyrics delight; there's the fun that's had with fairytale tropes. Every time you think you know where the well-trodden paths of these storybook woods are going, there's a witty twist.

It's a tad too long, with the more

downbeat second act occasionally dragging, and Anna Kendrick's Cinderella and Lilla Crawford's Hood are, perhaps, rather shrill. But these are tiny quibbles that don't really matter when the rest of the film knocks it out of the park. Or should that be out of the woods?

**Jayne Nelson**

A movie version of *Into The Woods* has been in development hell since 1990. Once, Robin Williams and Cher were set to star.

# The Pyramid

★★★★★

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!

15 | 89 minutes

Director: Gregory Levasseur



## THE

*Inbetweeners'* James Buckley takes the plunge into horror, playing a docu-cameraman who

follows some archaeologists into a three-sided pyramid so old it rewrites the rule book on Egyptian genealogy. Trapped, they soon realise they're not alone...

Essentially *The Descent* with CGI rat-dogs, it also chucks toxic dust and enough traps to scare off Indiana Jones into the uneven mix. Alexandre Aja's long-time writing partner Gregory Levasseur directs, breaking the found-footage rules whenever it aids his purpose and never sure whether to dig for po-faced, claustrophobic dread or exhibit a gore-tastic vom-com. The inventively nasty kills suggest he should have settled for the latter... it's just a shame that everyone dies in the exact order you'd expect.

**Jamie Graham**



# THE COMPLETE SCI-FI GIFT PACK

From the makers of **TOTAL FILM** & **SFX**



**ON SALE NOW**

[www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/GiftPacks](http://www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/GiftPacks)



# Lucy

Pure entertainment cut with total cobblers

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★  
**Release Date:** 12 January  
 2014 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD  
**Director:** Luc Besson  
**Cast:** Scarlett Johansson, Morgan Freeman, Choi Min-sik, Amr Waked, Julian Rhind-Tutt



## HUMANS ONLY

use 10% of their potential cerebral capacity, according to one particularly persistent myth. It's nonsense, of course. Studies have disproved it in numerous ways – the most obvious being that even tiny amounts of brain damage can be truly devastating. Still, it's a fun premise on which to hang a loopy action movie, and that's exactly what *The Fifth Element* director Luc Besson has done with *Lucy*.

Scarlett Johansson (in her fourth big genre film of the last year, following three critical and commercial hits with *Her*, *Under The Skin* and *The Winter Soldier*) plays the titular student. When we first meet Lucy, she's rueing the effects of a big night out and hanging out with her douchey new boyfriend, Richard – a guy with some seriously shady connections and a mysterious briefcase. Clearly nervous about its contents, he cuffs the case to Lucy's

**It's better to make a bold and interesting failure than a boring success**

wrist and forces her to deliver it to mob boss Jang (*Oldboy* star Choi Min-sik). It doesn't go well for anyone involved...

Soon, Lucy and a number of other unfortunates have had bags of mysterious new drug CPH4 (which looks not unlike Walter White's blue meth from *Breaking Bad*) implanted into their stomachs. When Lucy's bag ruptures, the CPH4 gets into her system and begins to unlock the hidden potential of her brain. Within hours she is smarter, faster, stronger – and psychic. She can speak new languages, control TVs by looking at them and make guns fly out of people's hands. Burning through her vastly reduced lifespan, she has just 24 hours to find more of the drug and take down Jang's gang.

Both *Leon* and *Nikita* ably demonstrated Luc Besson's action chops, and the first half of *Lucy* feels of a piece with his early hits. It's fast, action-packed and fun. Jang is an unambiguously evil villain to rival Gary Oldman's bonkers, coke-snorting turn in *Leon*, and it's a pleasure to see Miss Scarlett bring the pain to his goons, even if you can't shake the feeling that *The Matrix* did this sort of thing better 15 years ago. Likewise, the mid-movie car chase has a goofy energy thanks to Julien Rey's kinetic cutting. After years of wishy-washy disappointments, it feels like Besson is returning to his comfort zone with a lean, 86-minute actioner.

You can see the "But..." coming, can't you?

*Lucy's* last third is a shambles. As our heroine unlocks more of her mental powers, the film grinds to a halt and wanders down a pompous, pseudo-profound blind alley. Time

She must have gone "gangster", what with holding the gun like that.

travel, supercomputers and columns of black goo enter the mix. Your mind wanders back to the start of the film and its opening shot of an ape in the wild and you realise, with a sudden snort of horrified laughter, that this is Besson taking on Stanley Kubrick. *Lucy* is his attempt to remake *2001: A Space Odyssey*, but with added gunplay and explosions. It stops the drama dead in its tracks and the film's ruminations on humanity say nothing at all.

Throughout, the impressive cast do their best with thin material. Morgan Freeman is as gravelly and warm as you'd expect, but spends

most of the film in front of PowerPoint; he's there to provide the exposition but gets no dramatic material. Amr Waked comes on, shoots guns, and gets to snog Johansson, but is otherwise forgettable in a part that may as well be named Hero Cop. Jarringly, the most interesting person on screen is Julian Rhind-Tutt who, in his few brief scenes as an overly mannered and polite baddie, walks off with the entire movie. He vanishes 20 minutes in and is never seen again.

Then there's Scarlett herself. Johansson rarely turns in a less than watchable performance, but there's







little room for nuance here. On paper, her character arc sounds fascinating. As Lucy's mind expands, her humanity gradually starts to fall away (there are shades of *Watchmen*'s Dr Manhattan here). Unfortunately, the film switches her from a sympathetic, likeable woman to the Terminator almost immediately. There's little sense of progression, and an early moment of intriguing moral ambiguity – where she kills a terminally ill patient in a hospital to save her own life – is rapidly glossed over. The film's tight pacing is one of its strengths, but it also means that characterisation gets short shrift.

Still, it's surely better to make a bold

and interesting failure than a boring success. *Lucy* is short, sharp and eccentric enough to stick in your memory. It's visually striking in places, with bold psychedelic splashes of colour. And, from a wider point of view, it's managed to do something that both Marvel and DC have, so far, failed to do: put a woman front and centre in a superhero film (for that's exactly what this is). Despite its flaws, it's an enjoyable action movie. It's just a shame that, for a film about the limitless potential of the human mind, the results are often so hilariously stupid.

**EXTRAS:** We'll spare you a cheap gag about what percentage of the disc space is being left unused by this frankly stingy selection of extras. The DVD gets a single 16-minute feature, "The Evolution Of Lucy", featuring Scarlett Johansson, Morgan Freeman and Luc Besson. And that's it. The Blu-ray adds "Cerebral Capacity", another relatively short piece looking at the science of the movie, hosted by Freeman. And that's yer lot.

**Will Salmon**

**?** Lucy is named after the skeleton of a female found in Ethiopia, who's estimated to have lived 3.2 million years ago.

## Just Say "Woah!"

Five more drugs with incredible effects

### CAN-D

**The Three Stigmata Of Palmer Eldritch**

► In Philip K Dick's 1965 novel, colonists on Mars escape their boring lives by chewing this "translation drug", which comes in gum form. Used with Barbie-like dolls, it allows users to mentally identify with "Perky Pat" and boyfriend Walt, and enter their idealised world: happy plastic, it's fantastic!

### DUST

**Babylon 5**

► Originally created by the Psi Corps to produce human telepaths, dust accelerates neural processing 10 times, and stimulates the gene for telepathic ability. A dust user can also experience someone else's memories, in a kind of mental rape.

### MELANGE

**Dune**

► Found only on desert world Arrakis, this spice can not only extend lifespan and increase vitality, but allows freighter pilots to travel vast distances by entering a "navigation trance". Don't try snorting cinnamon to do the commute home quicker; trust us, it doesn't work.



### NZT-48

**Limitless**

► *Lucy* may inspire déjà vu if you've seen this 2011 thriller, in which Bradley Cooper's author takes a smart drug to beat writer's block. Brain boosted, he not only finishes his novel but gets kick-ass fighting skills and makes a fortune on the stock market.

### SLO-MO

**Dredd**

► Inhaling this caramel-coloured liquid affects your perception of reality, so that everything seems to be moving at 1% of the speed it usually does – and not in the rubbish Sunday-afternoon-watching-*Bargain Hunt* way.



## Extant Season One

Not Berry good

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 2 February

2014 | TBC | Blu-ray/DVD

Creator: Mickey Fisher

Cast: Halle Berry, Goran Visnjic, Pierce Gagnon, Michael O'Neill, Hiroyuki Sanada



### THE LATEST

Spielberg-produced telefantasy series feels like the result of some BOGOF offer on SF plots that have passed their expiration date.

Though lavishly produced, *Extant* is little more than *AI* meets *Lifeorce* with some wincingly-obvious parental metaphors grafted on in an attempt to give it a veneer of depth. John Woods (Goran Visnjic) is the scientist "dad" to prototype android Ethan. His wife Molly (Halle Berry) is an astronaut who returns from space impregnated with a perception-altering alien baby.

Over the course of ten episodes there are, perhaps, a couple of



Always take the time to coordinate your spacesuit with the station decor.

moments when the series might have something interesting to say, but these are buried under some of the clunkiest conspiracy-based action-adventure plotting ever committed to screen. The two plots *never* complement each other on a thematic level. Instead, ultimately they seem to be nothing more than a happy coincidence, so that one can provide the resolution to the other.

Berry, with the most irritating fringe and impractical heels ever, is utterly unconvincing as a wife, astronaut, action hero and, indeed,

actress, playing crucial moments like Jennifer Aniston in a light comedy. The lad paying Ethan is wonderfully odd, the effects are top-notch and there's some impressive production design (a lot of the near-future tech looks like leftovers from a *Minority Report* brainstorm), but overall, *Extant* is spirit-sappingly derivative.

**EXTRAS:** A gag reel, trailers and seven featurettes on all the usual behind-the-scenes gubbins (totalling 89 minutes), but thankfully no gallery of Goran Visnjic's horrible cardigans.

**Dave Golder**

### DRINKING GAME

TAKE A SWIG OF YOUR ROMULAN ALE EVERY TIME...

- Someone gives a speech about evolution.
- Halle Berry runs from an enemy in stupidly high heels.
- Goran Visnjic wears a new ghastly cardigan.
- Halle Berry has to wipe her ridiculous fringe out of her eyes.
- Somebody reveals they have artificial limbs.
- Ethan "humorously" misunderstands human traits.
- Halle Berry says, "It's my BABY!"
- Goran Visnjic says, "He's our SON!"
- Somebody dead pops up for a cameo.

## Intruders Season One

Mastering life after death

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2014 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD

Creator: Glen Morgan

Cast: John Simm, Mira Sorvino, Tory Kittles, James Frain, Millie Brown



### IN MANY WAYS

this BBC America/BBC Two co-production resembles another transatlantic partnership. It revolves

around a shock revelation about death, and a secret controlled by a small, powerful elite. A key character's a sleazeball who does horrible things to kids. The lead was a recurring guest on *Doctor Who*; the exec producers are alumni too. Hang on... it's *Torchwood: Miracle Day* all over again!

This dark, gritty paranormal thriller isn't quite as bewilderingly all-over-the-shop as Captain Jack's last hurrah, though. John Simm is

Jack Harkn... sorry, Whelan, a Troubled Ex-Cop drawn into a web of conspiracy after his missus (Mira Sorvino) starts acting out of character: speaking Russian; stroking her arms like they're new to her and, most disturbing of all, suddenly developing a liking for jazz. Her soul's been displaced by one of the Qui Reverti,

a secret society who've mastered how to return after death. And she's not the only one...

Simm does his best with a character painted in broad strokes ("I've got anger issues! Look, I just punched the French doors!"), but he's overshadowed by Millie Brown as Madison, a nine-year-old possessed by a centuries-old serial killer. The physicality of her performance impresses: when she flashes a murderous glare, or flops down in a chair like a geezer, legs spread apart, you buy it. And watching a little girl cuss like a docker never gets old.



"What are we up to? Oh, just casually hanging around a warehouse. You?"

## The series' mythology remains resistant to logic

*Intruders* has its flaws, though. Jack is annoyingly resistant to the truth. After eight episodes, the series' mythology remains both out of focus and resistant to logic. And there's something faintly disrespectful about the use of historical figures – one returnee is jazz musician Bix Beiderbecke. But the major frustration is that it takes a big idea with global implications, and manages to make it seem small. All too often the focus is on internecine warfare between the Qui Reverti and their hitmen lackeys; as a result the stakes never seem as substantial as they should.

**EXTRAS:** One measly talking heads intro featurette (10 minutes).

**Ian Berriman**

? The first half of the season follows Michael Marshall Smith's 2007 novel *The Intruders*; the second half veers away from it.



# The Rover

Sad Max

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!

2014 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD

Director: David Michôd

Cast: Guy Pearce, Robert Pattinson, Scoot McNairy, Gillian Jones



## BELIEVE EVERYTHING

you see on the big screen and you'd be forgiven for thinking there's never been a more wretched hive of scum and villainy than the Australian outback.

True to the desolate desert's on-screen legacy, the Oz of *The Rover* seems like an extraordinarily unpleasant place to live. Ten years after a catastrophic financial collapse, it's a nation without hope. US dollars and the business end of a dusty rifle are the only accepted forms of currency. No one looks like they've even heard of soap, let alone used it.

**A simple tale of revenge stretched to breaking point**

Enter Eric (Guy Pearce), a man whose life is located at the bottom of a bottle, and then gets worse. After stopping at a dingy watering hole Eric's car is stolen – prompting a pedestrian, but blood-filled, pursuit across the barren landscape. Along the way Eric picks up Robert Pattinson's Rey, the left-for-dead younger brother of Scoot McNairy's car thief, leading the two to strike up an unconventional partnership.

It's a minimalist tale more concerned with minutiae and atmosphere than sweeping plot developments. Tonally and in terms of action it's much closer to *The Road* than the costumed theatrics of the *Mad Max* films. Guy Pearce is dependably great as the brooding spirit of vengeance driven to get his car back at any cost, while Pattinson impresses as Rey, the tricky drawl and mess of mannerisms a lifetime away from sparkly vamp Edward Cullen.

It's beautifully staged and shot by David Michôd, who captures bleak tragedy in every frame. But for all the talent on both sides of the camera, the film has nothing to say. It's a simple tale of revenge stretched to breaking point that fails to engage for large swathes as a result. It only just feels like it's in *SFX* territory too, the world so thinly sketched you wonder why they even bothered with the five-minutes-in-the-future set-up. A missed opportunity.

**EXTRAS:** A director's commentary and a dull 45-minute Making Of. **Jordan Farley**

**?** Actor Joel Edgerton (Owen Lars in the *Star Wars* prequels) co-wrote the script with David Michôd, but doesn't star.



"No – I've got better facial hair!"

# Defiance Season Two

UKIP's nightmare: alien immigrants you can't send home

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

**Release Date:** 19 January

2014 | 18 | Blu-ray/DVD

Creator: Rockne S O'Bannon

Cast: Grant Bowler, Stephanie Leonidas, Julie Benz, Jaime Murray, Tony Curran



## SEASON ONE OF

*Defiance* ended on a bum note, as Syfy's gritty, witty and slightly pervy series about humans and various alien races being forced to coexist on a post-apocalyptic Earth quickly went all epic fantasy. Gods, resurrections and prophecies suddenly took precedence over the crime, politics and rutting that had dominated most of the series.

Season two not only returns to what the show does best – the crimes get grimmer, the politics get twistier and the sex gets pervier – but also seems desperate to try to rebalance

the fantasy excesses by giving them an SF rationale. It partially succeeds... until the season finale collapses under the weight of its own pretensions.

So, for example, watching deposed mayor of Defiance Amanda Rosewater become a drug addict who falls for the dubious charms of the smarmy publicity-whore who's been installed as the new mayor is far more

fun than watching "little wolf" Irisa turn into some kind of techno-prophet. In fact, Irisa, one of the best characters in season one, is hobbled here by mostly looking confused and/or sulky, separated from the other characters with whom she used to interact so sparkily.

The show's other breakout characters, such as the conniving (and

wonderfully sarcastic) alien doctor Yewll, just get better and better, though. Meanwhile, Datak and Stahma Tarr, the mutually untrusting husband and wife Mafia boss-style Castithans, continue to outsmart each other at every turn and make bath time into a full contact sport. There's also a new nightclub for humans who want to crossdress as aliens, murder mysteries, and twists galore. And aside from a few dodgy CG effects the show looks amazing, with some gorgeously grungy production design.

