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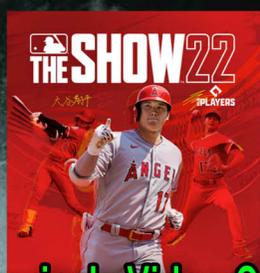
MONTHLY



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FILM / TV NEWS, STORIES, INTERVIEWS, NERD OPINIONS, MUSIC NEWS, REVIEWS, GAMING, COMICS, COSPLAY & SCIENCE NEWS



"America's Video Game"
By Marcus Blake

SUPERHEROES AS AMERICAN MYTHOLOGY

By Allison Costa



By Sydney Costa

"Tales of A Warped Teenage Brain"



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>"Superheroes as American Mythology" by Allison Costa</i>	Pg. 5
Film and TV News	Pg. 11
Monthly Movie Reviews	Pg. 13
<i>"Thor: Love and Thunder" Review by Marcus Blake</i>	Pg. 13
<i>"The Gray Man" Review by Alex Moore</i>	Pg. 14
<i>"Where the Crawdads Sings" Review by Marcus Blake</i>	Pg. 15
<i>"The Sea Beast" Review by Allison Costa</i>	Pg. 15
<i>"DC League of Super-pets" Review by Chloe James</i>	Pg. 16
<i>"ICON" Review by Marcus Blake</i>	Pg. 17
<i>"Don't Make Me Go" Review by Danielle Butler</i>	Pg. 18
OPINION:	Pg. 21
<i>"When the Internet Gets it Right: Resident Evil (Netflix) Series Review" by Brendan Smith</i>	Pg. 21
Gaming News	Pg. 25
<i>Opinion: "America's Video Game!" Reviewing MLB: the Show by Marcus Blake</i>	Pg. 31
Comic Book News	Pg. 35
<i>Cosplay: The Best of Superhero Cosplay - DFW Wonder Woman and Americas Sass</i>	Pg. 41
<i>DFW Wonder Woman Cosplay and Interview</i>	Pg. 42
<i>Americas Sass Cosplay and Interview</i>	Pg. 45
Music Stuff	Pg. 51
<i>"B-Side Reviews:" by Mariah Munn - Black Midi: Hellfire Album Review</i>	Pg. 53
Science News	Pg. 56
Storytellers	Pg. 61
<i>"Space Pizza: Part 1 - "Tales of A Warped Teenage Brain" by Sydney Costa</i>	Pg. 63
Word Games	Pg. 67
<i>The Avengers Wordcross</i>	Pg. 68



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SUPERHEROES AS AMERICAN MYTHOLOGY

By Allison Costa



THE last 20 years have seen America become obsessed with “The Avengers” franchise. The re-make of “The Avengers” ushered in a brand-new generation’s obsession with all things superhero. Now we will have Superhero movies and shows for generations to come, but this is not a new concept. Superheroes have been around for decades. Long before Marvel Studios made them a household name. In fact, superheroes are the legends and stories that makeup America’s Mythology. In them lies the roots for the foundation of America. In Joseph Campbell’s text, “The Hero with a Thousand Faces”, he argues for the principles found within mythology that characterize what he terms as “monomyth” or “the hero’s journey”. Campbell describes the narratives of Moses

and Christ in terms of his monomyth ideals and also claims that myths from many cultures and time periods follow this same basic pattern. Decades later, as one analyzes modern American culture and literature, it can be argued that this same hero’s journey is epitomized within the superheroes of today’s society and the parallels to Campbell’s “hero’s journey” portray superheroes as the best example of American mythology and monomyth.

All the way back in 1948, Joseph Campbell said the following concerning the hero’s journey and its significance in analyzing universal mythology, “the parallels will be immediately apparent; and these will develop a vast and amazingly constant statement of the basic truths by which man has lived throughout the millenniums of his residence on the planet”. Campbell is largely concerned with universal truths and his attempts to find these truths in an assortment of literature that spans both time, distance, and culture.



One of the main reasons why Superheroes have once again risen to the top of American culture, and indeed now the culture of the world is because of the unifying factors they portray in connecting all human beings and their mortal experience.



Regardless of Nationality, Gender, Culture, Upbringing, or the thousands of other factors that could separate human beings, somehow the world of superheroes finds a way to touch upon the mortal experience that everyone who has ever lived will experience in some capacity. When we look at the myriads of characters represented in the Marvel Universe and the DC Universe, we are all able to find ourselves resonating with the characters. We empathize with their loneliness, their trials, their sacrifices and heartaches, all the while fantasizing that we had their powers and abilities and finding strength in their triumphs.

In finding universal human truths that both resonate across centuries of religious scripture, culture, empires and mythology, modern-day superheroes point us all towards unification and “sense of human mutual understanding. As we are told in the Vedas: ‘Truth is one, the sages speak of it by many names’” (Campbell). Campbells

depicts the first stage in the Hero's Journey as "The Call to Adventure". This call is the first moment that hero himself (and thereby the audience), knows that his life will never be the same. Picture the moment Peter Parker gets bitten by a spider and comes home to realize he can climb on walls. Or the first time Tony Stark faces off against an unknown foe in his suit. During these instances, the heroes start to evolve into something more than the person they have been. These scenes appeal to us as the audience or the reader so much because we are all yearning for these defining moments in our life. We are all looking for that time when our lives and our purpose of what we are meant to do will call to us—even though it probably won't be through a super-human ability, this innate longing for purpose appeals to everyone.



Campbell states that this first stage of adventure "signifies that destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society into a zone unknown". The hero has now become "more" than he or she ever thought possible. Often this new "zone unknown" is more than just an instance, it can also be a literal geographic place that is new and foreign. It could be a distant country, a dark forest, a new kingdom, or even a secret realm. Campbell uses references such as King Arthur, and a Native American plains myth and the "Legend of the Four Signs", to show the universality of the signifiers in the call to adventure stage. Modern-day examples one may cite include the character of Frodo Baggins leaving the Shire to travel into the rest of Middle Earth, or Harry Potter discovering the secret world of wizardry co-existing alongside human beings that "muggles" simply cannot see. For Superheroes, this call to adventure often comes in their first battle against an enemy

they weren't even aware they had, often in an unusual and foreign location.



Whatever this new realm entails, whether physical or mental, it is obvious from this new event that our hero cannot go back to his/her previous state of ignorance. For example, in the case of the X-Men, quite often this is the moment when their powers first manifest themselves and they realize that they can no longer pretend to be ordinary, or "normal". The moment they are first approached by Charles Xavier to join his institute, or perhaps the moment their blood family begins to view them as a "freak" because of their powers. With Batman, it happens once he realizes that he can't sit back and let criminals win when he has the power to change the outcome. And with the Avengers it may start the moment they realize they have to work as a real team to beat an other-worldly foe. The Call to Adventure appeals to individuals from around the world, but especially to Americans because this is our heritage. A Nation that was founded by "heroes" who knew they were different from where they came from. They literally left their homeland to claim a foreign land and start a new nation. Of course, the similarities in the heritage of America and the Hero's Journey call out to so many searching for more freedom and opportunity.

For our heroes, these new events in their lives and the knowledge that their world is about to include new powers,

abilities, villains, and battles signifies that they will never be the same. Once hearing this "call" they then must decide which path they will follow. The decision to answer the call or refuse, brings us to the next step along our hero's journey, the "Refusal of the Call". Often immediately following the call to adventure, our would-be hero hesitates and tries to deny the fates or refuse the call. Think of the moment when all of the Avengers are fighting and choose to walk away from the conflict because of huge egos. It's not until the death of Coulson that they re-examine their decisions and are fully committed to take action. Campbell states that often times in literature and actual life, the refusal to the call means that the protagonist is simply not blessed with the transcendent experience he/she would have otherwise had, had they answered to their destiny. Often time innocent people are hurt or killed because our hero is hesitant to act. They have not fully committed to this new life and it takes losing something or someone important to them for them to have a profoundly changing life lesson.

Again, the audience can empathize with these types of choices. We are able to see on big and small screens the results of poor choices or regrets. We all have decisions in life that we wish we had done differently. Things we wish we could take back or re-do. Seeing our heroes experience this same loss and feelings of angst helps us to not feel alone in our experience.