It seems odd to want a show to be less ambitious, but *Defiance* definitely works better when it's dealing with the everyday nitty gritty of its characters rather than big concepts.

**EXTRAS:** An alternate ending for season one (four minutes), deleted scenes (24 minutes), a gag reel (seven minutes), a behind-the-scenes look at the show in the company of actor Jesse Rath (22 minutes), and five minisodes – "The Lost Ones" – which bridge the gap between seasons one and two (25 minutes). **Dave Golder**

**?** There are several real-life communities called Defiance in the USA, including the one where frontiersman Daniel Boone died.



The unlabelled filing cabinet came as a terrible blow.





The Happy Mondays audience were weary but contented.

## The Boxtrolls

Making good use of the things that they find

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

**Release Date:** 26 January

2014 | PG | Blu-ray 3D & Blu-ray/DVD

**Directors:** Graham Annable, Anthony Stacchi

**Cast:** Ben Kingsley, Isaac Hempstead Wright, Elle Fanning, Jared Harris, Nick Frost



### FROM THE

studio behind *Coraline* – and thus filmed in gorgeous stopmotion – *The Boxtrolls* is a

thoroughly entertaining adventure featuring a race of creatures kids will love to bits. The Boxtrolls live under the streets of the little town of Cheesebridge and emerge at night to collect all the interesting rubbish they can find. The citizens, rather than seeing them for the useful recyclers that they are, are terrified, particularly since the Boxtrolls once apparently stole a baby...

That baby is now a little boy named Eggs (Isaac Hempstead Wright), who gets pally with the

mayor's daughter (Elle Fanning) just as her dad's rule is threatened by the nasty Archibald Snatcher (Ben Kingsley). Snatcher wants to run things and, to get the townsfolk on his side, launches a campaign to round up the Boxtrolls. Boo! Hiss!

The voice cast are perfect, with Richard Ayoade in particular providing giggles as a thoughtful henchman. The production design is beautifully gothic, there are laughs by the bucketload and the animation is utterly divine. Witty, sweet and cute, you'll love *The Boxtrolls* as much as a cat loves an empty box.

**EXTRAS:** On the Blu-ray (rated): commentary by the directors; six animatic sequences (with commentary, 19 minutes); a five-part behind-the-scenes piece (33 minutes); six short featurettes. On DVD: nada. **Meg Wilde**

? The film is based on *Here Be Monsters!*, a book by Alan Snow. He once made tea for Tears For Fears (as a studio technician).



"Game of Pictionary?"

## Ganja & Hess

The arthouse *Blacula*

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

**Release Date:** 26 January

1973 | 18 | Dual-format Blu-ray & DVD

**Director:** Bill Gunn

**Cast:** Duane Jones, Marlene Clark, Bill Gunn, Sam Waymon



### THANKS TO ITS

African-American cast and crew and use of vampirism, *Ganja & Hess* is often bracketed with blaxploitation horrors. But writer/director Bill Gunn's cult curio has none of the camp appeal of *Blacula*. This is an avowedly avant-garde effort, with all the attendant idiosyncrasies and frustrations that implies.

*Night Of The Living Dead*'s Duane Jones is Dr Hess Green, a dapper, moneyed anthropologist who's cursed with a taste for blood when his new assistant stabs him with an ancient ceremonial dagger. After said assistant commits suicide, his widow Ganja comes looking – and very soon hooks up with Hess.

Languid pacing, opaque editing strategies, a weirdly diffident central performance, and Gunn's total lack of interest in the genre thrills he was hired to provide test your patience. At times it's hard to tell whether it's the work of a total incompetent or a Godardian provocateur. Possibly both.

But there are moments that reward your effort: a striking image here; a poetic monologue there. And the score, which takes African chanting and treats it with echo to lend it a shimmering psychedelic resonance, is a triumph.

**EXTRAS:** Commentary by Marlene Clark (Ganja), the cinematographer, the composer and a producer; 29 minutes of talking heads; the screenplay; a booklet. Be warned: the film's been pieced together from various prints, and often looks pretty ropery. **Ian Berriman**

? Spike Lee's latest film, *Da Sweet Blood Of Jesus*, is a remake of *Ganja & Hess*. It's due for release on 13 February.

## ROUND-UP

### ATLANTIS SERIES TWO, PART ONE

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!

2014 | 12 | Blu-ray/DVD



So far, series two of *Merlin* – in-Greek-cosplay has been all about swordfights in dodgy day-for-night filming and wandering around deserts and caves with wounded colleagues. Still little sign of much water – this is called Atlantis, for Poseidon's sake – and the plots are more derivative than a Boyzone setlist. But the banter between the three leads is fun. It's just a shame the show is so unadventurous when it comes to its scripts. Oh, and has everybody forgotten that Jason is from the future?

### DARK HOUSE

**Release Date:** 5 January

2014 | 18 | DVD



*Jeepers Creepers* director Victor Salva's latest follows Nick (Luke Kleintank), a guy who can tell if you're going to die a violent death simply by touching you, a power which may be inherited. That's just one element of a plot which also encompasses a house that can move about of its own accord, a holy war between demons and angels, and a bunch of lumbering, axe-wielding maniacs led by *Saw*'s Jigsaw, Tobin Bell. When so many direct-to-video movies are lacking in any ideas it may seem churlish to chide one for having too many, but there's simply too much going on in *Dark House* for it to have any hope of achieving coherence.

### METROPOLIS ULTIMATE COLLECTOR'S EDITION

**Release Date:** 19 January

1927 | PG | Blu-ray



A new two-disc Blu-ray Steelbook edition of Fritz Lang's silent classic. Like the previous Blu-ray release, it includes a restoration making use of a print discovered in Argentina in 2008, featuring 25 minutes of footage once thought lost. The extras previously available (expert commentary, 53-minute documentary, 56-page booklet) are joined by *Metropolis Refound*, a 45-minute documentary about the print's rediscovery; disco producer Giorgio Moroder's electropop makeover of the film; and a vintage behind-the-scenes documentary about that 1984 version (18 minutes).

### RESURRECTION OF THE MUMMY

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!

2014 | 15 | DVD

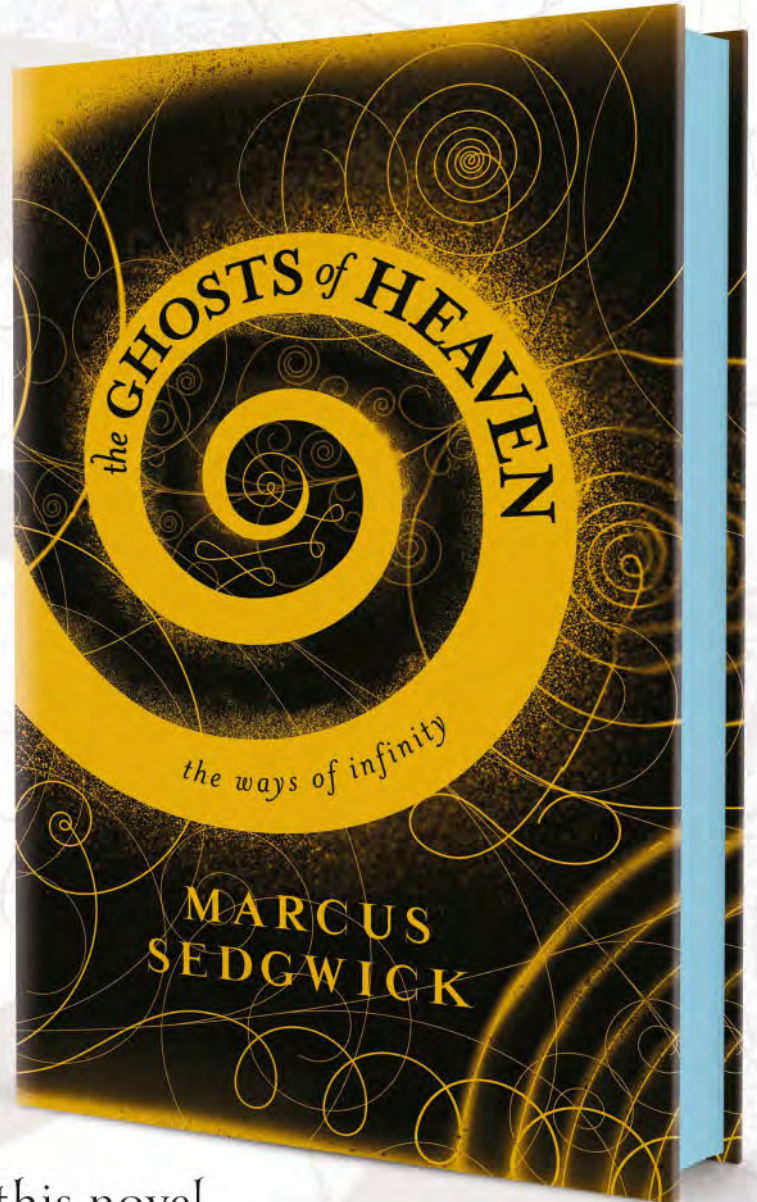
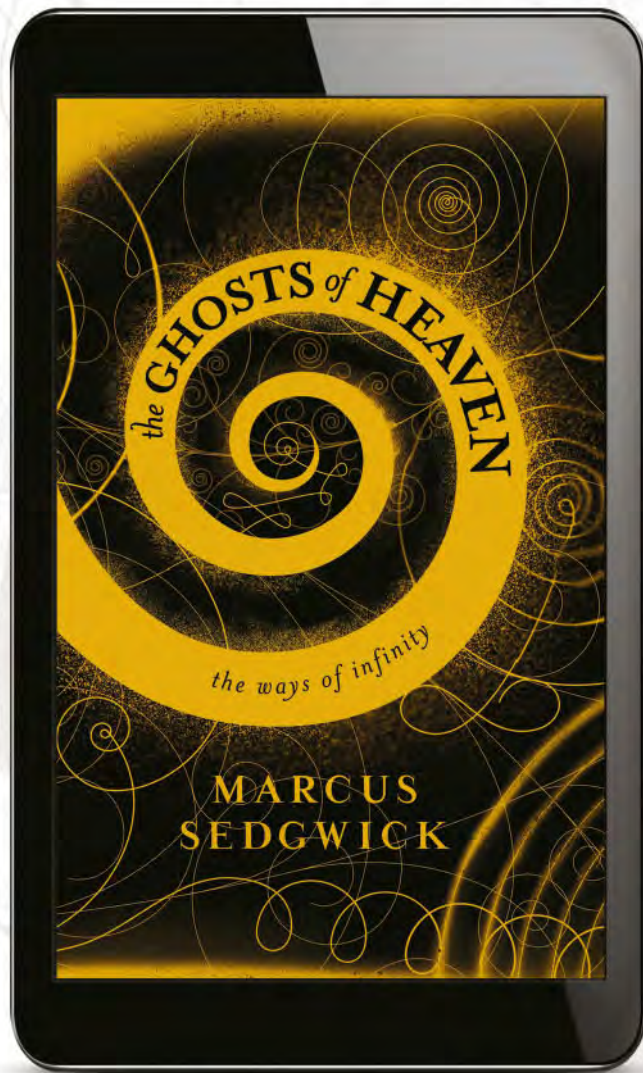


Beware, fans of the Universal franchise starring Brendan Fraser: don't be suckered into giving this entirely unrelated movie (also known as *The Mummy Resurrected*) a try. The slender plot sees six young women visiting the tomb of a sorcerer, then being picked off one by one as they're stalked by a mummy. The acting is pretty terrible (none of the girls seems particularly concerned by their friends' deaths), characters act in a bewildering way, and there are massive plot holes. To be fair, the mummy design is decent, but then it doesn't even show up until about 50 minutes in.



# No beginning. No end.

Discover the path to infinity.



There are four quarters to this novel.

They can be read in any order  
and the story will work.

*Whisper. Witch. Hell. Song.*  
Which path to infinity will you take?



[www.fiercefiction.tumblr.com](http://www.fiercefiction.tumblr.com)

Pick up or download  
your copy today  
#GhostsOfHeaven



## Six Gothic Tales

They ushered in a new age of horror

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!

1960-1964 | 12 | Blu-ray

Director: Roger Corman

Cast: Vincent Price, Peter Lorre, Boris Karloff, Basil Rathbone, Lon Chaney Jr, Elizabeth Shepherd



### BETWEEN

1960 and 1964, B-movie king Roger Corman directed eight Edgar Allen Poe

films. This box set presents three quarters of the cycle, all starring Vincent Price, four of them here making their UK HD debut.

The connection to the author's work is often tenuous; indeed, one is more an HP Lovecraft film. All six are compendiums of the crepuscular: misty moors, cobwebs, secret passages, black cats, random tarantulas, decaying mansions tumbling down in flames.

The first, *The Fall Of The House Of Usher*, is probably the best, a deeply Freudian tale of burial alive with troubling undercurrents of incest. *The Pit And The Pendulum*, which bolts a two-act prelude onto a tableau of torture, works well enough, but feels rather like an *Usher* remix.

*Tales Of Terror* takes the anthology route. Adapting three stories, it stumbles with a crudely comedic take on "The Black Cat", but recovers with an unsettling adaptation of "The Facts In The Case Of M Valdemar", thanks largely to a commanding turn by Basil Rathbone as a maniacal mesmerist.

After his fourth Poe film Corman was wearying of the format; thankfully this led him to mix things up from then on. So *The Raven* is goofy horror-comedy, a tale of squabbling sorcerers which delightfully pokes fun at genre trappings – "Hard place to clean, huh?", Peter Lorre cracks of a cobwebbed crypt. Its climactic battle, in which Price and Boris Karloff trade optical-effect magic attacks, is an utter delight.

*The Haunted Palace* deviates even further, being more an adaptation of Lovecraft's "The Strange Case Of Charles Dexter Ward"; though it still channels Poe, a sequence featuring eyeless mutants, offspring of human women and the old gods, feels jarringly of the Cthulhu mythos. The split role it provides Price, as a gentle man possessed by a cruel ancestor, is one of his best. Finally,

after seven films confined to sound stages (a deliberate choice, to weave an unreal atmosphere), *The Tomb Of Ligeia*, shot in England, lets loose Corman's camera to scamper along with a fox hunt and roam a ruined abbey. Scripted by *Chinatown*'s Robert Towne, it feels liberated in another way too, with a surprisingly independently-minded heroine.

Certain themes repeat with clockwork regularity: physical and mental corruption; families cursed to repeat the past; a morbid fascination with death. Corman's penny-pinching means sets and shots recur too; déjà vu descends whenever a mysteriously combustible castle erupts into

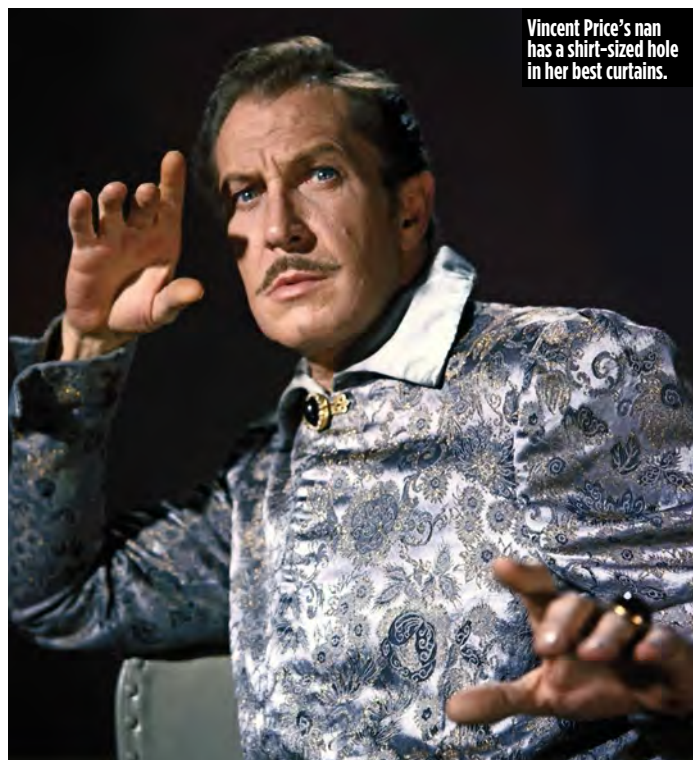
## All six films are compendiums of the crepuscular

familiar-looking flames. This means a marathon viewing session is best avoided, but watched in isolation, all six films succeed.

**EXTRAS:** An impressive array, too many to list here. They include six commentaries across four films (*Usher* and *Ligeia* each have a pair); one of these (on *The Haunted Palace* by Price's biographer) is new, the others carried over from previous releases. There are ten interviews (144 minutes); four of which (all with *Ligeia* crew) are new. Three new featurettes (67 minutes) are all talking heads with critics, with Kim Newman sounding forth a little ramblingly on first Poe and then Lovecraft adaptations, and Anne Billson talking cats in horror.

These bonuses are a little hit and miss: audio quality on one of the *Ligeia* commentaries is offputtingly poor, while a German documentary on Peter Lorre's career from 1984 is plodding and pretentious – still, their inclusion will satisfy completists. And there are gems too, like an insightful new interview with Corman's assistant on *Ligeia*, or a short promo record for *The Raven* which amusingly presents it as "an adventure into monstrous terror".

Plus, the accompanying booklet is superb: 200 pages long, it includes intelligent essays on all the films and one final treat: reproductions of the tie-in comic adaptations of three of the films. **Ian Berriman**



Vincent Price's nan has a shirt-sized hole in her best curtains.



## Remember Me

A Ghost Story Before Christmas

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!

2014 | 15 | DVD

Director: Ashley Pierce

Cast: Jodie Comer, Michael Palin, Mark Addy, Julia Sawalha, Sheila Hancock



### BAFFLINGLY

scheduled in the run-up to Christmas when once it would have been parachuted right into the middle of it, this MR James-styled chiller made most of its headlines by being the series that welcomed Michael Palin back to dramatic acting. As eightysomething Tom, he's absolutely the reason to watch, giving a tender and sweetly vulnerable performance that belies his relatively youthful 71 years.

As the teenage nurse at the centre of it all, Jodie Comer easily holds her own alongside a veteran-heavy cast, though Mark Addy's journey from regular put-upon copper to someone who can talk about ghosts without raising an eyebrow takes some hard swallowing.

As a ghost story, Gwyneth Hughes's three-parter seems to have been given more space than it needed. Supernatural fiction often needs some breathing space for atmosphere, but *Remember Me*'s favoured shots of dripping taps, mantelpieces groaning with old photos and moody shots of the Yorkshire skyline do feel tediously patience-testing after a while.

It's certainly nice to look at, with some handsomely composed shots courtesy of cinematographer Tony Miller, but it's all so leaden and self-conscious. Though Hughes and director Ashley Pierce should be commended for bucking the cliché and locating so many of their scares in broad daylight, *Remember Me*'s lumpish pace only reminds you quite how beautifully economical those old BBC MR James adaptations of the '70s were.

**EXTRAS:** None. **Steve O'Brien**

**?** Filming *The Raven*, Jack Nicholson endured an ordure ordeal: "The raven we used shit endlessly over everybody and everything."

**?** Michael Palin's last dramatic role was in *GBH*, which includes a hilarious sequence set at a *Doctor Who* convention.



# CHEVRON 8.2

MEET THE STARS OF STARGATE APRIL 24TH - 26TH 2015, RADISSON EDWARDIAN BLU, HEATHROW



CHUCK CAMPBELL  
CHUCK



CONNOR TRINNEER  
MICHAEL



DÁVID BLUE  
ELI WALLACE



CORIN NEMEC  
JONAS QUINN



MICHAEL ADAMTHWAITE  
HER'AC



TICKETS AVAILABLE

ONLINE NOW!

3 DAY TICKETS

FROM ONLY £88!

GO GOLD AND  
JOIN THE GUESTS  
FOR OUR GOLD  
WINE RECEPTION!



JAY ACOVONE  
CHARLES KOWALSKI



KIRIA CLAVELL  
AMATERASU



CARLOS LANCHU  
ANUBIS



PHOTO SHOTS  
AUTOGRAPH SESSIONS  
DEALERS ROOM  
EXCLUSIVE GOODIES  
AND MORE!

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE  
[WWW.MASSIVEEVENTS.CO.UK/CHEVRON82](http://WWW.MASSIVEEVENTS.CO.UK/CHEVRON82)



## MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER CON



FRI 20TH - SUN 22ND FEBRUARY 2015 - HILTON BIRMINGHAM METROPOLE  
A 3 DAY CONVENTION FOR FANS OF THE POWER RANGERS



PAUL SCHRIER



STEVE CARDENAS



JOHNNY BOSCH



JASON FAUNT



JASON NARVY



GET YOUR PHOTO TAKEN  
WITH YOUR FAVOURITE RANGERS  
IN OUR PROFESSIONAL  
PHOTO SESSIONS!



CERINA VINCENT



ERIN CAHILL



NAKIA BURRISE

WEEKEND TICKETS PACKAGES  
AVAILABLE FROM ONLY £88.  
PACKAGES INCLUDE TALKS,  
ACCESS TO DEALERS ROOM,  
AUTOGRAPHS AND MORE!

FOR MORE INFO & T&Cs  
PLEASE VISIT THE WEBSITE!

[WWW.MASSIVEEVENTS.CO.UK/POWERCON](http://WWW.MASSIVEEVENTS.CO.UK/POWERCON)

Guests subject to work commitments. These events are unofficial events ran for fans of the subject matter. Images are used for promotional purposes only and no copyright or trademark infringement is intended.



## BLU-RAY DEBUT

## The Thief Of Bagdad

Pure genie-us

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

1940 | U | Blu-ray

Directors: Various

Cast: Sabu, June Duprez, Conrad Veidt



**BILLED AS "THE** wonder picture of all time!", *The Thief Of Bagdad* isn't short on ambition.

This remake of 1924's Douglas Fairbanks swashbuckler was mounted by British movie impresario Alexander Korda and burned through the talents of no less than six directors, including the brilliant Michael Powell (*The Red Shoes*).

So it's no surprise that it dreams in Technicolor, drunk on the possibilities of cinema, still such a young artform in 1940. It conjures a storybook world where Sultans' palaces seem carved from nougat and ancient mythology melts into Art Deco splendor. There are minarets and elephants, flying



carpets and laughing genies, monstrous spiders in mountain temples and mechanical horses soaring over a Basra that only Scheherazade knew.

It's an absolute cake of a film. And while the love story may be sugar-rich, Conrad Veidt's icy sorcerer makes for a compelling antagonist, more thwarted romantic lead than generically hissable villain. Plucky boy daredevil Sabu has enough charisma to ignite the screen and the effects still crackle with a pioneering wow.

Be warned, though: the refrain of Sabu's sea shanty ("I want to be a bandit/Can't you understand it?") will stalk your head for days.

**EXTRAS:** Trailer, image gallery, poster gallery. **Nick Setchfield**

**?** Vivien Leigh was the original choice to play the princess, but then won the role of Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone With The Wind*.

## Dead Snow 2: Red Vs Dead

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 12 January

2014 | 18 | Blu-ray/DVD



## TOMMY

Wirkola's sequel to his 2009 Nazi zombie horror begins by pulling a *Halloween II*:

picking up exactly where we left off, then putting the hero into hospital. Thereafter the MO is to ramp up the scale, as the undead stormtroopers attack a small town. This time they have a tank...

Pitting this rotten Reich against resurrected Red Army soldiers feels old hat given that *Outpost III* played the same card, and the addition of a trio of *Star Wars*-quoting American geeks feels like pandering to the US market.

Fortunately, the physical humour hits the bullseye, with plenty of gory deaths that simultaneously make you wince and guffaw.

**EXTRAS:** Director/co-writer commentary; an amusing short; an effects breakdown. **Ian Berriman**

## Honeymoon

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 26 January

2014 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD



## AFTER THE

most adorable DIY wedding any hipster couple could ever dream up, newlyweds

Bea (Rose Leslie) and Paul (Harry Treadaway) head to a cabin in the woods for a budget honeymoon. At first, it's great – the cabin is old-fashioned but secluded, and all they're really interested in is one another anyway. Then, one night, Bea sleepwalks out into the forest, and what she encounters changes everything...

*Honeymoon* takes its time establishing its characters. The chemistry between the two leads is palpable and their relationship believable, if overly cutesy. The tension builds slowly as things get gradually weirder, then it all pays off sickeningly; you'll need a strong stomach. And though the ending won't answer all your questions, emotionally it's devastating.

**EXTRAS:** Two outtakes and a trailer. **Sarah Dobbs**

## As Above, So Below

Tunnel vision

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2014 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD

Director: John Erick Dowdle

Cast: Perdita Weeks, Ben Feldman, Edwin Hodge, François Civil, Marion Lambert

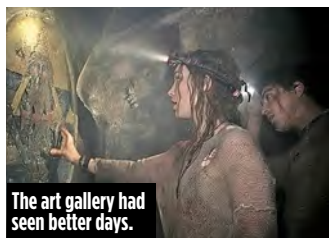


## A BRITISH

academic leads a scary jaunt into the Catacombs beneath Paris on a hunt for real-life alchemist

Nicholas Flamel and his immortality-granting philosopher's stone. Obsessed archaeology professor Scarlett Marlowe (Perdita Weeks) may have elements of Indiana Jones in her DNA, but *As Above, So Below* is a very different kind of movie, a creepy, low-budget horror that succeeds in unsettling without ever quite managing to give you the genuine willies.

The writing/directing/producing Dowdle brothers (*Quarantine*, *Devil*) shot in the Catacombs for real, and they mine the dark and claustrophobia of Paris's labyrinthine



The art gallery had seen better days.

subterranean tunnel system for all it's worth. They also give the found-footage subgenre a new lease of life, making the characters' individual POVs and personal camera lights key to the storytelling.

Unfortunately the scares – a mix of psychological horror, ancient myths reheated, and weird figures lurking in the corner of your eye – have little real structure, and by the final act the movie feels more like a fairground haunted house ride than a story, throwing shocks at you with little rhyme or reason.

**EXTRAS:** The Blu-ray release (rated) comes with only "Inside As Above, So Below", a sub-four-minute featurette that gives the briefest snapshot of the movie's origins. The DVD has zero. **Richard Edwards**

**?** In the *Harry Potter* books, Nicholas Flamel is an old friend of Albus Dumbledore; he plays a big role in *The Philosopher's Stone*.

## Beyond

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 12 January

2014 | 15 | DVD



## THIS IS A

battle of two awkward indie performances, as Richard J Danum (Cole) – haunted,

understated, dark – locks horns with Gillian MacGregor (Maya) – unpleasant but eventually sympathetic. The pair squabble and squirm their way through a fraught relationship, one knitted as the Earth is threatened, and unravelling under the pressure of broken parenthood and the struggles of impending doom.

Jumping back and forth between bleak pre- and post-apocalyptic threads, *Beyond* is a pretty uncomfortable watch. Various symbolism scattered throughout collides into the marginally unsatisfying conclusion, and it doesn't make a vast point outside of its own bubble, but since the film also doesn't overstay its welcome it deserves a pass.

**EXTRAS:** A trailer. **Alex Cox**

## Left Behind

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

2014 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD



## YOU'D THINK

that any Rapture-themed movie to be blessed with Nicolas Cage's presence would be overflowing

with boggle-eyed freak-out moments. But the Cage we get here just looks bored and weary, like a once wild-limbed puppet who's had his strings snapped. Despite Cage's 15-year reputation suicide, this a new nadir, a clunkily directed and deadeningly po-faced apocalyptic drama with a beefy Christian message.

It's based on a crazily popular series of Biblically inspired novels co-written by evangelical minister Tim LaHaye. Now, there's nothing wrong with Christian-fuelled stories, but as non-believers like Cage's adulterous air captain are left to burn on Earth, *Left Behind* delivers its God report in such a sanctimonious way it stands little chance of converting non-believers.

**EXTRAS:** None. **Steve O'Brien**



# THE COMPLETE iPad Gift Pack

Everything you need to get the very best  
from your Apple tablet is here!

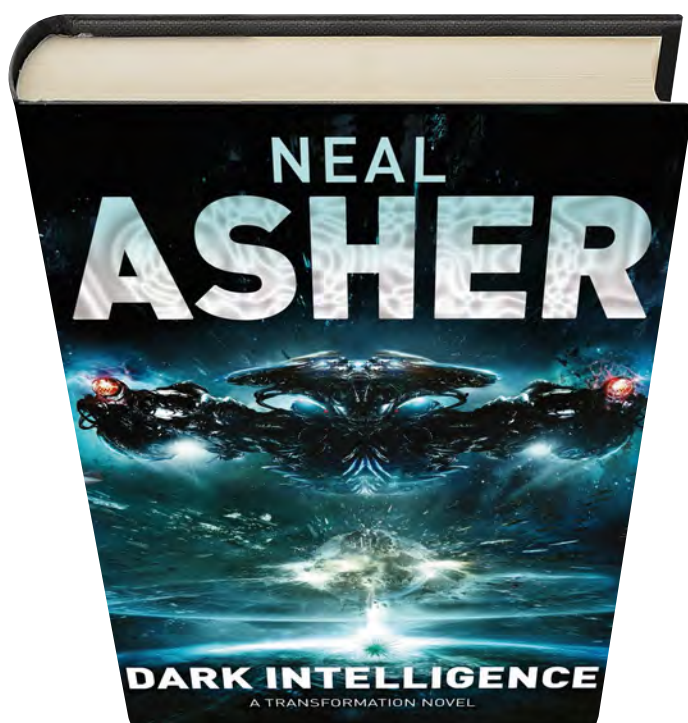


**94** Inspiring apps that will improve your creative side

**ON SALE NOW**

[www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/GiftPacks](http://www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/GiftPacks)





# Dark Intelligence

Ch-ch-ch-ch changes

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 29 January

400 pages | Hardback/ebook

Author: Neal Asher

Publisher: Tor

**THE POLITY BOOKS HAVE** never been for the faint-hearted. Replete with über-violence, more gore than you'd find on a planet-sized abattoir and the nagging sense that something horrible might happen at any moment, these are SF novels that mix early cyberpunk's insouciance with the widescreen baroque spectacle of space opera and the pacing of an airport action-thriller.

But even by Neal Asher's standards, there's something particularly grisly about *Dark Intelligence*, the first book of his new Transformation series. That's because, as the name suggests, grotesque transformations underpin the story. In particular, we get to look on as gangster Isobel Satomi – not a lady you'd willingly spend time with – is transformed into a Hooder, a vast predator. At which point it may help to quote Asher's own blog:

"Take a human spine and graft a horseshoe crab on the end of it, and you're about there." Lovely.

As to why she's undergoing such a metamorphosis, this is rooted in her own greed, stupidity and lust for power – she's someone who asks for help without thinking too deeply on what the price extracted for assistance might be – yet also in her encounters with a rogue AI, Penny Royal (of whom more later), and a former soldier, Thorvald Spear.

It's Spear we meet first, as he's reawakened when a "memcrystal" containing his personality is found after long years lost. As he comes back to life in a new body, even though he's rich (what with salary having accrued while he's been out of action), Spear isn't in a good mood. Haunted by terrible memories of combat and the aftermath of capture, he wants revenge against Penny Royal, which he blames for turning on its own side when it was sent to rescue Spear and his colleagues from a showdown with Prador forces (this time think genocidal alien crabs bristling with weaponry).

Penny Royal (a name derived from a herb used to induce abortions, which at the very least suggests self-image issues), is thus set up as the baddie here, a crazy, scarily powerful intelligence that needs to be wiped from the universe for the sake of everyone else. And yet *Dark Intelligence* is a novel where things are rarely as they seem, where even memory itself, so easy to tinker with, can be unreliable. That's not to say Penny Royal isn't dangerous – it is – but who's to say what its motivations might be?

It's a book where there are far more ambiguities than the action-driven plot, which essentially charts Spear's hunt for Penny Royal and Isobel's hunt for them both, might initially suggest. All to the good... and yet this in itself also highlights the novel's chief weakness. Bear with us here because this may initially seem churlish, but Asher is a novelist who dearly loves to entertain, to construct setpieces where things explode in spectacular and crowd-pleasing fashion. The trouble is that all this surface noise too often seems somehow to distract from the world he's creating. Imagine visiting a theme park and spending literally every moment on the rides.

It's a double shame because many of the underlying ideas here – that

## There are far more ambiguities than the action-driven plot might suggest

when people (using the word here to encompass all manner of clever creatures) change form, their perspective changes; that people's perspective on the past shapes what they do in the present and the plans they make for the future – cry out for the more careful exploration that, say, Iain M Banks would have given them.