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Joseph Campbell argues that the histories and myths of the world portray this "refusal to the call" to in fact be a refusal related to fully discovering oneself and one's own life interest. The hero not only turns his/her back on a transcendent

adventure but on the opportunity to become an entirely new creature and thus fulfill the measure of their creation. Do we do this? Do we turn down opportunities for growth or change because it seems to hard? And when we do, are we not in fact denying ourselves the chance to become more than we have previously been?



For our heroes, by trying to avoid an unknown future that they fear, they often bring their own tragic fate upon them, and stand in need of assistance from some higher force. This “assistance” brings us to Campbell’s third stage in “Departure”, namely “Supernatural Aid”.

Universal myths or legends from different historical and cultural backgrounds all contain some kind of protective figure our spirit guide. As Campbell cites, among the American Indians of the Southwest, the favorite personage for this role is the Spider Woman, an old woman who lives underground and offers assistance to those on a quest. In the case of the Twin War gods of the Navaho who sought their father the Sun, the Spider Woman gave them not only a direction to head in, but also gave them feathers of protection and warning of what was to come. Similarly in Greek mythology, the thread of Ariadne brought

Theseus safely through the adventure of the labyrinth. If Superheroes are truly American Mythology than logic tells us that they must follow this same pattern of discovery. For Thor it is in his moments with Odin, who is both his father and his counselor that he taps into who he is truly meant to become. For Spiderman he has several guides along the way, but in the recent re-make its Tony Stark a.k.a. Ironman who inspires him as to the kind of superhero he wants to be.



Other examples from modern-day could include the characters of Gandalf, and Dumbledore. Or in the case of the X-Men, this guide is most frequently Professor Charles Xavier as he serves as a Savior figure for many of the mutants. For Batman, this guide is often his humble servant Alfred, who always reminds him of who he truly is when he becomes lost. This guardian or guide will take the hero up to the next stage of his/her journey, which is “The Crossing of the First Threshold”. Even though the hero is entitled to aid and

direction from a higher source, in order to fulfill their destiny, there are parts of his/her journey that they must do completely by themselves. In the Avengers series, as well as other trilogies and series that have recently been re-done, such as Spiderman, Thor, Batman, and even new series like Loki and Wanda Vision, there is always a point when even our hero’s guide can no longer help them. In order to fully embrace their destiny, they must do the hardest part of their journey alone. And thus, it is with all of us in mortality. Despite having wonderful friends or mentors, often it is the hardest aspects of life that only we can experience. That we must overcome ourselves. So, of course, watching our heroes in the depths of their despair rise to incredible challenges afterward would appeal to us.

This is why there will always be superhero stories—both new and old. Why older superhero stories will always be re-done for the next generation. Why new superhero stories and their origin stories will continue to be written to reflect the struggles of our modern society.

Because our heroes are simply the best within us. They are the good we want to see. They are the power we long to have. They are the change we yearn to make. They destroy all of the many factors that divide us as human beings and unite us in a common universal language where we belong. Where we fit in. Where we make a difference and are needed. Every human being that ever has and ever will exist wants these same basic tenants—purpose, love, meaning and acceptance. And our superhero mythology is what makes us believe it is possible.





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FILM & TV NEWS

Ben Affleck Back as Batman For 'Aquaman' Sequel With Jason Momoa



Reunited and it feels so good. Ben Affleck is ready to don the Batsuit yet again for the Warner Bros/DC sequel *Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom*. Sea god Jason Momoa spilled the news on social media today. "REUNITED bruce and arthur," Momoa wrote on Instagram today, along with a photo of him and Affleck (see it below). "love u and miss u Ben WB studio tours just explored the backlot alright. busted on set all great things coming AQUAMAN 2 all my aloha j" Deadline has

reached out to Warner Bros for more details about Affleck's Bat-return.

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He most recently played Bruce Wayne/Batman in 2017's superhero mashup *Justice League* (and in last year's Zack

Snyder director's cut of the pic) and in 2016's *Suicide Squad*. The two-time Oscar winner played the dual role in 2016's *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* and its is set to reprise for next year's *The Flash*. Momoa played Aquaman in *Batman v Superman* and *Justice League*.

No word yet on how big Affleck's role will be in the next Aquaman pic, which is set to hit theaters March 17. Momoa is back as the waterlogged title hero aka Arthur Curry, and James Wan returns as director. *Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom* is written by David Leslie Johnson-McGoldrick. Plot details remain submerged, but Amber Heard is back for more, alongside Patrick Wilson, Yahya Abdul-Mateen II, Dolph Lundgren, Nicole Kidman, Randall Park and others. *Reported by Deadline.com*

'Tomb Raider' Rights Up For Grabs After MGM Exit; Alicia Vikander Role To Be Recast



MGM no longer holds rights to produce the *Tomb Raider* film franchise, which has spawned three movies with the most recent in 2018 starring Alicia Vikander. The actress is no longer attached to a planned sequel,

and Graham King's GK Films is now shopping rights and seeking a new lead, Deadline has confirmed. A bidding battle is underway, we hear. Stay tuned for who comes out on top.

Angelina Jolie kicked off the film series in 2001 with *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*, spawning a sequel two years later, *Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life*, both via Paramount. Vikander took on the role for the Roar Uthaug-directed reboot which grossed \$274.7 million at the worldwide box office for distributor Warner Bros.

A sequel to that movie had been in the works since 2019 with Vikander set to return. Ben

Wheatley and more recently *Lovecraft Country's* Misha Green had been attached to direct, the latter as late as last year. MGM even had a release date: March 2021, smack in the middle of the Covid pandemic.

King acquired film rights to the original video game property from Square Enix Ltd. in 2011. The action-adventure game was a massive hit after its 1996 debut, spawning multiple sequel games and eventually the Jolie-starring movie adaptations. MGM has been recalibrating since being acquired by Amazon in an \$8.5 billion deal that closed in May. *Reported by Deadline.com*

'Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning Part Two' Adds 'Mindhunter' Star Holt McCallany



Holt McCallany (*Mindhunter*) has signed on for a role in *Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning Part Two*. He joins an ensemble led by Tom Cruise, which also includes Hayley Atwell, Shea Whigham and Pom Klementieff, as previously announced. *Part Two* is the eighth title in a franchise of spy actioners centered on Cruise's Impossible Missions Force agent Ethan Hunt, who with his team has embarked on assorted globe-trotting missions to avert global disaster. While the plot of the pic discussed as a potential franchise ender has thus far been kept

under wraps, Christopher McQuarrie has returned to direct from his own script, after mounting *Dead Reckoning Part One*. In the new film, McCallany will play Secretary of Defense Bernstein. Cruise and McQuarrie are producing for Paramount Pictures and Skydance, with David Ellison, Dana Goldberg, Don Granger and Chris Brock serving as exec producers. The release dates for both parts of *Dead Reckoning* have been delayed multiple times by the Covid pandemic, with *Part One* now set for July 14, 2023 and *Part Two* set for June 28, 2024.



McCallany is perhaps best known for his role as FBI Special Agent Bill Tench on

Netflix's Emmy-nominated drama series *Mindhunter*, examining the early days of criminal profiling. He stars opposite Courtney B. Vance on AMC's legal drama *61st Street*, which has been renewed for a second season, and has also been seen on *Lights Out*, among many other series. The actor was most recently seen on the film side in Guillermo del Toro's Searchlight feature *Nightmare Alley*, opposite Bradley Cooper and Cate Blanchett, also appearing opposite Jason Statham in Guy Ritchie's *Wrath of Man*. *Reported by Deadline.com*



Jake McLaughlin, Theo Rossi, Miki Ishikawa & Arielle Kebbel To Star In Sci-Fi Thriller 'Site' From Writer-Director Jason Eric Perlman



Jake McLaughlin (*Quantico*), Theo Rossi (*Sons of Anarchy*), Miki Ishikawa (*The Falcon and the Winter Soldier*) and Arielle Kebbel (*9-1-1*) will lead the cast of the sci-fi thriller *Site*, which Jason Eric Perlman (*Threshold*) is directing for the newly-formed shingle Entelekey Media, from his original script.

The film currently in production in North Carolina centers on Neil Bardo (McLaughlin), a commercial real estate inspector and committed family man who accidentally injures his only son. To keep his marriage to Elena (Kebbel) intact while facing crushing medical costs, Neil begs for additional shifts from his mercenary boss, Garrison (Rossi). While inspecting an abandoned government facility, he's confronted by nightmarish visions that now begin infiltrating his waking life. Desperate for answers, Neil enlists the help of ex-girlfriend turned journalist Naomi (Ishikawa). And together they unravel the

mystery of the covert government site and its soul-bending experiments.

ers are Kelly Hayes and Benjamin Cooke. Yvonne Supangkat is exec producing the pic for Entelekey Media.