Perhaps this will be addressed in future books, but for now you're left wondering whether Asher being so good at what he does might just be holding him back from doing other things better.

**Jonathan Wright**

❓ Asher says the Prador grew from a "long-time love of sea-life – especially the kind of stuff you find under rocks at low tide".



## By Your Command Volume Two

Heavy enough to stun a skinjob

★★★★★

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!

655 pages | Paperback

Authors: Alan Stevens and Fiona Moore

Publisher: Telos

**WITH BLOOD & CHROME**

deactivated and no further spin-offs planned, it's a funny time for an in-depth book on *Battlestar Galactica*. Still, distance does at least mean that *By Your Command* can claim to be comprehensive. Well, you'd certainly hope it is – it's bleedin' enormous.

While the first volume looked at the original series, this second concentrates entirely on Ronald D Moore's edgy, politically-charged reboot. Every episode gets a detailed synopsis and critical analysis, while the series' arcs and themes are also probed. Short-lived spinoffs *Caprica* and *Blood & Chrome* are covered – though not in nearly as much depth – but most intriguing is a chapter detailing Bryan Singer's aborted TV reboot.

Facts come thick and fast, and Stevens and Moore's accessible style makes the book easy to dip in and out of. Did you know that *Serenity* makes a fly-by in the miniseries? Or that the show was originally intended to feature 24-style split-screen? Even if you did, the sheer density of information means that you're bound to discover something new.

Episode guides are rather redundant in this age of series-specific wikis, and there's little need for the 20+ pages of cast and crew credits. But there's no denying the weight of information. This'll make a fine living room companion during marathon watches. **Will Salmon**

❓ In the '70s series *Pyramid*'s a card game and *Triad* a sport. The reboot mixed them up so they're the other way round.



# Saint Odd

Oddball but entertaining ending

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 15 January

442 pages | Hardback/ebook

Author: Dean Koontz

Publisher: HarperCollins

## DEAN KOONTZ'S ORIGINAL

paranormal pot-boiler, *Odd Thomas*, arrived back in 2003 and became an instant bestseller. Since then there's been a spin-off novella, a humdrum Hollywood movie, a trilogy of graphic novels and a series of sequels – of which *Saint Odd* is the seventh. This is also, apparently, the final instalment.

A wryly paradoxical conclusion is indicative of the sort of wit that fans of the franchise will probably come to miss the most. Odd Thomas himself, however, is not given the breathless send-off one might hope for. Instead, a considerable bulk of Koontz's latest book is spent with the likeable psychic making a slightly meandering return to his hometown of Pico Mundo, California, and grappling with the



loose ends of previous adventures. The desert setting provides a fittingly claustrophobic backdrop to Thomas's alienation and loneliness – and creates a dry sense of foreboding – but there's little here to make the reader feel uneasy. It's told in the first person, unfolding as an intimate and detailed travelogue, and the author knows how to make his pulpy subject matter seem urgent, but a general sense of suspense is missing.

The text might threaten “sex, savagery and satanic ceremony” but any such transgression is given little detail. This is unfortunate because, thematically, a bit more grit would have complemented the “all or nothing” sense of Thomas's ultimate challenge and search for inner peace. Moreover, despite some interesting encounters, from car chases to ravenous coyotes and creepy cultists, an overriding sense of lovelorn despair occasionally makes *Saint Odd* something of an endurance test.

Perhaps to keep the sense of mystery lingering, Koontz hangs almost every chapter on a cliffhanger – often with the promise of forthcoming anarchic chaos. Unfortunately, the biggest mystery is why it takes so long before the really interesting otherworldly insanity of this series begins to kick in. By this point, there seems to be little point in beginning the action with such a religious sense of restraint. That said, though, this is still Koontz on fine form – and the final payoff for his most enduring creation is positively saintly. **Calum Waddell**

Also out: “You Are Destined To Be Together Forever”, a short ebook which looks back to where it all began for Odd and Stormy.

## BULLET TIME

A BOOK IN BULLET POINTS

### DYSTOPIA

**Release Date:** 15 January

128 pages | Hardback

Author: Dave Golder

Publisher: Flame Tree Publishing

• The latest in the large-format Gothic Dreams series, which combine 60-odd illustrations (usually in the form of fantasy art) with 10,000 words of copy.

• This potted overview of the SF genre du jour seeks to define what a dystopia is, explore common themes and chart how the genre has developed, not only in literature but also in films, television and videogames.

• Along the way there are some attractive paintings of, for example, overgrown skyscrapers and a flooded London.

• Would make a good starting point for a young fan of *The Hunger Games* who's ready to have their horizons expanded.

• Long-time *SFX* editor Dave Golder wrote the text, so you should all buy a copy.

• In fact, buy two copies. Then give them away and buy two more.



# The Boy Who Wept Blood

Not quite a fantasy Renaissance

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 29 January

608 pages | Hardback/ebook

Author: Den Patrick

Publisher: Gollancz

## BASED IN AN ALTERNATE

version of 14th century Italy, Den Patrick's interesting but not entirely remarkable Erebus Sequence owes as much to *Game Of Thrones* as it does to *The Borgias*. This second volume takes place a decade after the conclusion of opening instalment *The Boy With The Porcelain Blade*, and the decade-long gap means that you don't necessarily have to be familiar with what has gone before.

Like Westeros, the mythical realm of Landfall is divided into a series of rival houses, who are predictably constantly at each other's throats; lead character Dino even has a miniature dragon that perches upon his shoulder. Like George RR Martin, Patrick dials down the fantastical elements to good effect, concentrating instead on the political shenanigans between the



opposing parties that occasionally erupt into vicious swordfights.

Patrick has a strong eye for character: the tender relationship between Dino and Anea, the mute Silent Queen, is particularly well drawn, while Dino's priggish reaction to being embroiled in a sordid conspiracy to expose another character's homosexuality is also deftly handled.

With some devastating revelations concerning the mysterious Erebus figure, the stage is set for the final part. Hopefully by then, the story will add up to more than the sum of its influences. **Stephen Jewell**

Den Patrick will be discussing the series at Waterstone's Piccadilly on Thursday 28 January. For tickets, call 0207 851 240.

# Macaque Attack

Monkey tragic

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 15 January

347 pages | Paperback/ebook

Author: Gareth L Powell

Publisher: Solaris

## ON PAPER, MACAQUE

*Attack* seems like it'll be a lot of fun. It's full of great ideas: a cigar-chomping military monkey who drops both f-bombs and real bombs! Parallel reality cyborg-assassins! A tough woman who's married to a hologram! But ideas aren't enough on their own; great stories need soul.

Perhaps we're naive to expect greatness from a plot that sounds like a YouTube supercut of several DTV '80s action flicks. Hell, this is the third part of an award-winning trilogy centring around a talking skyliner captain/monkey named Ack-Ack, for goodness sake. But just because it's about an army of multiverse-jumping monkeys facing an evil cyborg invasion doesn't mean it can't be well-written. *Macaque Attack*'s combination of genuinely fun B-movie concepts and clichéd description makes it a chore to get through. There's only so many



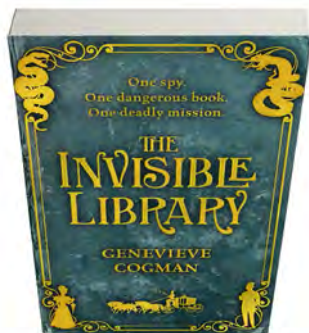
“Powerful muscles rippling like pistons” similes you can take before you start to feel your brains dribbling out of your nose. And motherf\*\*king Ack-Ack's f\*\*king tendency to effing eff every other effing word gets tiresome incredibly quickly.

It ends with a false epilogue (without it, the conclusion would be incredibly unsatisfactory) suggesting more to come, so we can only pray to Semos (god in the *Planet Of The Apes* series, a franchise that proves the potential of pulp primates) that this really is the end of Ack-Ack's adventures.

**Sam Ashurst**

Gareth's younger brother Huw is also an SF author: *Spacejacks*, the first book in a children's trilogy, came out last summer.





## The Invisible Library

Raiders Of The Lost Books

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 15 January  
330 pages | Paperback/ebook  
Author: Genevieve Cogman  
Publisher: Tor

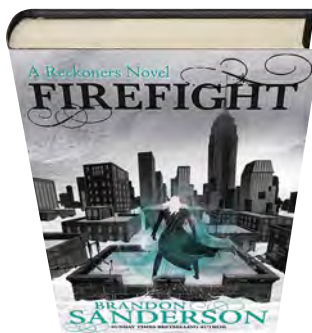
### THIS DELIGHTFUL

steampunk fantasy has so much fun with its central premise that we can only guess at the glorious ideas that *didn't* end up on the page because there wasn't enough room – but that's what sequels are for, hopefully.

*The Invisible Library* is the tale of a librarian named Irene who embarks upon quests to alternate worlds to bring back important books for safekeeping in a magical library. Each world is different: there are dragons, Fae, robotic alligators, Zeppelins, detectives who could give Sherlock Holmes a run for his money...

The only downside is a slight tendency to keep exposition scenes dragging on for too long, but that's a small issue in an otherwise marvellous debut. **Jayne Nelson**

**?** This is Cogman's first novel, though she's also written RPG sourcebooks. By day, she's a classifications specialist in the NHS.



## Firefight

Epic win

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 8 January  
432 pages | Hardback/ebook  
Author: Brandon Sanderson  
Publisher: Gollancz

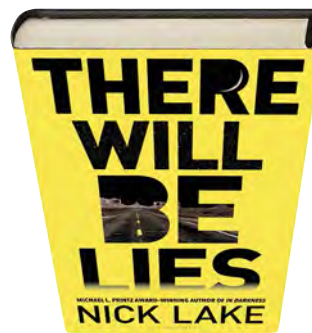
### BRANDON SANDERSON'S

Reckoners series has a compelling hook. What if normal people gained superpowers, and what if these new "Epics" didn't use them for good?

After defeating Steelheart in the fast-paced first book, *Steelslayer* David Charleston and the Reckoners return to face another superpowered villain. Leaving the steel city of Newcago, they journey to old New York where the Epic Regalia, a powerful hydromancer, rules the flooded, glow-in-the-dark remains of Manhattan island.

Like *Steelheart*, *Firefight* challenges the Reckoners to kill the villain and save the city. But how do you fight an Epic that can manipulate water? How do you defeat a man who can teleport away? It's another brisk YA fantasy from Sanderson – inventive, action-stuffed and surprising until the end. **Dean Evans**

**?** Also available: *Mitosís*, a novella set between books one and two, about a villain who can split himself into clones.



## There Will Be Lies

Rescuing the inner child

★★★★★

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!  
454 pages | Hardback/ebook  
Author: Nick Lake  
Publisher: Bloomsbury Children's

### AFTER BEING RUN OVER

by a car and taken on the run by her over-protective mother, homeschooled teenager Shelby Cooper comes to realise just how much of her life is built on lies...

This YA story could be a straight-up coming-of-age tale, were it not for the presence of Coyote, the Native American trickster god. Shelby repeatedly enters "The Dreaming", where Coyote tells her she has to rescue "the child" from "The Crone". The parallels between Shelby's life, in which she's forced to come to terms with a family she never knew she had, and her quest to save a stolen child in the Dreaming are clear (and possibly all too obvious). While the tale is well-constructed there's a lack of emotional depth that makes it all feel ultimately unsatisfying.

**Miriam McDonald**

**?** The part about The Dreaming came to Nick Lake in a dream. In it, he was Shelby and the coyote protected him.



## Frozen Charlotte

An army of Annabelles

★★★★★

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!  
354 pages | Paperback/ebook  
Author: Alex Bell  
Publisher: Stripes Publishing

### WITH SALES OF OUIJA

boards on the up and panicking priests warning off potential dabblers, this YA horror – the first in new range Red Eye – is well timed.

When Sophie and Jay play with a Ouija app they accidentally unleash something nasty. Traumatized, Sophie goes to stay with her uncle in the country. It's not a great move: he lives in a creepy old house with his weird kids and a collection of sinister dolls...

Annoyingly, the most intriguing idea here – the app – is left largely unexplored in favour of a grab-bag of horror tropes, some of which are more successful than others. Still, there are some satisfying ghost story scares and the dolls' dialogue is fun. Horror fans will find it tame, but it makes for a solid entry-level shocker. **Will Salmon**

**?** Frozen Charlotte dolls originated in late 19th/early 20th century North America. Male versions are called Frozen Charlies!

## REISSUES

### HALF A KING

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 29 January  
Author: Joe Abercrombie  
Publisher: Harper Voyager



The author of the blood-soaked First Law books doing YA? *Whaaat?* Fear not, fans. Though this book has less shagging and swearing, it's still recognisably his brand of mud-caked, magic-lite fantasy. It follows teenage prince Yarvin, who's overthrown and sold into slavery, then escapes to reclaim his throne. We called it: "grimdark fantasy for people don't have the patience or stomach for *Game Of Thrones*."

### THE QUIET WOMAN

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!

Author: Christopher Priest  
Publisher: Gollancz



The reissues of Christopher Priest's back catalogue continue with this 1990 release. Set in an oppressive alternate Britain where a Chernobyl-like disaster in France has spread fallout over the south of England, it follows Alice, a writer whose friend was murdered. Switching between the sometimes completely conflicting viewpoints of Alice and an "information management" expert, this satirical spin on life under Thatcher concludes in unsatisfyingly abrupt fashion.

### SMILER'S FAIR

★★★★★

**Release Date:** OUT NOW!  
Author: Rebecca Levene  
Publisher: Hodder & Stoughton



The first volume in the Hollow Gods series revolves around the titular travelling carnival. It's a den of vice which, we're told, "holds one example of all that there is in the world"; a world where the chaotic moon god is set to return to claim his birthright... We said: "Consistently surprising, packing in plenty of character development, fast and brutal action, and even some storylines that are wrapped up before the end."

### WHAT MAKES THIS BOOK SO GREAT

★★★★★

**Release Date:** 8 January  
Author: Jo Walton  
Publisher: Corsair



Subtitled *Re-Reading The Classics Of Fantasy And SF*, this collection reprints 129 essays by Jo Walton, originally published on Tor.com. We said: "What shines through is Walton's love of speculative fiction... However, these short, pithy pieces, which work brilliantly online, become overwhelming when they're gathered together and read in one sitting."



## Deathblade

Malus guffaw-naught



**Release Date:** 15 January

320 pages | Hardback

Author: CL Werner

Publisher: The Black Library

### LONG-TIME READERS OF

epic fantasy may note a slight resemblance between Malus Darkblade, titular hero of *The Tales Of Malus Darkblade*, and a certain magic sword-wielding albino hero made famous by Michael Moorcock. But Elric of Melniboné isn't the only clear influence on display in *Deathblade*, CL Werner's latest addition to the series. There's a heavy dose of Jack Vance's *Cugel's Saga*, and even a little of Gene Wolfe's *The Book Of The New Sun* in this conniving dark elf anti-hero.

After numerous life-imperilling quests described in earlier books and comics, and a decade spent wandering the Chaos wastes with only the sword of Khaine for company, Malus has finally plotted and backstabbed his way to true power. But his position as ruler of the city of Hag Graef is imperilled



when the Witch King orders an outright attack on the High Elves, with Malus in the vanguard – the very last place a self-obsessed coward wants to be...

All of this is the stuff of solid, archetypal fantasy that both Warhammer and genre fans will enjoy reading. But *Deathblade* misses out on the ironic, dark humour that an anti-hero like Malus really needs. Werner lets the Darkblade take himself a little too seriously, and the result is a story that too often falls flat just when it should raise a laugh.

**Damien Walter**

**?** Werner realised he wanted to write after reading *The Hound Of The Baskervilles* at age 10, then writing his own Holmes story.

## Letters To Lovecraft

Essay-inspired anthology



**Release Date:** OUT NOW!

280 pages | Paperback

Editor: Jesse Bullington

Publisher: Stone Skin Press

### IF YOUR SKIN CRAWLS AT

HP Lovecraft pastiche or sub-par mythos shenanigans, don't be put off reading this. The premise is intelligent: to engage with the author through his 1927 essay "Supernatural Horror In Literature". Eighteen authors each picked a quote, then wrote a story inspired by it. The results are variable, but although non-Euclidean geometries and Deep Ones raise their fish-eyed heads, refreshingly the majority of the stories are non-mythos, and all are fiction of the better sort.