"For all its mind-bending ambition, I believe *Site* is a film uniquely suited to our moment," said Perlman. "We've never experienced a greater awareness of our global interconnectedness, nor our collective crises—and *Site* really aims to look at the metaphysics of that collision. We couldn't be more gratified by attracting this caliber of cast!"

McLaughlin starred in the hit drama series *Quantico*, which aired for three seasons on ABC, and prior to that, in NBC's *Believe*. His film work includes Oliver Stone's *Savages*, the Warner Independent crime drama *In the Valley of Elah*, and Gavin O'Connor's *Warrior*. He can currently be seen in the Apple TV+ limited series *Black Bird* with Paul Walter Hauser and Taron Egerton.

Rossi is best known for his turns as the menacing Hernan 'Shades' Alvarez in Marvel's *Luke Cage*, as hacker and intelligence officer Juan Carlos 'Juice' Ortiz in FX's *Sons of Anarchy*, and as infection evaluation officer Burt Cummings in Zack Snyder's zombie heist pic *Army of the Dead*. He will next be seen starring alongside Aubrey Plaza in the thriller *Emily the Criminal*, which is slated for

release by Roadside Attractions and Vertical Entertainment on August 12, after being snapped up in a bidding war at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival.

Ishikawa recently recurred on Marvel's *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier* for Disney+. She was also notably a series regular on AMC's critically acclaimed drama series *The Terror*, developed by David Kajganich.

Kebbel recently appeared in a major recurring role on the hit Fox series *9-1-1* and can also be seen in the third and fourth chapter in the *After* film series: *After We Fell* (which is currently available for streaming on Netflix) and *After Ever* for director Castille London. The actress played the lead role of Amelia in NBC's *Lincoln Rhyme: Hunt for the Bone Collector* and also previously starred in NBC's *Midnight, Texas*, among other series.

Perlman is an award-winning writer-director who made his feature directorial debut with the horror-thriller *Threshold*, which was released by Archstone in 2019. The film was awarded Best Horror at the Hollywood Reel Independent Film Festival, won laurels for Best Feature Film at FirstGlance Philadelphia, and is now available on all digital platforms. Also coming up for the director is a limited series titled *Smogtown*, which he's been tapped to write. *reported by deadline.com*

MONTHLY MOVIE



REVIEWS



Thor: Love and Thunder

Review by Marcus Blake



The mighty Thor is back! *Thor: Love and Thunder* is the first film about the Norse god after the “Infinity War” movies and we get to catch up with the God of Thunder as he not only transforms his body from “Fat Thor” to the “Warrior God Thor” we know from the Avenger movies. If you remember, he went off with the Guardians of the Galaxy at the end of *Endgame*. But for the first time in nearly 10 years, we also have Dr. Jane Foster back. It’s been interesting to see all the Marvel movies and Disney + series in Phase 4 after *Endgame*, how these heroes have adapted to a world 5 years later, and seeing their stories being set up for the next great villain. I’ve always been a big fan of Thor. His origin movie in 2011 is one of my favorites, leading to the first Avengers movie and while *Thor: Dark World* was not exactly a good movie, they hit it out of the park with *Thor: Ragnarok*. I wish I could say *Love and Thunder* is as good as *Ragnarok*, but sadly that isn’t true! That’s not to say you shouldn’t see it if you are a Marvel Fan, but it’s another example of how we’ve already seen the best of the Marvel movies and everything else is merely, “okay” except for *Spider-Man: No Way Home*. There’s a lot

of great comedy in this movie, but unfortunately, it overshadows the story.

We find Thor going on many adventures with the Guardians until he is called into action to save New Asgard from a mysterious villain known only as the “God Butcher.” This villain shows up, intent on destroying everything. His story is explained at the beginning of the movie, but basically, you have a villain that wants to destroy all gods, played by Christian Bale. He’s good in the movie, but he’s generally good in any one of his movies. However, he alone can’t save the story. While Thor is defending New Asgard, he meets his old flame, Jane Foster, who has become a Thor herself by using the power of Thor’s hammer! Her reasons will be explained in the movie, so I won’t spoil it. You have two Thors coming together to fight this new villain. It’s great to see Natalie Portman back playing a “Lady Thor.” She and Chris Hemsworth have great chemistry together, which was evident from the first Thor movie, and they kick butt in this one. As much as I enjoyed both of them and as much as I enjoyed the comedy, the story is kind of “blah” because we’ve seen the story before where a powerful villain wants to destroy other powerful beings. After 30 or so Marvel movies and series, it feels like familiar territory. This movie almost feels like an origin story for Natalie Portman’s Lady Thor than a continuation of Thor’s story. Yes, Thor is the main character, but this movie is mostly about her coming back into his life and fighting alongside him. It’s great to have the old band back together, but I wonder where she has been all along leading up to the Infinity War movies. She seems like a central character, just as important as Pepper Potts or Black widow. What makes this movie work is the comedy and the action in it. Unfortunately, that’s all you really have. The thing about *Thor: Ragnarok* is it was a perfect balance of everything that you would want in a movie. It had comedy, it had action, and there were some great emotional connections between Thor and Loki. That movie truly propels these characters leading into the Infinity War movies. I don’t know where they’re going with *Love and Thunder* except to reintroduce Jane Foster. It’s obvious that there will be

another big villain at the end of Phase 4 and of course, this movie teases storylines with gods like Zeus and Hercules, but the story isn’t very clear except as a way to bring back Jane Foster in what almost feels like some kind of “superhero rom-com.” It’s funny and entertaining, but where’s the serious story that’s leading to a bigger story as we saw with all The Marvel movies leading up to the Infinity Wars. Chris Hemsworth is great in this movie, but sadly, he was always better being able to play off of Tom Hiddleston’s, Loki. Not having Loki around anymore doesn’t make Thor that interesting, his character is better with Loki or the rest of the Avengers. *Love and Thunder* feels more like a generic action-comedy film instead of an emotional superhero movie that’s leading to something bigger. I laughed, but I didn’t feel as connected to these characters as I did in the first two Thor movies. The story seems very basic with characters getting back together like it’s some kind of high school reunion, but in the end doesn’t have the same emotional weight has past Marvel movies. It could have been better, but it appears that Taika Waititi just wanted to make an action-comedy movie simply to entertain us and not having to care about the characters like we once did in past films. Maybe we’ll appreciate this film more when the bigger story of Phase 4 is complete.

Overall, it’s an entertaining film, but doesn’t match the greatness of past Thor films. It’s great to have these characters back, but I personally had a better connection to them in the earlier Marvel movies. This film feels like they’re rebooting a franchise and bringing back the original cast just for nostalgia. Chris Hemsworth and Natalie Portman are great, but their chemistry can’t save this film! It’s not one of the better Marvel Movies and feels way too familiar without giving us anything new about the characters except to reunite them. But, this is Marvel Phase 4 and sometimes you make a movie just to catch up with old characters before they play their role in a bigger story. That’s all *Love and Thunder* really is. Maybe there’s more to this story than what we’re seeing in the film, but time will tell. You may laugh and you may enjoy the action, but it’s not enough to

remember the movie... I mean, how many of you go back and watch *Iron Man 3*. That's the best comparison I can make. This is the "Iron Man 3" of the Thor movies. You watch it for your favorite characters, but don't care much for the story. There are two very interesting credits scenes that are obviously building to something bigger, and it will be interesting to see what happens to these characters in the larger picture of Phase 4, but *Love and Thunder* is mostly forgettable as a film. One thing that does help save it... a great Guns n' Roses soundtrack.

Final Grade: 6 / 10 (Adequate)

The Gray Man

Review by Alex Moore



I remember when The Bourne franchise began. I had not begun to really dive in to the 007 series of movies and so, when I DID get around to that, I thought it was like another Bourne. Now, I know better that to think that, but perhaps James Bond's style was adjusted to match the other great attractions of those days. Did that really need to happen? Who can say? Sometimes it is better to thrive than to stick to your guns, so to speak. When I began

"The Gray Man," the latest offering from Netflix, I could not help but feel reminded of these aforementioned films. Do you remember when 007 was held up in a North Korean prison and was eventually plucked from there by his government? Yeah, me, too! So, Court Gentry, also known as Sierra Six, played by Ryan Gosling ("First Man"), meets up with a member of the CIA, Donald Fitzroy, played by Billy Bob Thornton ("A Million Little Pieces"). He is a prisoner, but will soon be plucked by his government...

If you ever find yourself struggling to keep up with the timeline, join the club. All I can tell is that it is 2003 when the story begins and, eventually, we wind up in current day, 2022, presumably. Somewhere in between those 19 years, Six is on an assignment in Bangkok, Thailand to assassinate a target. As it turns out, that target is another agent, 'Four.' It was at this point that I took note of some of the acting performances. Not-so-great ones at that. As if the messy timeline were not enough to cope with, there is another constant, which I found all-too-repetitive: a multitude of title cards showcasing the next location. Yes, I know that James Bond has been known to travel all around the globe, but I do not recall the constant reminders showing up in big letters seemingly every 15 minutes or so... but I digress, so we will move on.

Beyond Gosling and Thornton, we have a rather impressive supporting cast. In actuality, Thornton is pretty limited on screen, but is highly impactful. He is just that kind of an actor. So, Chris Evans ("Lightyear") is Lloyd Hansen. He was once a colleague of Six, if that sounds familiar, too. However, he is on the opposite end of the spectrum, which makes him the villain. As much as I enjoyed seeing Evans in a role like this, I could not get over his distinctive 'look,' which I would humorously describe as a German track star from the 1980s.

Dani Miranda, played by Ana de Armas ("No Time to Die") is, quite possibly, the only real trusted ally that Six has, throughout. It was great to see her play as a skilled agent, again, after appearing in the latest 007 movie, though she had a larger and more important part to play in this one. I think it is important to note the portrayal of Rege-Jean Page ("Sylvie's Love") as Denny Carmichael. I know that he is strongly being considered to play the part of James Bond for the upcoming era of the film franchise, but if that is to be the case, I will not look forward to his acting, based on this particular part. However, it is only one part and not one he will be remembered for. Most fans of his would probably agree with that.

The only other performance that really stood out was that of Julia Butters ("Once Upon a Time in Hollywood") as Claire Fitzroy. She becomes something of a surrogate daughter to Six, if you will pardon the cliché, and does a fine job with what she has. Of

course, there are not any real surprises with her story arc, just so you are aware. That might be one of the most glaring details about "The Gray Man." I realize that originality is not everything, but something needs to stand out in a positive way to be memorable and aside from Thornton's performance, which is laughable for all the right reasons (AND the wrong ones), I simply did not see it here. Well, that closing fight scene was pretty good, but you will need some patience to get to that point. The Russo Brothers have had some nice movies, but also their fair share of average and even bad ones, too. I watched "Extraction" a couple of years ago and was not very impressed, yet a sequel is slated for next year, as well. This is not down to the level of "You, Me and Dupree," but it is NOT up to the level of "Avengers: End Game," either. It is somewhere in between, which is pretty average, like "Extraction."

James Bond will return, but I cannot be too sure if Sierra Six will. Maybe he will, but I will not look forward to that in nearly the same way. Maybe others will and that is absolutely fine. After all, there are additional 'Gray Man' novels still floating around, right? Make that money, Mark Greaney and good luck.

Final Grade: 5 / 10 (Average)

Where the Crawdads Sing

Review by Marcus Blake



Where the Crawdads Sing, based on the best-selling book, hits theaters this week. If you're a fan of the book, then it is a must-see film and if you're just a casual moviegoer, then it's worth checking out. You won't be disappointed! It has a modern-day *To Kill a Mockingbird* feel to it. The movie had a wonderful cast that leaves you with wonderment and intrigue about the "old south" without the anger that comes from the political tensions of that era. It's a wonderful story about a girl who is forced to take care of herself and grows up in the marshlands of North Carolina. It is a tale of mystery and love to the backdrop of a court trial where the town's "golden son" is found murdered and the girl that no one understands is accused of the crime.

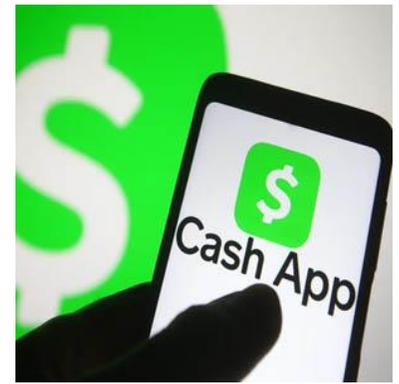
Not having read the book, I enjoyed the movie very much, mostly because of the wonderful performances from the cast. Daisy Edgar-Jones is the new "it girl." Beautiful and talented, she was almost perfect or made to play Kya Clark, the story's main character. While she has not done many movies compared to TV or "limited series" on streaming services, this will certainly be her breakout role and you'll understand why once you see her performance. In a lot of ways, she makes the movie better than it probably should be and her performance is definitely worthy of an Oscar nomination. The other great performance comes from David Strahan, who plays her lawyer and channels his best "Atticus Finch" while defending her to where it almost makes you feel like you are watching the modern-day version of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The story is intriguing and has many layers to it, mostly because it is set in the marshlands of North Carolina, which is its own character, especially as you're dealing with Kya who becomes a Naturalist and understands the wildlife of that area better than most. I don't think I would have liked the movie as much if it weren't for the performances of the two

main characters because the film does feel familiar as if Harper Lee had written it herself.

It's not a perfect movie and my biggest complaint is that it does feel familiar, and you have seen the story before. All the tropes from the classic story, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, are there? A misunderstood person is accused of murder, there's a witch hunt to put her away because she's the obvious choice, and then a good-hearted lawyer defends her because he cares more about truth than appearances. If you're going to copy a story about the "old south" and about standing up for what's right, then *To Kill a Mockingbird* is the way to go. But it is the performances that overshadow this familiarity. The pacing is pretty good, but for me, the one downfall to it being a perfect movie is the overkill when it comes to foreshadowing. There's no surprise to the mystery in the story. The filmmakers drop so many clues about what really happened that it doesn't leave you that surprised at the end. While I will not spoil it, I don't think you'll be surprised. Foreshadowing is a useful tool, but it has to be subtle, and if you keep dropping clues even to the point where the opposing attorney explains to the audience what really happened, then you take away the mystery and intrigue of the story. That's never good!

It is a good film, marked by great performances. It's probably not one you should pay a full-price movie ticket for, but it's worth the matinee price. Even if you only watch it once, you will enjoy the good parts of the story, despite the fact you may not be surprised at the ending. It's also a perfect one to rent if you're cooking dinner and staying in for the evening. The "To Kill a Mockingbird" feel to the story is a double-edged sword as it does make the movie feel way too familiar or makes you want to go back and watch the original film. However, at the same time, a story that feels like another story you could identify with, and love is not necessarily a bad thing. The marshlands provide an interesting side character and definitely adds some intrigue to the story, which a lot of movies lack these days. *Where the Crawdads Sing* is a beautiful movie, but you'll be more impressed with the performances than the overall plot. However, the performances are so good that it does make this film worth watching. Daisy Edgar Jones and David Strahan give Oscar-worthy performances, which makes the film better than it really is.

Final Grade: 7 / 10 (Average)



The Sea Beast

Review by Allison Costa



Recently Netflix debuted a new original animated film titled "The Sea Beast". Now, with the exception of just a few other titles (like Mitchell's vs. the Machines), most of these Netflix "originals" are complete flops and don't measure up alongside the real heavy hitters of family and children's film-making. However, this time I think they have a winner on their hands. With characters that have personality and grit, a fun storyline and some great actors voicing the main characters (Karl Urban), this film really comes to have a life and place of its own. A great children's film needs to have action, comedy, growth in the characters and some kind of moral that doesn't feel blatantly thrown in your face. In "The Sea Beast", we are our main characters grow and there is definitely a deeper moral of who the real monsters are and honoring nature and the world without it coming off as cheesy or pushy.

It follows the journey of both a young orphan girl as well as a grown man (who is also an orphan) and a monster hunter. We see both characters evolve in their life perceptions and relationship. We also see growth amongst the main Sea Captain who has a vendetta against the fierce Red Bluster. After the film was over, my 9yr old even said to me "mom

that reminded me a lot of the Moby Dick book that I read". And while The Sea Beast is definitely NOT Moby Dick, there are similarities in the life lessons that are shared that even young children can pick up on.