Chesya Burke's "The Horror At Castle Of The Cumbernauld" is the most affecting. This tale of gross injustice shocks with its real-world horror, and is also genuinely "weird". In fact, Burke's story is so effective it highlights the problem with modern horror:



few of these stories are horrifying, frightening, or even that weird. Lovecraft's fiction is chilling because it came from the real (if repugnantly erroneous) terror he felt for the Other. Burke's story works because it too is powered by strong emotion: she is an African-American writer directly engaging with the terrible engine of Lovecraft's creativity.

Life in the 21st century is too lacking in pain, madness and fear to inspire terrifying literature. Many of us have spare pennies to spend on Cthulhu plushies. *Letters To Lovecraft* reflects that. **Guy Haley**

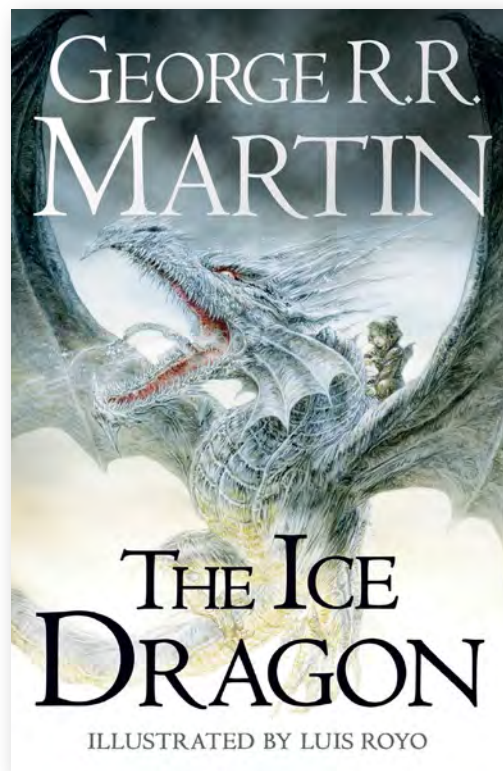
**?** Out 28 February: *Weirder Shadows Over Innsmouth*, a third collection inspired by Lovecraft's "The Shadow Over Innsmouth".

# WHSmith

# EXCLUSIVE OFFER!

## GET THE ICE DRAGON BY GEORGE RR MARTIN FOR HALF PRICE!

Only £6.49 with this voucher (RRP £12.99)



Take this to your local high street WHSmith



This voucher entitles you to get *The Ice Dragon* by George RR Martin for £6.49. Voucher is valid from 7 January 2015 to 3 February 2015 only in WHSmith High Street stores. Excludes Outlet stores, Online and Travel stores including those at airports, railway stations, motorway service stations, hospitals and work places. Subject to availability. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other promotional voucher. Only one voucher can be redeemed per transaction and it must be surrendered upon use. No cash alternative. Photocopies will not be accepted and the voucher is not transferable. WHSmith reserves the right to reject any voucher it deems, in its sole discretion, to have been forged, defaced or otherwise tampered with.



# BOOK CLUB 110

# The Handmaid's Tale

## Margaret Atwood, 1985

Arthur C Clarke Award winner Lauren Beukes revisits another winner's sterile sex cult dystopia

**T**HE PARANOID, conservative '80s was a boomtime for barbed dystopias, from *Brazil* and *Waiting For The Barbarians* to *V For Vendetta* and *The Handmaid's Tale*; fictional funhouse mirrors that you didn't want to examine too closely, to see that the reflected reality wasn't that much of a stretch.

Margaret Atwood wrote her novel, appropriately, in 1984. And just like Orwell's novel is used as easy shorthand in any conversation about surveillance society and propaganda, *The Handmaid's Tale* gets busted out whenever an American senator talks about "legitimate rape" and how a "woman's body knows how to shut that down", for example, or when medical schemes won't pay for contraception or a girl gets shot for daring to go to school.

In 1970 abortion was legalised in New York. It required an act of humanity, of empathy. When the vote was deadlocked at 74-74, an Assemblyman from a deeply Catholic district stood up, his voice thick and trembling, and said that he knew this would be the end of his political career, but he couldn't let this bill fail because of him. He changed his vote. He collapsed into his seat, his hand over his face and the Assembly erupted in chaos. But it was done. Abortion was legal and other states followed suit.

Almost 50 years later and a woman's right to control her body is still, somehow, an issue that is up for debate and Atwood's tale seems more prescient than ever. But it would be too facile to hold up the book as simply a compelling parable about reproductive rights.

Let's be clear that the novel is *not* about abortion. In fact, the story speculates that abortion might have been one of the many factors, along with toxic pollution, that has led to a global sterility and the formation of a nation state called Gilead, where the fundamentalist



## It's more than a parable about freedom of choice

religious right police fertility and who does or does not get to have sex.

It's the story of Offred, who has been forced to surrender her name and her freedom, as one of the brood mares (or handmaids, from the Bible) to the new regime's leaders and their sterile wives. She wears red robes with a winged white wimple, and once a month, in a scene that's comically horrifying, lies symbolically between the legs of her commander's wife, as he pushes and shoves his way between hers to do his Godly duty to propagate the earth, everyone cool and distant and thinking of England – or rather, Gilead.

But Offred is not cool and distant. She feels intensely, especially the loss of her defiant friend Moira and her stolen daughter and her missing husband. She has to fight her attraction to Nick, the driver, who may be part of the underground or an Eye for the regime, confront the vulnerability of the commander who invites her to play illicit Scrabble games, and the cruelty of the Aunts, who play educators and enforcers, because there are always those oppressed who are complicit in their oppression.

Atwood draws from history, from the underground railway that helped free slaves to the feminist activism of the '70s, aborigine foremen and all the ways we are complacent and complicit. But it comes down to something Offred remembers about Hitler's mistress, about "how easy it is to invent a humanity for anyone at all".

The book never loses sight of that empathy – revealing the humanity even in the worst of them. *The Handmaid's Tale* is a feminist parable about freedom of choice, for sure, but it's also about how easily politics can loop our necks like the nooses on the people hanging on the wall. Ultimately, it's about all the things which slip outside of any dictatorship's control: love, desire, our craving for other people.

"Nobody dies from lack of sex, it's lack of love we die from." **SFX**

Lauren Beukes is the author of *The Shining Girls*, *Broken Monsters* and the Clarke Award-winning *Zoo City*.

### LIKE THIS? TRY THESE!

**V For Vendetta** (Alan Moore and David Lloyd, 1982-1989)  
The comic story about a social crusader inspired a movie, which inspired the real-life Anonymous, who are stranger and more intriguing than fiction.



**Station Eleven** (Emily St Mandel, 2014)  
*The Walking Dead* without the bleakness – a dystopic tale of a travelling theatre girl caught up in a sci-fi comic book, a Broadway star and the museum of lost things.



## CALLING ALL BOOK LOVERS!

Do you spend your life with a book in your hand? Do you have opinions you want to share about everything you read? Then you're the sort of person we're looking for to become part of our exciting new **SFX Book Club Reading Group**.

The Reading Group will be our first port of call every month for comments in Book Club – we'll give you advance warning of what's coming up on the page, and invite you to read the book with us. Then, you'll be given the opportunity to tell the world what you think about the book and what it means to you. The best bit? Every time you contribute, we'll find you a free book from our vast repository in the SFX office.

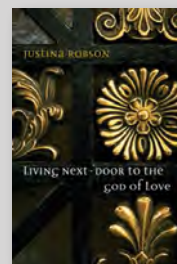
If you want to join the select group that is the SFX Book Club Reading Group (or have an idea for a catchier title), email us at [sfx@futurenet.com](mailto:sfx@futurenet.com) (using the subject header "Reading Group") with a 100-word critique of the last SF/fantasy book you read, and a few lines telling us why you're right for the group. We look forward to hearing from you!

## GET READING!

The SFX Book Club is your chance to read the best books along with the best authors [fb.me/SFXmagazine](http://fb.me/SFXmagazine)

### NEXT ISSUE

Adrian Tchaikovsky casts his eye over Justina Robson's *Living Next Door To The God Of Love*.



If you've not read the book before (or you have but you've been waiting for an excuse to read it again) this is your chance to see what a top novelist and other SFX readers think.



# SUBSCRIBE

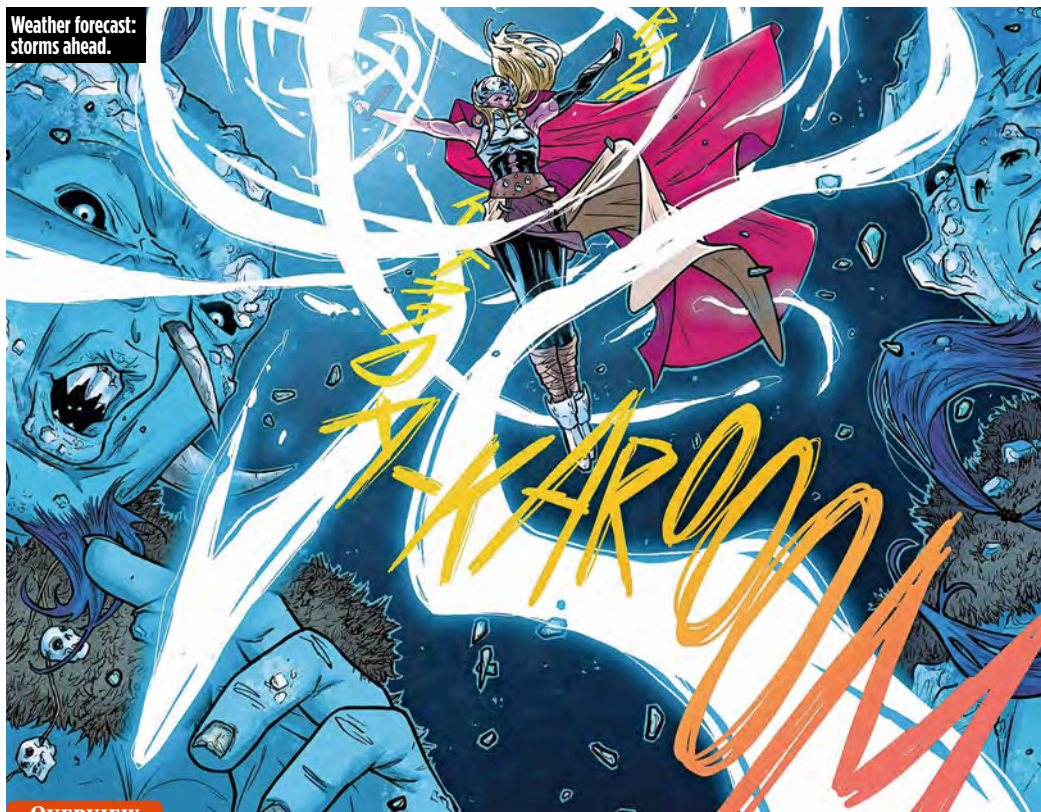
GO TO [UFC.COM/MAGAZINE](http://UFC.COM/MAGAZINE)  
TO SUBSCRIBE NOW!



AVAILABLE IN PRINT  
AND DIGITAL FORMATS



Weather forecast: storms ahead.



OVERVIEW

# Thor

Rise of the Thunder Goddess

★★★★★

Release Date: **OUT NOW!**

Publisher: Marvel

Writer: Jason Aaron

Artists: Russell Dauterman, Matthew Wilson



## OVER THE LAST

few years, Marvel have been proving themselves masters at provoking fanboy internet rage, but little has made certain close-minded areas of fandom quite as mad as the announcement of a brand new, female version of Thor.

Admittedly, Marvel hasn't been quite as brave or daring as to actually change their character's sex. The original Thor is still around, and still the son of Odin, but his story is heading in some new directions in the wake of Marvel's recent miniseries *Original Sin*.

After hearing a dark secret that rendered him incapable of wielding the mighty hammer Mjolnir, Thor has lost his powers and is a broken man. When a deep sea invasion by Frost Giants occurs, with the aid of dark elf sorcerer Malekith the

Accursed, Thor tries desperately to fight off the invasion but fails – and then a mysterious masked female appears, able to lift Mjolnir and summon all the powers of the Thunder God...

One of the big questions since the announcement has been the identity of the mystery woman taking over as Thor, but if these first three issues are an indication, writer Jason Aaron is in no hurry to reveal that secret. Some will dismiss this new female incarnation as a gimmick, but so far it's an interesting way to explore the nature of what makes the Thunder God truly "worthy", and we'll still be following the original Thor at regular intervals. Aaron pulls off an enjoyable sense of energy and colour, while also utilising more adventurous stylistic choices – including a strong reliance on

traditional thought bubbles rather than in-panel narration.

However, while this relaunched version of Thor shows potential, alongside some entertainingly muscular artwork from Russell Dauterman and Matthew Wilson, it feels like some of the mystery is working against the story. Keeping the new Thor's identity secret makes it harder to get to know her (especially since she doesn't even appear until issue one's final page), and Aaron's storytelling choices mean that for large chunks of the plot she's alone and talking to herself.

Issue three's action sequence does a good job of giving us characterisation as well as some epic punches, but given how important this new version of Thor is, this isn't the most ideal or accessible introduction, especially for any potential new readers.

However, while Aaron may have dropped the ball a little with these flaws, he's also delivering the kind of over-the-top action and mythological colour that a comic like *Thor* demands. Time will tell exactly how interesting a character the female Thor proves to be, but for now this new era in the Thunder God/Goddess's life is off to an enjoyable and promising start. **Saxon Bullock**

**Delivers the kind of over-the-top action that Thor demands**

⚡ Aaron got his break in comics by winning a Marvel scriptwriting contest in 2001 – the strip was published in *Wolverine* #175.



Luckily the new costume made Batgirl impervious to broken glass.

OVERVIEW

# Batgirl

Gordon's grin

★★★★★

Release Date: **OUT NOW!**

Publisher: DC

Writers: Cameron Stewart, Brenden Fletcher

Artists: Babs Tarr, Cameron Stewart



## WITH GAIL

Simone departing after her lengthy recent run on *Batgirl*, it would have been easy to maintain the same dark, action-packed style as before. Instead, DC have handed the title to a creative team headed by writer/artist Cameron Stewart. Tapping into the same kind of bright, accessible fun that's made recent hit *Ms Marvel* such a delight, the result is a lively and colourful approach that's a relaunch in all but name.

Relocating Barbara Gordon to Gotham's hip Burnside neighbourhood, the story follows her attempts to go back to college. An unexpected fire means an all-new costume as Batgirl tackles criminals like Riot Black and the sword-wielding Jawbreaker twins. However, there's also a mysterious, so-far unnamed adversary who knows her secret identity, and is out to ruin her reputation...

The move from intense drama and serial killer villains to breezy comedy-drama is one hell of a tonal swerve, but Stewart and his collaborators make this an enjoyable and fast-paced comic. Artist Babs Tarr helps immeasurably with this, showing a deft hand with character while also giving the title the requisite action and humour. There are a few wobbly moments in these first three issues where the new version of Batgirl is trying a little too hard to be hip and happening, but otherwise this is thoroughly entertaining stuff. **Saxon Bullock**

⚡ Stewart's next art project is Dark Horse's 10-issue sequel to Chuck Palahniuk's novel *Fight Club*, coming in May.



## OVERVIEW

## Gotham Academy

Pottering about Batman's beat

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

Publisher: DC Comics

Writers: Becky Cloonan and Brenden Fletcher

Artists: Karl Kersch, Geyser and Dave McCaig



## THE NEW 52 IS

not so new anymore, and DC's last three years have featured multiple mess-ups with its female characters,

alongside a general sense that dark, gory and extreme stories are the only ones that really matter. As a result, it's a huge surprise that DC's latest new Batman-related release is not only a genuine all-ages comic, but also one of its best titles since the 2011 relaunch.

The story is set at the titular academy, a sprawling, high-class institution for educating the children

of Gotham's brightest and best. This being Gotham, there are a variety of dark and spooky mysteries lurking in the shadows, and students Olive Silverlock and "Maps" Mizoguchi are soon investigating them. But Olive has some secrets of her own, like what happened to her over the summer, and her mortal dread of anything relating to Batman...