The movie also ends with a reminder of the beauty and simplicity of family life, and that family are the people we choose and that choose to love us in this life. A reminder that is much needed for everyone right now. It wasn't flashy or in-your-face, just a nice message to enjoy what we have. In terms of the actual animation, it was also spectacular and very well-done. Along the lines of the animation in the "How to train your Dragon" series, and really brought the characters to life even more. As far as criticisms of the film, the only thing I can really think of is that I would have liked to see a moment of resolution between the main Sea Captain Crow and Jacob. They were supposed to be like Father and Son and had lived most of their lives together, yet at the end after their final fight it never shows them speaking again, even though it hints at the Captain's change of heart. Other than that, our entire family of 9 really enjoyed the film and felt it was good for kids of all ages!

Final Grade: 9 / 10 (Great)

DC League of Super-Pets

Review by Chloe James



Sometimes we need to ask ourselves, what really makes a good DC (or superhero in general) film? At this point, there are so many different "universes" it's really hard to argue the accuracy of any film adaptations that may come out. If one of the writers can think of it - BAM - it's canon now! Not that I have any complaints. It's one of the ways that comic books have stayed a living, breathing medium. Understandably, even dedicated fans may find it difficult to keep up with the multiple plots, new characters, and alternate timelines. For example, I, who admittedly lets a lot of DC story details slip past my notice, only learned about 10 years ago that Superman has a Kryptonian dog...named Krypto. And an entire League of Super-Pets exists. And no, it's not a joke, and Krypto is canon - since 1955! Also, admittedly, I haven't followed much on that element of DC much since, as there are other comics I would rather read if I felt like an animal story.

Probably should have guessed that sooner or later a feature length *DC League of Super-Pets* would be a thing, CGI animated and with an all-star cast, no less! Focusing on Krypto (Dwayne Johnson), who absolutely loves his life as the super powered doggo best friend of Superman (John Krasinski), and is confident there is no one else in Sup's life that can possibly be as important as him. When he discovers that Clark is planning on asking girlfriend Lois Lane (Olivia Wilde) to marry him, Krypto starts acting up...leading Clark to seek a companion for him from a local rescue shelter. Enter Ace (Kevin Hart), a shelter mutt who really isn't interested in having an owner, but really just wants his freedom. Along with some other colorful companions, Ace's shelter also houses Lulu (Kate McKinnon), a hairless guinea pig, formerly lab subject belonging to Lex Luthor (Marc Maron.) When Lulu, who not only greatly admires her former master, but is as maniacally evil, comes across some orange kryptonite which gives superpowers to animals, she unleashes her plan to defeat the Justice League and free her beloved Lex from

prison. Krypto must learn how to work with Ace as well as the other shelter animals to save Superman and the world.

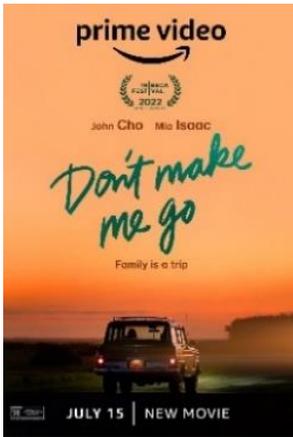
I will be the first to say, this is a winning combo for kids. You got a bright colorful PG rated superhero film (with very well-known superheroes) combined with wise cracking celebrity voiced animals? This would have to be very below mediocre to fail. I'm happy to say, *Super-Pets* is at least above mediocre. Maybe even a few notches above mediocre, in fact! On both a DC film and animated movie for kid's scale, *Super-Pets* checked all the marks it needed to. Heartwarming moral? Check. Impressive yet non-intimidating animation style? Yes. Nods to DC lore that DC nerds would get immediately? Yup. Potty humor for the kids? Duh. Sneakily inappropriate jokes for the parents in the audience? You got it. Is checking off all the boxes for a hit kids animated movie always a good thing though? Even if all of these check marks are done exceptionally well, like in this film, doesn't that just make it predictable? If you know anything about me, the animation nerd, one of my strongest opinions (that I'm sure my friends are sick of me repeating) is that animation doesn't have to be unintelligent or "just for kids." And because of this, I'm a little too critical of animated films that formulaically pander to a certain crowd.

But...I need to realize that this movie was, in fact, made for kids. Sure, DC fans and animation nerds like me are welcome to enjoy it as well. It really wouldn't be fair to hold it to the same standards as an adult live-action superhero movie or a Studio Ghibli masterpiece. I'm a jaded adult, of course, I'll be able to predict what's going to happen next in many kids' films. But the core audience it was made for? I'm thinking this is going to be awesome for them. My jaded adult self was definitely still entertained from *DC League of Super-Pets*. It was funny, cute, well animated, well-acted (some of the celebrities even sounded like not themselves!), and absolutely a love letter to the DCU. While I still wish I was given a surprise or two by this experience, little kid me would probably be watching it on repeat when it comes out on home streaming.

Final Grade: 7 / 10 (Okay)

Don't Make Me Go

Review by Danielle Butler



I loved this film, have tissues on-hand cause it's a tearjerker. In this story, a father and daughter driving cross-country, a decision the father Max (played by John Choo) makes after he receives a serious prognosis of a fatal brain tumor and wants to spend more time with his daughter Wally (played by Mia Isaac.) The opening line of the film is "You're not going to like how this story ends but I think you're going to like this story." Followed by, **spoiler alert**, a comical scene on a nude

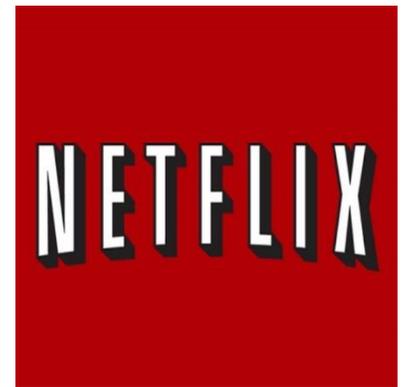
beach. Although this movie has heavy subject matter the tone of the story is lighthearted and the audience knowing what Wally doesn't, is along for the ride, rooting for both Max and Wally. Max and Wally have the same trauma; they were both left by Wally's mother when she was a baby and with no other relative to care for Wally in Max's absence takes her on a road trip to attend his college reunion in NOLA and help Wally meet her mom.

The relationship between Max and Wally is unique and lovely bond. The serious topics in the film are nicely woven with humorous everyday conversations and adventure as Max teaches Wally to drive while trying to teach her life skills and guide her towards a secure future. We see the bickering, and the nagging dynamic between a typical teenager and parent, especially a single parent. What's special about this movie is how while Max and Wally are travelling, they explore the continental U.S.A and embark on a journey to discover more about themselves each other and challenging each other. Their drive to NOLA to attend Max's college reunion becomes an adventure. This movie is not really about death; it's about living. It's about what you do with the time you have and who you spend your time with. As a viewer, I wanted to know more about Max and Wally and loved how they opened up to each other and spoke their truths.

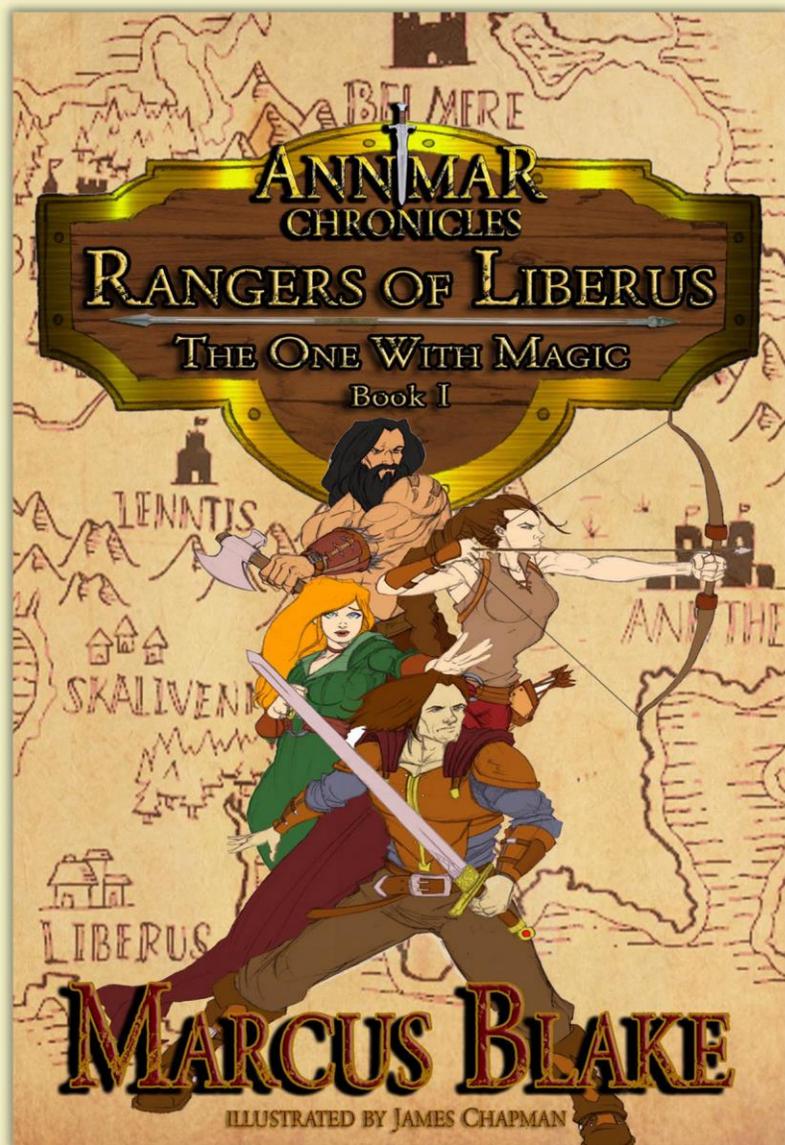
John Choo a comedic veteran and treasure delivered every range of emotion throughout

the film. He is always enjoyable, and I loved how he brought the character Max to life as a concerned, loving father and strict parent as well as a man. Mia Isaac is as lovely as she is bold. I adore the character, Wally. She is outspoken, smart, and not afraid to take risks. Okay, maybe she's afraid to change lanes, but Mia brought this character to life. I am excited to learn of Director Hannah Marks, a young talent director who helped shape this film based on her relationship with her father and her family's health issues. I would rate this movie a nine because it reminds us that life is hard and short, so we might as well enjoy it.

Final Grade: 9 / 10 (Great)



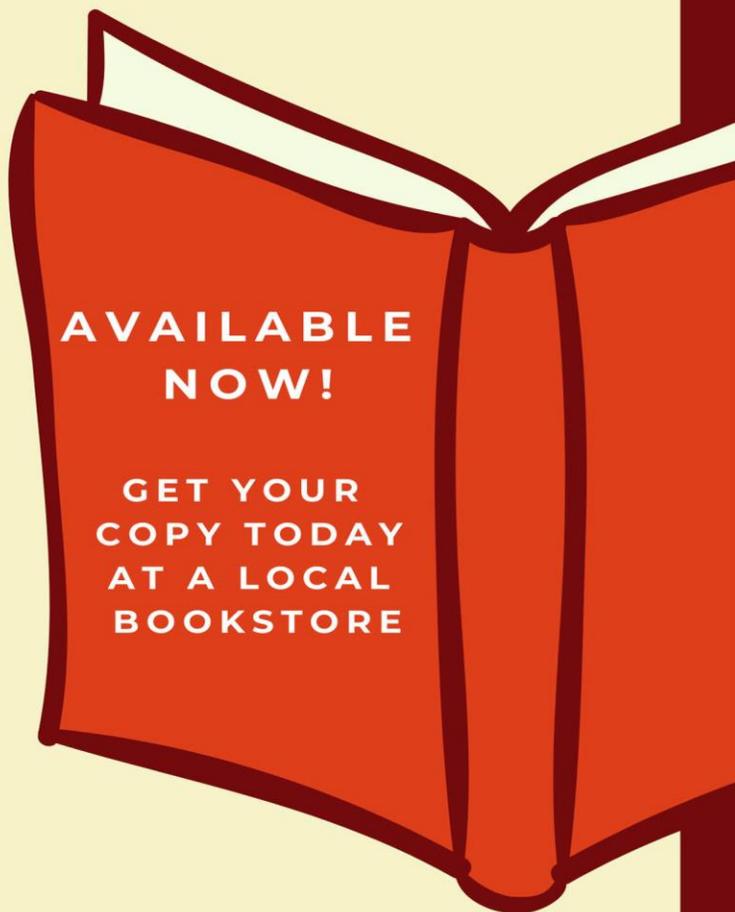
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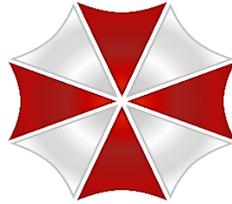


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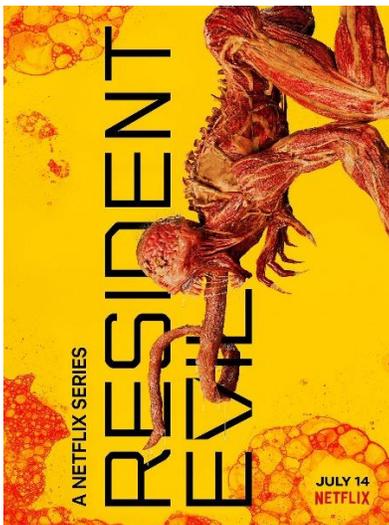




When the Internet Comes Together!

The Verdict: Netflix's Resident Evil is S@#T!

By Brendan Smith



As a geek, or nerd, whatever your preferred adjective, every once in a while, a video game adaptation comes along that stands out from the vast majority of mediocrity that permeates the genre. No, I'm not talking about the Sonic movies, those were actually entertaining. I'm talking about Resident Evil on Netflix which is a special kind of achievement in filmmaking. No, I'm not talking *Gone With The Wind* or *Citizen Kane* or even *Terminator 2*. No. I'm talking on the infamous level of Tommy Wiseau's *The Room*. Let me explain, but let's start with the basic plot!

The series' main plot is spread out over two points in time – 2022 and 2036, with a gap of some 14 years. The "past" plotline deals with the struggles of 14-year-old fraternal twins Billie and Jade, the children of Dr. Albert Wesker and conceived through suspicious

circumstances. Their lives take a dramatic turn when Albert is awarded an executive position at the struggling Umbrella Corporation that once employed him, and they move to Umbrella's planned community, New Raccoon City ([Afrikaans: Nuwe Wasbeer Stad](#)). While there the two girls stumble onto the dark secrets behind their origins and Umbrella's dark legacy, while their father coordinates a response to the outbreak of a retroviral bioweapon called T-virus.

In the "present" of 2036, the T-virus has reduced human civilization to 300 million refugees living in walled city-states and other settlements, surrounded by the six billion "zeroes" who contracted the disease and became roaming gangs of cannibal mutants. The most powerful organization left on Earth is the Umbrella Corporation, backed by its military arsenal, who are conducting a global manhunt for Jade.