Co-writers Becky Cloonan and Brenden Fletcher have jam-packed the first three issues of this *Harry Potter*-esque school saga with eccentric charm and likeable, interesting characters, giving the comic its own distinct identity while sowing the seeds for plenty of upcoming plot threads. What pushes this from engaging, accessible fun into unmissable territory is the stunning artwork from Karl Kersch (backed up by



It's easy to get jaded in a world filled with superheroes.

lush colours from Geyser and Dave McCaig). The gorgeous, manga-esque visuals make this feel like the animated DC movie spin-off you never knew you wanted. Hopefully *Gotham Academy* will be livening up the world of Batman for many years to come. **Saxon Bullock**

**?** The first comic Becky Cloonan read was issue one of *The Silver Surfer: The Evolutionary War*, when she was eight years old.

## OVERVIEW

## Birthright

Jumanji RR Martin

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

Publisher: Image

Writer: Joshua Williamson

Artist: Andrei Bressan



## BIRTHRIGHT

moves fire-fast and barely stops to catch dragon-breath. Our hero, Mikey, is introduced as a little

boy running into the woods, playing catch with his dad. Mikey doesn't return, and is declared missing. A search is mounted, and his dad's accused of murdering his son, which leads to the collapse of his marriage. For a lot of books, that would be enough to fill an issue. Here, it's the first five pages.

The next time we see Mikey, a year's passed. Only, he's not a little boy. He's a fully-grown warrior, sitting in a police station covered in bad-ass armour, looking like Conan via Jon Snow. Turns out Mikey ran face-first into a fantasy world full of magic, dragons and monsters. Time



If you go down to the woods today...

passed differently there, so he's now an adult while his family have barely aged. He's back to save the world (or is he?). But first, he has to convince his parents he's the little boy they lost...

And that's only the beginning. Joshua Williamson has created a rich world, full of detail and wonder. The narrative shifts between present reality and Mikey's past adventures, resulting in evocative drama on one

page followed by epic action on the next. Each reality is compelling, and beautifully rendered by artist Andrei Bressan.

If *Birthright* keeps up this pace, it'll be the best book Image has put out since *Saga*. It's not fantasy to suggest you'll be hearing a lot more about this one. **Sam Ashurst**

**?** *Birthright* is a comic packed with detail. Look closely through issue one for cameos by Conan, Willow and He-Man.



He had high expectations of those candles.

## OVERVIEW

## Annihilator

Barton Fink in outer space

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

Publisher: Legendary Comics

Writer: Grant Morrison

Artist: Frazer Irving



## IF THE

*Multiversity* is Grant Morrison's fond farewell to the DC Universe, then this creator-owned

mini-series shows that DC's loss is indie comics' gain.

Named after real-life black hole the Great Annihilator, on the surface it's the story of struggling screenwriter Ray Spass's encounters with Max Nomax, the supposedly fictional protagonist of his latest blockbuster script. But dig deeper and familiar themes emerge.

Continuing Morrison's fascination with not so much breaking down but completely shattering the fourth wall, the constant shifts between Max's interstellar milieu and Ray's increasingly surreal reality evoke Dennis Potter's *The Singing Detective*. And while issue three's surprise revelation conjures up the playful spirit of *The Multiversity: The Just's* haunted comic, the wry asides about Hollywood's renowned shallowness channel Morrison's own recent experiences as a scribe-for-hire in Tinseltown.

He also has some fun with his long-standing rivalry with Alan Moore, as issue one's early segue between the singularity's vast depths and a seemingly bottomless sinkhole at Ray's LA house pays a neat tribute to *Watchmen's* iconic opening scene. But while Dave Gibbons was confined to a rigid grid structure, here Frazer Irving adopts a more organic style of layout, and his fluid linework and muted colours bring Morrison's brilliant metafiction to stunning life. **Stephen Jewell**

**?** Morrison's *Sinatra* – originally written as a movie screenplay – is being adapted into a comic. Issue one's due in April.



# Game Of Thrones Episode 1: Iron From Ice

The game is not the same

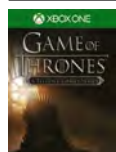
★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

Format reviewed: Xbox One

Also available on: Xbox 360, PS3, PS4, PC, Mac, iOS

Publisher: Telltale Games



## IN THE GAME OF

thrones, you win or you die. In the game of the game of thrones, it's slightly more subtle than that. Telltale's visit

to George RR Martin's notoriously unfair universe gives you the reins in a world where the concept of finality is taken seriously. Most of the time, this means someone getting a knife through the throat, but here it's more a case of sticking with decisions – even if they don't satisfy everyone. Where Telltale normally relies on fairly social choices, options with little effect outside of the personal, *Game Of Thrones* the game – like the books and the TV show – deals with far grander ramifications.

At one point, a criminal needs to be punished for stealing. You've just

been promoted to Lord, and you need to show your authority. But he's telling you he's innocent, and the crowd are alternately jeering and calling for mercy. Do you cut his fingers off, the standard punishment for thievery? Banish him to the Wall, far from his family? Or let him go, and risk seeming soft? There's no wrong

answer, but there's no right one either. Here's where *Game Of Thrones* differs from the Telltale formula – you'll feel unsure in your choices whatever you do. Effects aren't limited to an inner circle – you're in control of hundreds of lives.

The game shines in these moments of heart-wrenching diplomacy, but they arise too rarely in a story penned

in by wider Westeros happenings. Beginning in the camp outside the Red Wedding – with no context provided for newbies who don't know what that is – you never shake the feeling you're just a ripple on the periphery of the exciting HBO splash. As the Forrester clan (whose house the main characters belong to) aren't in the show, you get the impression theirs is a fundamentally unimportant story. Admittedly, Telltale was never going to let us rewrite the main events, but the inclusion of characters from the TV series only serves as a reminder that more exciting things are going on.

That said, it still charms with its lovely smudged pastel look, and there's no doubt the writers get the show's fruitier grasp of language. But as solid a representation of Westeros as this is, it's a narratively unimpressive start to what we hope will be a much more well-rounded series. **Kate Gray**



This is what happens if you read SFX in WHSmith without buying it.

The game starts at the end of season three of the TV series, and while you don't need to have watched that far, it helps.

## Lego Batman 3: Beyond Gotham

Not quite super

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

Format reviewed: Xbox One

Also available on: Xbox 360, PS4, PS3, PS Vita, Wii U, iOS, PC

Publisher: Warner Bros



## LEGO MARVEL

*Super Heroes* is, so far, the pinnacle of the Lego videogame series, mainly because it wielded the

originality and references that a huge comic-book kingdom deserves. *Lego Batman 3: Beyond Gotham*, though, awkwardly shines the DC universe through the prism of Batman. All the powers that make superheroes unique are shared between characters by way of suit upgrades, which robs them of their individuality and adds a tiring and fiddly mechanic. Thanks to the speed of upgrade unlocks, this quickly makes Batman himself all but redundant. So we're looking at a Batman game which, somehow, makes you not really want to play as Batman. Not a great success there.



It looks as polished as Lego games always do, there are hints of that unique Lego thought process – at one point, the problem of big tentacles flailing around a base is solved by a giant knife which cuts them up into sashimi – and the dialogue certainly has plenty of personality. The trouble is those personalities just don't reach the effortless levels we've seen before. Constant reference is made to how unfunny the jokes are and Batman is a massive jerk, acting as if he might storm off to his Batroom at any moment.

People who love Lego games will still find the ludicrous amount of value you expect from these worlds, but we'd be surprised if anyone loved *Lego Batman 3*. **Kate Gray**

The season pass, available for £11.99, grants access to six DLC packs with new missions and free play modes.

## World Of Warcraft: Warlords Of Draenor

Orcward encounters

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

Format reviewed: PC

Price: £30 (£10 monthly subscription required)

Publisher: Blizzard

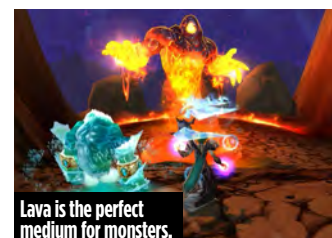


## WARLORDS OF

*Draenor* is Blizzard going back to its roots, if hardly back to basics. Orcs. Humans.

The raw power of the Horde, in a land of blood and fire. It's also some of the best MMO content Blizzard has ever made, combining the raw ambition we saw exhibited in previous expansion *Wrath Of The Lich King* with the expertise earned from another six years of practice, refinement and technological progress.

You're now officially one of Azeroth's heavy-hitters; where once some random guard in a nowhere outpost could have you go get him lunch, now you're given proper respect wherever you go. You have



Lava is the perfect medium for monsters.

full control of your faction's main garrison. The whole garrison system is simple but effective, the physical presence of recruited followers and the general sense of life making it feel like your own place, despite everyone using the same instanced map.

It's still reassuringly *World Of Warcraft* at its core. There are bear asses to collect and ten of these to kill followed by twenty of those, and nothing you encounter is going to cause any real trouble. But if *Pandaria* felt a bit like Blizzard flapping around after such a good run, this feels like there actually could be another ten good years in the old girl. A triumphant return to form for both Blizzard and its world. **Richard Cobbett**

*Warlords Of Draenor* is the first expansion pack to take place primarily before the main timeline, in a branching reality.





AUDIO CD

## Good Omens

Antichrist In The UK

★★★★★

Release Date: 15 January

195 minutes | CD

Director: Dirk Maggs

Cast: Peter Serafinowicz, Mark Heap, Colin Morgan, Charlotte Ritchie

Publisher: BBC Audio

**IT'S A TRICKY BUSINESS**, bringing a much-loved book to life on screen or radio. Teasing out the essence of the story while keeping what made it great and not alienating the fans... it's a difficult balance, and one we're not sure this Radio Four adaptation of Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman's 1990 novel completely achieves.

Armageddon is approaching, and the Antichrist is in the world – though no one knows exactly where he is. The angel Aziraphale and demon Crowley are meant to help hurry things along, but they've grown to quite like this world, so are secretly trying to prevent armageddon without alerting their superiors. Predicting everything that's to happen along the way is *The Nice And Accurate Prophecies Of Agnes Nutter, Witch*, a handy if opaque guide to events by a psychic 17th century witch.

It's a lot to cram in, and the adaptation copes with this by following the book very closely – there's not much left out, and the precise, witty notes and descriptions are often turned verbatim into dialogue, not always successfully. The voice cast is great: Peter Serafinowicz is pitch perfect as Crowley, though Mark Heap is just a tad *too* fussy as Aziraphale. Clive Russell as Shadwell and Phil Davis as Hastur stand out, and a first episode cameo from the authors is a treat.

This is a good adaptation of a great book. It's just a shame it didn't have the confidence to stamp more of its own personality on the source material.

**Rhian Drinkwater**

For the novel, Gaiman wrote the Four Horsemen while Pratchett wrote Adam and Them, sharing copy on floppy discs.

AUDIO CDS

# Doctor Who

Everyone loves a gun-wielding tortoise...

## The Highest Science

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

127 minutes | CD/download

Publisher: Big Finish

## The Rani Elite

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

108 minutes | CD/download

Publisher: Big Finish

## The Early Adventures: An Ordinary Life

★★★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW!

123 minutes | CD/download

Publisher: Big Finish

**DURING THE MID-'90s**

"wilderness years" of *Doctor Who*, the New Adventures line of spin-off novels kept the show alive while

off the air, and some of the most fondly remembered were written by Gareth Roberts (who eventually became a frequent writer for the new series). Now, Roberts's first New Adventure, *The Highest Science*, has been adapted for audio by Big Finish. It's an enjoyable romp featuring the Seventh Doctor alongside regular spin-off companion Bernice Summerfield (Lisa Bowerman).

As the TARDIS crew embark on an unexpected quest on a deserted planet, there's danger from a variety of sources, including the militaristic, tortoise-like alien Chelonians, while the fast-paced plot throws in lots of strong dialogue and imaginative concepts. What it can't do is disguise the one-dimensional chief villain or the frequently random storytelling, resulting in a fizzle of a climax that feels as if Roberts simply ran out of plot. However, Bowerman once again makes a lively *Who* companion, and this is ultimately an entertaining if not quite essential listen.

Over in the regular monthly releases, the Sixth Doctor and

Peri are pitched against a new incarnation of an old enemy. *The Rani Elite* sees the TARDIS arriving at a prestigious galactic academy – but a significant professor there has been replaced by renegade Time Lady the Rani (Siobhan Redmond), who's embarking on another lethal plan... There are some well-crafted plot twists here and the script makes good use of the Rani's amoral nature, while both Colin Baker and Nicola Bryant are on excellent form. Unfortunately, Redmond's performance as the Rani is a little flat, meaning this story doesn't always hit the notes it aims for.

Finally, over in the *Early Adventures* range, there's quieter, more reflective drama in *An Ordinary Life*, set during the Hartnell era's 12-part epic "The Daleks' Master Plan". On the run from the Daleks, the First Doctor, Steven Taylor and Sara Kingdom make an unscheduled stop in '50s London, where they take shelter with a newly-arrived Jamaican family. When the Doctor apparently abandons his companions, Steven and Sara are left to try and cope with everyday life. The first two episodes are characterful drama with well-played depth. The second half of the story isn't as strong, instead going for a more traditional *Invasion Of The Body Snatchers*-style tale of alien possession, but despite the flaws this is still an interesting example of *Who* exploring difficult and challenging themes.

**Saxon Bullock**

Also coming out (from BBC Audio on 15 January): a reading of Tom Baker tale "Full Circle" by Matthew Waterhouse (Adric).



# Box Of Delights

What we've been playing with this month

AVAILABLE AT:  
**forbiddenplanet**  
international  
home shopping  
[www.forbiddenplanet.co.uk](http://www.forbiddenplanet.co.uk)  
01621 877 222



## FUNKO PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

### 1 ReAction Horror Figures

Funko | Height: 9.5cm-10.5cm | RRP: £9.99 each | FPI price: £8.99 each | Catalogue numbers: 87019-87033

Funko's ReAction range, styled like the Kenner toys of the late '70s, reaches its apogee here with two horror ranges: one of Universal Monsters; another of modern-day boogymen like Michael Myers. You can't go wrong giving murderous monsters a cutesy makeover! Only Pinhead from Hellraiser doesn't really work: the scale means they couldn't replicate those nails in his noggin.

### 2 Avengers Character Watch

Zeon | Length: 20cm | RRP: £10.99 | FPI price: £9.99 | Catalogue number: 88073

It's time to bin the Bulgari and retire the Rolex - your new favourite watch is here. Okay, it's about as basic as timepieces come (the tiny LCD display just tells the time and date) and unless you have the wrists of an infant it probably won't fit. But with two interchangeable face plates included (either Iron Man and The Hulk or Captain America and Thor), there are few cooler accessories.

### 3 Superman Plate And Egg Cups

Half Moon Bay | Width (plate): 18.5cm | Height (egg cups): 4.5cm | RRP: £8.99 (for one plate or two egg cups) | FPI price: £6.99 | Catalogue numbers: C1390/C1392

What does the Man of Steel eat for breakfast? We wouldn't be surprised if he tucks into a hearty serving of boiled egg and soldiers. And what better way to serve a national staple than on this rather neat branded crockery - after all, there are few things in life that don't look cooler when they've got a Superman logo splashed across them.



## 4 Death Star Juggling Balls

Paladone | Diameter: 6.5cm | FPI price: £6.99 | Catalogue Number: B7354A

What better way to feel like a Disney-dream-crossover Galactus than to toss multiple Death Stars around? These vinyl-panelled not-moons include bafflingly worded "how to juggle" instructions on the box for the non-juggler; the seasoned juggler, however, will likely be disappointed by the lack of squish and the prominent, uneven trenches left by the stitching. "Use The Force" cries the box, but we could only make them hover briefly.

5

## 5 Mirror Universe Spock Vinyl Figure

Funko | Height: 9.5cm | RRP: £12.99 | FPI price: £10.99 | Catalogue number: C1457

Ah, 1967's "Mirror, Mirror". A classic episode, a sinisterly goateed Mr Spock, the first sight of whom signals that a transporter glitch has taken Captain Kirk into a twisted alternate universe. Unfortunately, the chubby-chops treatment here brings to mind David Brent rather than Leonard Nimoy - or possibly, given that he appears to be wearing eye shadow, Ricky Gervais in the days when he was one half of a new romantic band.



7

## 7 The Twelfth Doctor Figure

Character Options | Height: 10cm | FPI price: £6.99 | Catalogue number: B9710

Peter Capaldi's incarnation materialises as part of the third wave of dinkier 3.75" figures, meaning he'll only develop a complex if you try to combine him with his taller predecessors (top tip: place him on some Lego and hope no one undermines his confidence). A freak anomaly in the space-time continuum means the resemblance to the real Capaldi alternates between impressive and boggling depending on the angle. He comes complete with sonic and display stand - but where's his coat's snazzy red lining? It's on the box art, but not our figure, so we're assuming this is a glitch.