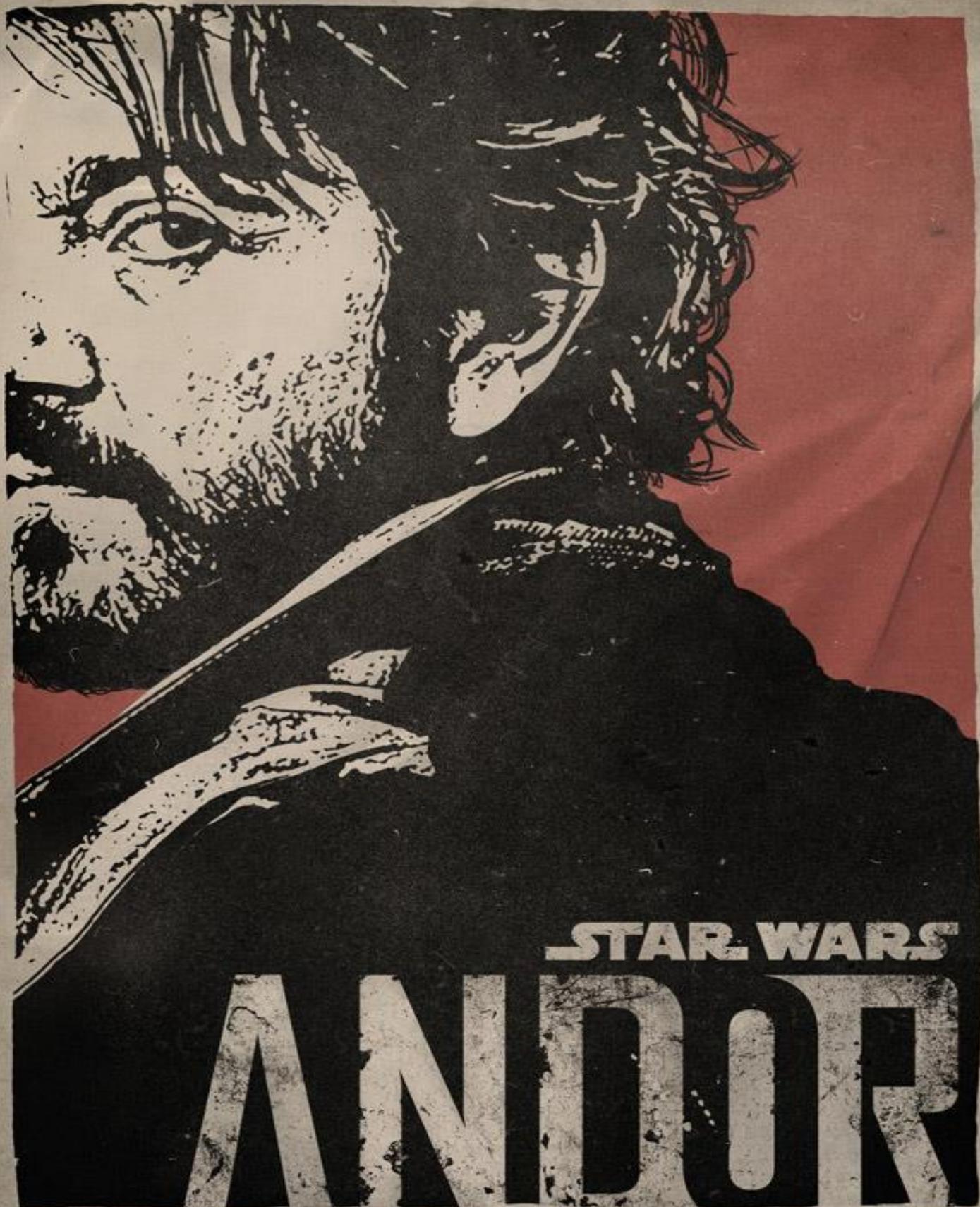


When it comes to this series, I'll never get those 8 hours back, I won't inflict that on you. Instead, I'll let the people of the world explain how truly awful this show is. It's Metacritic User score: 1.5/10. On Rotten Tomatoes, their users scored it at 26%. IMDB users scored 3.7/10. For an average user score across the board of 26%! And IMDB breaks down it wonderfully. Younger people score it worse than those in their 30s and 40s, who are slightly more forgiving. Women are slightly more forgiving than men, but no age/gender demo scored it higher than a 5/10 average. The lowest was a 2.9/10.

Resident Evil on Netflix was viewed as differing levels of terrible by just about everyone. That in and of itself is a truly impressive feat...one for which Netflix can be proud. Think about it. In 2022, for one fleeting moment, Netflix got the entire world to stand together and in one clear, loud, voice, proclaim, "This is absolute shit!" Congratulations [Netflix](#). Truly, well done. [That Nerd Show](#) grade: The fans have spoken and more than that, they got it right! Resident Evil on Netflix gets at 2/10







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GAMING NEWS

Resident Evil: Village Gold – Lady Dimitrescu Takes ‘The Mercenaries’ to New Heights in Winter Expansion



Resident Evil Village Gold Edition will be available on Oct. 28, 2022 for PlayStation®5, Xbox Series X|S, PlayStation®4, Xbox One, and Steam. The **Winters’ Expansion** will also release on the same date for PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X|S, PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Steam, and Stadia. Pre-orders begin today. The new trailer can be found on [YouTube](#). A new ensemble of heroes and villains join **Resident Evil™ Village** protagonist Ethan Winters as playable characters in “The Mercenaries Additional Orders”. This **Winters’ Expansion** content updates enables players to step into the sizable shoes of Alcina Dimitrescu, charge into battle wielding the magnetic powers of Karl Heisenberg, and unleash Chris Redfield’s arsenal of weaponry and boulder-boxing fists. Lady Dimitrescu looms large over enemies in this action-packed mode, where she brings her nine-foot stature to bear against any Lycans or other foes unfortunate enough to cross her path. In combat, Dimitrescu builds a Thrill meter by slicing adversaries to ribbons with her razor-sharp talons. This allows her to perform special actions like slamming down hostiles or summoning her daughters. Meanwhile, Lord Karl Heisenberg possesses his own electrifying powers. Equipped with a

massive hammer and the ability to manipulate magnetic currents, Heisenberg can really put a charge into his attacks. The terrifying creations from Heisenberg’s factory, Soldat Jets, also join him in the fray – but be mindful not to get caught in the crossfire of their self-destructive assaults.



Heisenberg can also trade off movement speed to see what enemies are made of by pulling them in with his magnetic field or put on a show everyone can enjoy by slinging scrap metal, like saw blades, their way. Chris Redfield also S.T.A.R.S. in “The Mercenaries Additional Orders”. The legendary BSAA agent packs a serious straight punch that not only can get him out of situations where he’s stuck between a rock and a hard place, but it also builds up his Onslaught gauge in a hurry as well. When Onslaught is active, Chris moves and reloads with lightning speed. Chris can also request support from the Hound Wolf Squad by using his target locator to pinpoint enemy positions and call in missile strikes. Alongside the new

playable characters, “The Mercenaries Additional Orders” introduces two new stages, the Bloody Village and Bloody River, plus additional improvements to the experience.

Resident Evil Village Gold Edition and the **Winters’ Expansion** are both available for pre-order starting today on PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X|S, PlayStation 4, and Xbox One. Console players who pre-order **Resident Evil Village Gold Edition** or the **Winters’ Expansion** will also receive the Street Wolf Outfit as a special bonus. This outfit is a costume Rosemary Winters can wear in the “Shadows of Rose” story DLC. Pre-orders for the **Winters’ Expansion** begin today on Steam and also include the Street Wolf Outfit.

About Resident Evil Village Gold Edition and the Winters’ Expansion
Set a few years after the events of **Resident Evil™ 7 biohazard**, **Resident Evil Village** resumes the Winters family saga with a new nightmare where Ethan is hunted by relentless new foes in an isolated village. **Resident Evil Village** continues Ethan’s adventure in the first-person view with photorealistic visuals that take survival horror to the next level with the power of Capcom’s proprietary RE Engine. **Resident Evil Village Gold Edition** is a bundle of the base game with a code for the upcoming **Winters’ Expansion**, which includes Third Person Mode, “The Mercenaries Additional Orders”, and “Shadows of Rose”, a new narrative DLC following the story of Ethan’s daughter Rosemary set 16 years after the main campaign. **Resident Evil Village Gold Edition** also includes the “Trauma Pack” digital add-on content.

Secret Neighbor's Paranormal Amusement Park Update is out Now for Xbox Series X|S & Xbox One!



School's out, summer break is in full swing, and it's time to get your game on! The *Secret Neighbor* team is excited to bring you a brand new batch of midsummer hijinks with *The Paranormal Amusement Park Update*. Featuring a new Neighbor class, map, graphical updates, emotes, hidden treasures, and more! Here's everything you need to know about it. Welcome to the multiplayer horror game set in the *Hello Neighbor* universe. You are a member of the Neighborhood Rescue Squad, a group of kids who will stop at nothing to rescue their friend Nicky Roth from their Neighbor's creepy clutches. However, no heist

is without danger, as one of your trusted team is the Neighbor in disguise.



The Neighbor is Going Ghost!

As if the park wasn't scary enough on its own at night, recently there have been reports of paranormal activity spotted in the area. Could it be the Neighbor's doing? Only one way to find out! Keep a keen eye out for flickering lights and glowing blue ectoplasm and if you feel a chill go up your spine, it's time to run.

Introducing: The Ghost Neighbor! His abilities include a spectral ghost transformation capable of flight and phasing through walls, and an ultimate ability that can temporarily disable every light within close proximity. This phantom menace has a weakness to light as it prevents changing back into his more corporeal form to grab you, so it's now more important than ever to keep your trusty flashlight on you at all times. Light switches have also been added to every map to help players stay out of his cursed grasp.

No update would be complete without spiffy new skins. The circus may have shut its doors but you may still see lions in the big top, so stop by the shop to see the latest offerings! While you're there, check out the new Emotion section and snag one of three new Neighbor Emotes to inflict a little psychological damage on your foes. You're now well-equipped and ready to take on anything this new update can throw at you. We hope you enjoy your visit to the Amusement Park and may your flashlight batteries last well into the wee hours of the morning, now get out there and show that you ain't afraid of no ghost!