## 6 Touch Control Sonic Screwdriver

Character Options | Length: 22cm (unextended)/25cm (extended) | RRP: £14.99 | FPI price: £13.99 | Catalogue number: B8893

This Moffat-era model might be the best sonic yet, because of one function: spring-loaded extending action! Squeeze a button on the base and it flies open. The button also makes the tip glow green and activates sound effects - when your index finger's wrapped around t'other side. Neat. Releasing the "emitter jaws" with a flick of the wrist is as compulsively satisfying as popping bubble-wrap or cracking your knuckles.

## THINGS TO COME

MORE GOODIES COMING YOUR WAY



### ADVENTURE TIME BEANIES

ETA: FEBRUARY

These aren't the first beanie hats based on the cult Cartoon Network series - designs depicting Jake, Beemo and Princess Lumpy are already available. But these latest three, featuring Finn, Tree Trunks and Jake, are particularly cute, thanks to their vivid colours and fluffy bobbles. Plus, there's something about them which looks a bit home made. Lie to your friends and pretend you knitted one yourself.



EXPECT TO PAY  
£290

### FULL SIZE ROCKET RACCOON

ETA: MARCH

Ward off Jehovah's Witnesses by sticking this foam replica of the genetically-engineered rodent in your window; based on the digital files used on *Guardians Of The Galaxy*, it stands nearly three feet tall. It is a tad disappointing that Rocket isn't packing a massive blaster, but with his tightly clenched fists, he still looks ready for action.



### ALIEN SERIES FOUR FIGURES

ETA: MAY

There are two cool things about Neca's latest wave of Alien figures. Firstly, for the first time they feature likenesses of Sigourney Weaver, with Ripley depicted both in a jumpsuit and a spacesuit. Secondly, the spacesuited Ripley comes with a brilliant accessory: a frightened Jonesy the cat, arching his back and hissing! A more mellow moggy accompanies the jumpsuited Ripley.



SPONSORED BY

[www.starzonetoys.com](http://www.starzonetoys.com)

## WANTED

Original Dalek. Other original Doctor Who props/costumes also considered. Any condition



For more details please contact- Julian Vince • email- [JulianGenesis@gmail.com](mailto:JulianGenesis@gmail.com)

[www.JulianVince-Daleks.weebly.com](http://www.JulianVince-Daleks.weebly.com)



*American*  
**GRAFFITI**  
The Comics Specialist.

Stockists of US comics, Graphic Novels, Manga and much more  
78 Church Lane (Off High Street.) Barnstaple  
Devon EX 31 1BH  
Tel: 01271 325740  
e-mail [shop@amgrafcomics.co.uk](mailto:shop@amgrafcomics.co.uk)

Church Street Models  
Dr Who

Poseable figures,  
micro figures,  
fridge magnets,  
key fobs, mouse  
mats, pens, ties,  
mugs & radio  
control Daleks



10A Church Street, Basingstoke  
Hants, RG21 7QE

01256 358060

Online shop

[www.churchstreetmodels.co.uk](http://www.churchstreetmodels.co.uk)

Closed Tuesdays & Sundays  
Also Model Railways

# SFX

# KRACKERS

KRACKERS COMICS & GAMES

COMICS • GRAPHIC NOVELS • TOYS  
WARHAMMER • DUNGEONS & DRAGONS  
STAR WARS • MAGIC: THE GATHERING  
DR WHO • KID ROBOT • FAMILY GUY  
FUTURAMA AND HALO

5 BATH PLACE, TAUNTON, SOMERSET TA1 4ER TEL: (01823) 335 057

[WWW.KRACKERS.COM](http://WWW.KRACKERS.COM)



Stockists of US Comics, Anime & Manga, SF Merchandise and more!

**The Sheffield Space Centre**  
33 The Wicker, Sheffield, S3 8HS.

Tel 0114 2758905

Open 10am to 5pm Mon to Fri

9am to 5pm Sat, Closed Sundays

Visit our website at [www.space-centre.co.uk](http://www.space-centre.co.uk)

## MINIMODELFILMSTUFF.CO.UK

COLLECTIBLE TV & FILM MEMORABILIA FROM  
THE BEST MOVIES & TV SHOWS. INCLUDING  
IRON MAN, THE HUNGER GAMES,  
BATMAN, GAME OF THRONES & MANY MORE!

08456 44 70 44

5% OFF! • FREE UK DELIVERY

ENTER THE CODE  
SFX5 AT THE CHECKOUT  
Offer expires 28.02.15. Excludes delivery. T & Cs Apply

## FAMOUS SCRIBBLES

Authentic Film & Television

Autographed Photos

and Memorabilia

AFTAL Approved Dealer #72

Website: [www.famousscribbles.co.uk](http://www.famousscribbles.co.uk)

Tel: 01892 610384

# SFX



## whoshotjohn.co.uk

movie inspired clothing



To Advertise here please call  
Adrian Hill on  
01225 442244 or email  
[adrian.hill@futurenet.com](mailto:adrian.hill@futurenet.com)



## MEET THE STARS IN PERSON AT THE UK's LEADING COLLECTORS EVENTS AND CONVENTIONS IN 2015!

**20 - 22 FEB: MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER CON**

WWW.MASSIVEEVENTS.CO.UK/POWERCON BIRMINGHAM

**1 MAR: LONDON COMIC MART**

**21 - 22 MAR: CARDIFF FILM & COMIC CON**

WWW.CARDIFFCOMICCON.COM MOTORPOINT ARENA

**28 - 29 MAR: NEWCASTLE FILM & COMIC CON**

WWW.NEWCASTLEFILMANDCOMICCON.COM METRO RADIO ARENA

**17 - 19 APR: AUTOGRAPHICA**

WWW.AUTOGRAPHICA.CO.UK LONDON

**24 - 26 APR: CHEVRON 8.2**

WWW.MASSIVEEVENTS.CO.UK/CHEVRON82 LONDON

**3 MAY: LONDON COMIC MART**

**2 - 4 MAY: PLAY EXPO BLACKPOOL**

WWW.PLAYEXPO.NET NORBRECK CASTLE EXHIBITION CENTRE

**7 JUN: LONDON COMIC MART**

**13 - 14 JUN: COLLECTORMANIA 23**

WWW.COLLECTORMANIA.COM STADIUM:MK

**5 JUL: LONDON COMIC MART**

**17 - 19 JUL: LONDON FILM AND COMIC CON**

WWW.LONDONFILMANDCOMICCON.COM/SUMMER OLYMPIA

**2 AUG: LONDON COMIC MART**

**15 - 16 AUG: SHEFFIELD FILM AND COMIC CON**

WWW.SHEFFIELDFILMANDCOMICCON.COM MOTORPOINT ARENA

**22 - 23 AUG: COLLECTORMANIA GLASGOW**

WWW.COLLECTORMANIAGLASGOW.CO.UK BRAEHEAD ARENA

**29 - 30 AUG: BOURNEMOUTH FILM & COMIC CON**

WWW.BOURNEMOUTHFILMANDCOMICCON.COM BOURNEMOUTH INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

**6 SEP: LONDON COMIC MART**

**4 OCT: LONDON COMIC MART**

**31 OCT - 1 NOV: BELFAST FILM & COMIC CON**

WWW.BELFASTFILMANDCOMICCON.COM ODYSSEY ARENA

**31 OCT - 1 NOV: HALLOWHEDON 7**

WWW.MASSIVEEVENTS.CO.UK/HALLOWHEDON7 LONDON

**1 NOV: LONDON COMIC MART**

**6 DEC: LONDON COMIC MART**



# WWW.SHOWMASTERSONLINE.COM

For ticket enquiries please email [shop@showmastersevents.com](mailto:shop@showmastersevents.com). For general and trader enquiries email [info@showmastersevents.com](mailto:info@showmastersevents.com) or call 01908 671138





# VIEW SCREEN

TV REVIEWS  
AND OPINION



## What's On

What to watch  
when this month

LOOK OUT  
FOR SFX TV  
REVIEWS AT  
GAMESRADAR.  
COM/TV

- **Mondays - The Librarians**  
continue to do a *Warehouse 13* type thing on Syfy.
- **Tuesdays** - At long last, **Supernatural**'s ninth season comes to UK screens - thanks to E4 for bringing the Winchesters back to Blighty. It's part of a double bill with **The 100**. Over on Fox, **American Horror Story: Freak Show** continues from 13 January. And on Syfy, Halle Berry's astronaut drama **Extant** (previously on Amazon Prime) gets a first UK TV run from 20 January.
- **Wednesdays** - Another long-awaited TV season makes its UK debut as the third year of awesome Canadian time travel drama **Continuum** arrives in our timeline from 28 January on Syfy. The same day, season four of **Grimm** brings a touch of the fairytale to these cold winter evenings on Watch.

There'll be other shows coming back from winter breaks too over the next few weeks, so look out for *Atlantis*, *The Vampire Diaries*, *The Originals* and more in your TV guide, along with newbie *Cockroaches* on ITV2.



BROADCAST UK: THURSDAYS ON SKY 1 US: WEDNESDAYS ON THE CW

# Arrow

What do you get when you mix an Arrow with a Flash?

It's a glorious time to be a superhero fan. Enough comic-inspired films and TV shows have been produced at this point for all the genre's on-screen growing pains - long since left behind in print - to be flushed out of mainstream storytelling. Case in point: TV's *Arrow*. Initially an attempt to translate the success of Christopher Nolan's *Dark Knight* trilogy to the small screen, it found its feet midway through its first year, then brought propulsive action to its second season, the best by far of any live-action superhero TV show. Now in year three, *Arrow* has spawned another series devoted to a Justice Leaguer in *The Flash*, and reaps the full benefits of that relationship in a two-part, midseason crossover event. Comprised of *The Flash*'s "The Flash Vs Arrow" and *Arrow*'s "The Brave And The Bold" - a lovely paean to the longstanding tradition of funnybook team-ups, named after the long-running DC title - it's a study in contrasts that examines what makes our heroes tick.

In this case, Barry Allen, despite his powers, represents "the brave", as the champion determined to set the world's wrongs right. Oliver Queen is "the bold", the vigilante willing to compromise his principles in order to defeat villains without any, and who sacrifices the things - and sometimes people - he loves so others won't have to. Of course, as Barry's friends Cisco and Caitlin point out, bravery - and cute nicknames - might come easier when the powers of one's foes are so outlandish as to render the menace they hold mere fodder for fanciful adventures.

As this episode opens, the STAR Labs team pays Starling City a visit just as Digger Harkness, a former Suicide Squad member, breaks into ARGUS headquarters, seeking vengeance from his former recruiter, Diggle's

## BONUS FEATURES

► **Did You Spot?** "The Brave And The Bold" continues *Arrow*'s tradition of shout-outs. The street intersection "Infantino and Adams" is a nod to artists Carmine Infantino and Neal Adams, who designed the Green Arrow and Flash that inform the shows.

► **Trivia** The swirl that encircles Ray Palmer's corporate logo is another nod to (and perhaps foreshadowing of) his comic-book alter ego, The Atom, whose own emblem it resembles.

► **Will Boomerang Come Back?** As longtime DC fans know, while Captain Boomerang is a long-term member of the Flash's rogues gallery, he's introduced in "The Brave And The Bold" as, primarily, the Arrow's enemy.





Retaining peripheral vision while wearing a hood is a superpower of its own.

girlfriend Lyla. The action throughout this sequence is typical of *Arrow*, in that it's pretty much the best on television (while distinguished from the SF oriented sequences in *The Flash*). In the wrong hands, Harkness (dubbed Captain Boomerang, after his weapon of choice) could look ridiculous, or be stripped of what makes him interesting in an attempt at realism. But writer-producers Greg Berlanti, Marc Guggenheim and Andrew Kreisberg do their usual finely balanced job of integrating him into the DC TV Universe, while playing up his level of cunning – a requirement of any adversary confident enough to battle the bowman and the speedster.

Some have argued that this season of *Arrow* has contained more navel-gazing and philosophical ruminations from Oliver and co than previous years – understandable when the principal antagonist thus far is Ollie's own perceived inability to be both vigilante and Starling's scion. But the navel-gazing in "The Brave And The Bold" is pierced by the levity of Team Flash, and the younger hero's belief that Oliver too can inspire people, despite his past sins.

Those looking for a greater external threat this year would do well to remember *Arrow*'s past Big Bads – Malcolm Merlyn and Slade Wilson – revealed their intentions late in their respective seasons. One glimpse at what's to come, with a bare-chested Oliver battling Ra's al Ghul in the snow, and it appears that season three will follow suit. Should things get out of hand, however, Brandon Routh's Ray "Atom" Palmer and JR Ramirez's Ted "Wildcat" Grant stand waiting in the wings. **Joseph McCabe**

## MINDPROBE

# Amy Acker

*Person Of Interest*'s resident super hacker is breaking records

### How would you describe Root's journey this year?

There's going to be a big change in her character pretty soon. She's willing to do whatever the Machine tells her to do. But we're gonna see how that can cause problems in certain situations, and maybe even [make her] question her relationship with the Machine.

### Which of your roles most closely mirrors your own personality?

Probably not Root! At the same time, when I started, [executive producers] Greg [Plageman] and Jonah [Nolan] said, "We really just want her to talk like you." But Fred is probably the closest to me. She's from Texas. She loves tacos. We'll always have that.

### What attracts Root and Shaw to each other?

They both are these interesting, tough, smart women in this strange world that maybe haven't had someone to relate to... The first scene Sarah and I had together was me torturing her with an iron. I'm really not sure if they wrote that scene to be sexual in any way!

### Are you a genre fan?

Yes. Starting with *Angel*, I was a girl in a potato sack in a demon dimension and ended up as a blue demon goddess. [Laughs.] That's been the same with *Person Of Interest* – how much you're allowed to change and grow the character seems to be different in genre television.

### Have you and Joss Whedon spoken about doing any follow-up projects after *Much Ado About Nothing*?

I was hoping when he wrapped *Avengers 2* that there was gonna be a call about the next one. So far the last Shakespeare email we got from Joss was [him] telling us we were inducted into the *Guinness Book Of World Records* for the largest cast commentary on a DVD. I guess he was working on that!

**Joseph McCabe**

*Person Of Interest* airs on CBS in the US and returns to Channel 5 later this year.

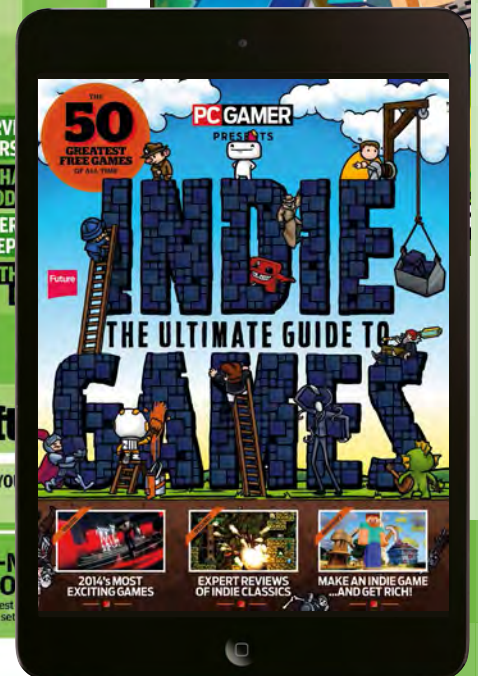
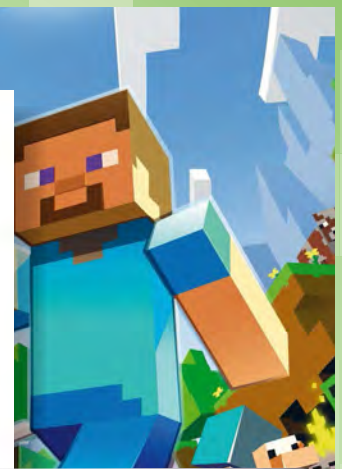




# THE ULTIMATE GIFT PACK

# MINECRAFT

The ultimate gift for minecraft fans



**ON SALE NOW**

[www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/GiftPacks](http://www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/GiftPacks)





**BROADCAST** UK: SEASON NINE, TUESDAYS ON E4 US: SEASON TEN, TUESDAYS ON THE CW

# Supernatural

## Hitting the high notes

**SUPERNATURAL IS 200** episodes old, and boy is it looking good for its age.

While most sci-fi shows seem to suffer from irreversible creative malaise somewhere around the 100-episode mark, *Supernatural* has gone from strength to strength since its transformative eighth season. All the better then that the angels at E4 stepped in to save *Supernatural* fans on this side of the pond from a world without the Winchesters, as season nine starts on E4 this month. Huzzah!

The reason this is important (beside the obvious): I'm about to gush over the fifth episode of season *ten*. So, if you don't want one of *Supernatural*'s most rewarding episodes ruined come back in about a year. I'll wait...

Still here? Then chances are you already know just how spectacularly lovely "Fan Fiction" is. Few shows could get away with the meta plots that *Supernatural* deploys on a semi-regular basis, but it's easy to forget that for every 42 minutes of self-referential bliss ("The French Mistake", "Changing Channels") there was horribly misjudged meta trudge "Season Seven, Time For A Wedding!" to sour the show's otherwise remarkable track record.

Fortunately "Fan Fiction" gets everything just right. Written by Robbie Thompson, the meta-musical episode is a heartfelt and hilarious tribute to the show and its fans. As

well as telling an inventive monster of the week tale the episode celebrates the brothers' unbreakable bond in tear-jerking fashion and is loaded with dozens of fan-pleasing references and in-jokes to the point that, three viewings in, I'm sure there are plenty I've still yet to see.

There are no limits to Thompson's mining of *Supernatural* fandom: even Destiel and Wincest are tackled, complete with spot-on deadpan reactions from Sam and Dean (but mainly Dean). Crucially the musical numbers are also ace. Much like *Buffy*'s "Once More, With Feeling", "Fan Fiction" has tunes that hold up as accomplished examples of earwormy song writing in their own right, even before weaving the Winchester life story into their lyrics.

It's astonishingly clever, laugh out loud funny and has a humdinger of a final shot too – the return of Chuck, presumed dead after his disappearance at the end of season five. A simple cameo, or has he been god all along? It's a shame there's no space for Cas (the real one), Crowley or a few other familiar faces from the show's past, but otherwise "Fan Fiction" is note perfect. **Jordan Farley**

### BONUS FEATURES

► **Star Turn:** Katie Sarife is wonderful as *Supernatural*-obsessed school girl Marie, and even makes a mean Sam!  
► **High Flyers:** Only four other *SFX* shows are part of the 200 club: *Smallville* (218), *Stargate SG-1* (214), *The X-Files* (202) and, of course, *Doctor Who* (depends who you talk to).

► **My Eyes, My Eyes:** Do not Google "Supernatural Fan Fiction images" in the hope of finding pictures from this episode. Unless that kind of thing floats your boat, of course.  
► **Best Line Calliope:** "*Supernatural* has everything. Life, death, resurrection, redemption – but above all, family. It isn't some meandering piece of genre dreck, it's... epic."

## YOU HAVE BEEN WATCHING...

## THE WALKING DEAD

What *SFX*'s Facebook and Twitter followers are saying about *The Walking Dead*'s fifth season so far...

► Late season four and all of season five (so far) have brought me back to a show I'd given up on. Mostly because of Carol. If they kill her, I'm bailing again.  
**Grahame Robertson**  
► You seriously don't think you can be impressed any more, then wham, the next episode hits and it's bloody gorgeous!  
**Brian Jackson**

► Always something to keep you on the edge of your seat and now it's the living who are to be feared more than the dead!  
**Caroline Walker**  
► The series continues to impress me – I like quiet character moments where everyone catches their breath, but I also like action and gruesome horror.  
**Neil Tex Hickman**

► How much of an asset to the group would Shane be these days? Rick might be going mad but in hindsight, his plan might have worked better – element of surprise and all that!  
**Neil Malcolm**  
► Series four and five (so far) have been *Breaking Bad* quality. Smart, deliberate, character-led, drama.  
**Stephen Saul**

► The mid-season finale disposed of a main character in one of the most pathetic deaths ever. They deserved better.  
**Stephen CWLL**  
► Really glad to see some action back inside the city. I especially liked the melty zombies and the ones stuck to the pavement.  
**Marc Farmer**  
► A little lacking in direction.

Almost like they're treading water before something big happens.  
**Robin Whitehead**  
► It's been on a roll of late but I'd still like to see a little humour. I know they're living in bleak times but if we saw them enjoying each other's company I'd probably care what happens to them more. They're always so deadly serious!  
**Ian Salsbury**







**BROADCAST** UK: AIRS ON ITV2 US: AIRS ON THE CW

# The Vampire Diaries

Better than last year – but is that enough?

**THE VAMPIRE DIARIES** IS becoming increasingly review proof. What can you say, other than, “It’s *The Vampire Diaries*, you know the score”. If we tell you that – so far – season six is slightly better than season five (which it is), that’s hardly going to get you tuning in if you’re not currently watching the show,

because you know we’re talking a matter of degrees. It’ll still be a vamp soap with a bunch of characters all playing lip-locking merry-go-round with the occasional bloody death.

We may as well tell you that the soundtrack is mildly less irritating this year. There’s a reason for that. Some of the early episodes are partially set in 1994, so the usual

## BONUS FEATURES

► **Trivia:** Matt Davis (Alaric) is now once again an official regular character.

► **Ratings:** The season premiere was the least watched premiere in the show’s history, with 1.18 million viewers in the US.

► **What’s In A Name:** The episode “Yellow Ledbetter” is

named after a Pearl Jam track that was on the B-side of the single “Jeremy”. We see no flip side to Jeremy in this episode.

► **Best Line:** Damon: “If a bunch of witches were going to get together and create some space-time purgatory, you’d think they’d pick a better year than the one Kurt Cobain killed himself. The whole thing was just very depressing.”

whiny pop from artists you’ve never heard of is replaced by some proper classics from that year by bands that you have. This is good. But is that really going to make a difference to whether you watch it or not?

Time travel suggests some major changes going on. Well, yeah. And no. This is *The Vampire Diaries*. It can *Vampire Diaries*-ise any new plot element. So yeah, bad boy vampire Damon and witch Bonnie – both presumed dead by self-sacrifice – have instead ended up in a witch-created 1994 that looks just like Mystic Falls except the place is deserted aside from an imprisoned psycho. Interesting, but not time travel. They may as well have become trapped in a deserted Burger King.

The other big gimmick is the magical barrier around Mystic Falls that doesn’t allow the supernatural to exist within it (meaning all the vampires are stuck outside). The writers have been having some fun with this concept, but you know its days are numbered.

Other than that, it’s business as usual: slick, witty on occasions, nicely gruesome when it needs to be and Damon’s fruit machine eyes are fascinatingly bizarre. But it seems to be on constant loop – and that’s the epitome of the law of diminishing returns. **Dave Golder**

**BROADCAST** UK: MONDAYS ON SYFY US: SUNDAYS ON TNT

# The Librarians

Warehouse 14?

**THE FOLLOWING IS A** transcript of an internet forum conversation a few moments after the first episode of *The Librarians* has finished airing. Possibly.

**TheDiktor:** “That was just a limp version of *Warehouse 13*.”

**AllSeeingIvy:** “I think you’ll find it’s based on three TNT TV movies called *The Librarian*, the first of which predates the first episode of *Warehouse 13* by some years.”

**TheDiktor:** “We only got them recently.”

**AllSeeingIvy:** “I wouldn’t complain. They were like cheap comedy versions of *Indiana Jones* with very poor jokes.”

**TheDiktor:** “So were they *Indiana Jones* or *Warehouse 13*?”

**AllSeeingIvy:** “I think you’ll find that



*Warehouse 13* was inspired by the final shot of *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* anyway.”

**TheDiktor:** “I’ve never heard that.”

**AllSeeingIvy:** “Some truths don’t need to be documented, they just need to be repeated

## BONUS FEATURES

► **Continuity:** Flynn (Noah Wyle) mentions having killed Dracula, which he did in the third TV movie, *Curse Of The Judas Chalice*.

► **It’s Wossname:** Christian Kane, who plays Jake Stone, is best known to telefantasy viewers as demon lawyer Lindsey McDonald in *Angel*.

► **Nitpicking:** Among the many *Doctor Who* parallels in the opening episode is a reference to a “fixed point in space”. Which just seems to be an American way of saying, “a place”.

► **Best Lines:** Eve: “I need an answer.” Flynn: “This is my answer.” Eve: “Walking away quickly is not an answer.”

enough times on the internet to become fact.”

**TheDiktor:** “True enough. So was this the same set-up? The same cast?”

**AllSeeingIvy:** “Surprisingly yes, though you won’t see as much of *ER*’s Noah Wyle, *Third Rock*’s Jane Curtin and Bob Newheart in the future. They’re handing over to the new team.”

**TheDiktor:** “At which point it will be indistinguishable from *Warehouse 13*, except the jokes are crapper. Librarians/agents travel the world to find mystical artefacts to bring back to the library/warehouse. *The Librarian* may have got there first, but if *Warehouse 13* did it better in the meantime, why bother?”

**AllSeeingIvy:** “It’s not that bad...”

**TheDiktor:** “There are some fun moments, but it’s pretty lame overall with obvious gags, cheap props, lots of shouting and a then-this, then-this, then-this plotting style. And why is Noah Wyle doing a bad impression of the Tennant and Smith Doctor combined? Bow tie and baseball boots, the bit where he becomes fascinated with the word ‘vex’ – very Moffat.”

**AllSeeingIvy:** “You won’t have to suffer for long.”

**TheDiktor:** “You’re right. I’m not bothering with the next episode.”

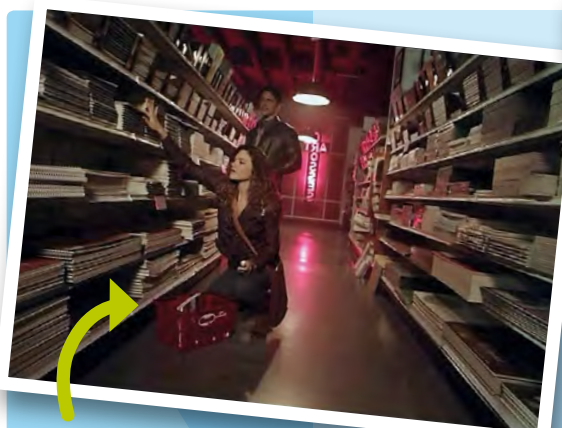
**Dave Golder**





# SPURIOUS AWARDS

Celebrating the silliest moments from the month in TV



## ● MOST DRAMATICALLY LIT STATIONERY SHOP OF THE MONTH

We're guessing this is where the devil picks up his felt tips on *Constantine*.

## ● ADORABLE AFFLICTION OF THE MONTH

The marks left by the Troubles on *Haven's* Duke look like they're giving him a hug, aww.



## ● LEAST HYGENIC POOL OF THE MONTH

Health and safety would have a field day with this swimming pool on *American Horror Story*.

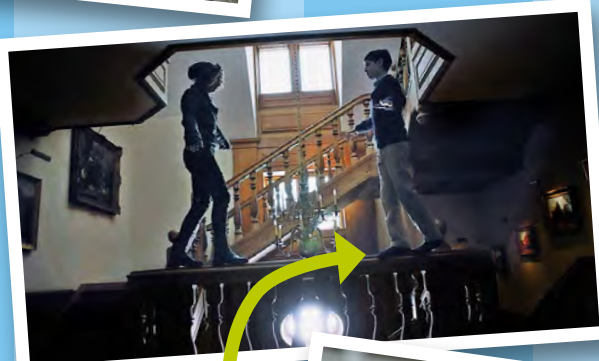


## ● UNEXPECTED SUPERPOWER OF THE MONTH

Forget exceptional archery, gloveless mountain climbing is Oliver's real superpower on *Arrow*.

## ● GEEKY T-SHIRT OF THE MONTH

Cisco seems to have a never-ending supply of geeky t-shirts on *The Flash*, but this is our favourite so far.



## ● DEATH WISH OF THE MONTH

Balancing precariously on a banister in SOCKS? That's just asking for a broken neck on *Gotham*.

## ● FAR-FETCHED PRODUCT PLACEMENT OF THE MONTH

Did anyone like *Tron*: *Legacy* enough to want a licensed lunch box? Once *Upon A Time's* Henry doesn't count.



## ● COMICAL ELECTROSHOCK MOMENT OF THE MONTH

Conclusive proof on *SHIELD* that whenever you freeze frame a character getting electrocuted it's always hilarious.



## ● DAPPER VAMPS OF THE MONTH

Seems Kol didn't get the memo that tuxes and top hats were in this season on *The Originals*.



## ● EXTREME WEIGHT LOSS OF THE MONTH

Well, that's one way to shed a few pounds on *Supernatural*.





## The Riddler



### NICK SETCHFIELD, FEATURES EDITOR

As lean and as crooked as one of his question marks, Frank Gorshin's Riddler is my favourite Batman villain.

Mainlining the box-set of the '60s series, I'm reminded how Gorshin's brand of supervillainy exists in a whole other league to his fellow Bat-felons. So many of the show's guest stars feel like Hollywood warhorses plundering the dressing-up box and having a right old hoot, earning cool points with the grandkids and banking anecdotes for Bing's next pool party in Palm Springs.

Gorshin's different. Gorshin's crazy.

Just look at him, this deranged matchstick man in green tights, scampering through the day-glo unreality of Gotham City. Convulsed in hysteria, a vein throbbing fit to burst on his brow, he's like a spider frying in an electric socket – and loving it. Gorshin brings such a brilliant, defining physicality to the role. No wonder the equally elastic Jim Carrey openly homaged his predecessor in 1995's *Batman Forever*.

You can hear the madness of King Frank in that immortal giggle, too. It's a contagiously cracked sound, more demented than a hyena dosed on laughing gas. But watch how Gorshin switches in a heartbeat from manic glee to psychotic chill. There's something genuinely frightening in those eyes. He's the only '60s Batman villain you'd be wise to be afraid of (King Tut? Get out of here).

Gorshin confessed he stole that giggle from Richard Widmark in 1947's *Kiss Of Death* (it's the sound of a man pushing a wheelchair-bound old lady down the stairs, apparently). He first won fame as an impressionist, in fact, and became a popular nightclub draw, headlining in Vegas.

And there's a definite pinch of Rat Pack DNA in him.

Gorshin once performed a song as the Riddler on a Dean Martin TV special. Sharp of suit, flanked by go-go girls, he reels off puzzlers before collapsing in demented fits. YouTube it. It's like a lounge act in hell.

There's a Gorshin anecdote I love. One day he stole the Batmobile. Shooting a scene where the Riddler hijacks the caped crusader's wheels in a Gotham alley, Gorshin ignored the frantic cries of "Cut!", gunned the accelerator and kept driving, rocketing into the Hollywood hills. I'd like to believe he was giggling all the way, the lunatic. **SFX**

### ● FACT ATTACK!

- Frank Gorshin was Emmy-nominated for his turn as the Riddler.
- He appeared on the same 1964 edition of *The Ed Sullivan Show* as the Beatles.
- The Riddler only appeared in two 1940s comic book stories before being revived in the mid-'60s.
- Gorshin returned to the role of the Riddler in 1979 cringe-a-thon *Legends Of The Superheroes*.
- He actually played two Batman villains. He voiced Hugo Strange in three 2005 episodes of animated series *The Batman*.
- Gorshin left the ultimate riddle behind him. His gravestone asks "What does it all mean?"



© GETTY IMAGES

**SEE YOU NEXT MONTH! WEDNESDAY 4 FEBRUARY** DETAILS ON PAGE 29



# JUDGE DREDD

THE MEGA COLLECTION

**THE OFFICIAL  
JUDGE DREDD®  
GRAPHIC NOVEL  
COLLECTION**  
WITH DEFINITIVE STORIES,  
EXCLUSIVE BONUS  
CONTENT AND PREVIOUSLY  
UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL

ISSUE 1 ONLY  
**£1.99!**

PRE-ORDER TODAY  
**FOR YOUR  
CHANCE TO WIN**  
A FREE SUBSCRIPTION!



**COLLECTOR'S  
HARDBACK  
EDITIONS**

[WWW.JUDGEDREDDCOLLECTION.COM](http://WWW.JUDGEDREDDCOLLECTION.COM)





**Eight classic adventures.  
Eight unforgettable moments in time.**

Available to pre-order now! Publishing 12th Feb 2015



**THE HISTORY COLLECTION**