PlayStation Plus Monthly Games—July: Crash Bandicoot 4: It's About Time, Man of Medan, Arcadegeddon

The all-new PlayStation Plus is now available globally. Today, we're pleased to share the monthly games that will be included in July for PlayStation Plus. From July 5 to August 1, all PlayStation Plus members can add Crash Bandicoot 4: It's About Time, The Dark Pictures Anthology: Man of Medan and Arcadegeddon to their game library.

Also, check out our [PlayStation Plus monthly games-inspired playlist](#) on Spotify, which will be refreshed with new songs every month.

Now, let's take a closer look at the titles. **Crash Bandicoot 4: It's About Time | PS4/PS5**



An all-new Crash adventure awaits! Dr. Neo Cortex and N. Tropy are back at it again and launching an all-out assault on not just this universe, but the entire multiverse. Wield four

powerful guardians of space and time that give Crash and Coco the power to bend the rules of reality and conquer dangerous obstacles in exciting new ways. And you'll not only play as the wumping, jumping, marsupial duo: experience things from different perspectives with the one and only Dr. Neo Cortex. Play as Crash, Coco, Tawna, Dingodile, or Dr. Neo Cortex and battle bosses such as N. Gin, Louise, Nitrus Brio, and Nefarious Tropy.

The Dark Pictures Anthology: Man of Medan | PS4



In this branching, cinematic horror game from the creator of Until Dawn and The Quarry, five friends set sail on a holiday diving trip that soon changes into something much more sinister. All playable characters can live or die, with the choices you make deciding their fate. Experience your terrifying story alone, with a

friend online* or go for safety in numbers with up to five players offline.

Arcadegeddon | PS4/PS5



Gilly, the owner of a local arcade, is trying to save his business from a faceless mega-corporation, Fun Fun Co. ...and what better way to stick it to the man than with a brand-spanking-new super game. Unfortunately, the corp gets wind of Gilly's plan and launches a cyberattack, injecting a virus into the game. Now it's up to you to rise up and save both the game and the last remaining local arcade in this ever-evolving co-op multiplayer shooter. Offering a mix of PvE and PvP gameplay, you and up to 3 friends online* to explore multiple biomes, compete in mini games, find hidden chests, and battle a crazy cast of enemies and bosses.

XBOX NEWS – Xbox Focuses on Massive Lineup of the Biggest Franchises and Original IPs Fans Can Play Over the Next 12 Months

At Xbox, they are on a mission to bring the joy and community of gaming to everyone on the planet and that's why our teams and partners have been hard at work building a truly diverse line-up of content for players of all types to look forward to. And with Xbox, you have more ways to play those game than ever before –

on console, PC, or on the go.

Everything in today's Xbox & Bethesda Games Showcase is targeted to launch in the next 12 months. From industry-defining racing games, gripping narratives, compelling strategy titles, and the most anticipated open world RPG of the last 20 years, there is something for everyone. The gameplay you saw today featured extended looks at highly-anticipated titles like *Starfield*, *Forza Motorsport*, *Diablo 4*, and *Redfall*, as well as focused, unique ideas like *Pentiment*, *High on Life*, and *Ravenlok*. The biggest franchises and the most original IPs are all coming to Xbox. And for players looking to experience games that are built natively for their Xbox Series X|S consoles and high-end PCs, you can look forward to *Redfall*, *Starfield*, and *Forza Motorsport*. Or you can experience those games on your TV app, phone, or Xbox One thanks to Xbox Cloud Gaming.

Starting this week with *Microsoft Flight Simulator*, you'll be jumping into monthly launches and game updates that will keep you entertained for the next 12 months. And if you're looking for the best way to get ready for the next 12 months of games, get started with the new Game Pass deal that gets you 3 months for just \$1.

Here is a summary of everything we announced during the Xbox & Bethesda Games Showcase.

Massive Franchises and New IPs from Xbox and Bethesda

Announcing a New Partnership Between Xbox Game Studios and Kojima Productions

Today, we also announced a partnership between Xbox Game Studios and Kojima Productions to create a video game for Xbox like no one has ever experienced or seen before leveraging the power of the cloud. Hideo Kojima is one of the most innovative and creative minds in our industry we can't wait to share what our teams will create together.

Bethesda Games Studios Reveals the First Look at *Starfield* Gameplay

In unveiling the first gameplay footage from *Starfield*, Game Director Todd Howard

took fans on a tour of this next generation role-playing game set amongst the stars. The first new universe in 25 years from Bethesda Game Studios, *Starfield* will allow you to create any character you want and explore with unparalleled freedom as you embark on an epic journey to answer humanity's greatest mystery. In the year 2330, humanity has ventured beyond our solar system, settling new planets, and living as a spacefaring people. From humble beginnings as a space miner, you will join Constellation – the last group of space explorers seeking rare artifacts throughout the galaxy – and navigate the vast expanse of the Settled Systems in Bethesda Game Studios' biggest and most ambitious game. Where will *Starfield* take you?

Console Exclusive on Xbox Series X|S, coming to Windows PCs, Day One on Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

Bite Back with *Redfall*'s Gameplay Reveal

Experience *Redfall*, a brand-new co-op FPS from the award-winning team at Arkane Austin. *Redfall* brings you an open world packed with mystery, a diverse roster of heroes to choose from, strategic combat that will keep you on your toes, painstakingly crafted environments, a rich narrative driving you through the world, a wide array of weapons... and vampires. Get ready to face off against the bloodsucking menace when *Redfall* launches in 2023.

Console Exclusive on Xbox Series X|S, coming to Windows PCs, Day One on Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

The all-new *Forza Motorsport* is the most technically advanced racing game ever made

We went under the hood to share the next generation of *Forza Motorsport* to immerse you in the spectacle of racing like you've never seen before. Captured in-game, we unveiled a brand-new trailer, which debuted alongside the first ever gameplay of *Forza Motorsport*. *Forza Motorsport* has been built from the ground up to showcase the Xbox Series X|S consoles. The accuracy of our overhauled physics, the beauty of our cars and tracks, our new dynamic time of day, advanced car damage, and real time ray tracing on track lead to a generational leap in immersion and the most

Console Exclusive on Xbox Series X|S, coming to Windows PCs, and Day One on Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass.



Introducing *Minecraft Legends*

Mojang Studios unveiled *Minecraft Legends*, an all-new action strategy game developed in partnership with Blackbird Interactive, launching in 2023. *Minecraft Legends* takes players to the Minecraft universe in a fun and unique new way, as they lead their allies in heroic battles to defend the Overworld. For more information, visit our Xbox Wire post [here](#), follow the *Minecraft Legends* journey on @Legends_Game and for email updates and to join our Discord, visit <https://www.minecraft.net/about-legends>.

Coming to Xbox Series X|S, Xbox One, and Windows PCs, Day One on Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

Obsidian Announces *Pentiment*

Set in 16th century Bavaria, *Pentiment* will take players on a narrative journey through the eyes of Journeyman Artist Andreas Maler during a time of great social unrest. Players will become entangled in a series of murders that span over 25 years. It will be up to the players to investigate and interrogate the townsfolk to make their own decisions, where the consequences will impact the town for years to come. Led by game director Josh Sawyer, this game is brought to life by a talented team inspired by illuminated manuscripts, woodcut prints, and history itself. Be on the lookout as more information about *Pentiment* will be coming as we get closer to its release this November.

Console Launch Exclusive on Xbox Series X|S and Xbox One, coming to Windows PCs, Day One on Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

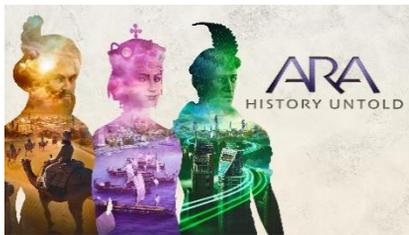
A New Grand Strategy Game from Experts in the Genre

Xbox Game Studios Publishing is excited to reveal *Ara: History Untold*, an upcoming turn-based, historical grand strategy game for Windows PC and available day one with PC Game Pass. *Ara: History Untold* is in development at Oxide Games, which was founded by and includes many of the leads that shipped one of the most popular turn-based

strategy games of all time. In *Ara: History Untold* players will build and lead a nation throughout history as they explore new lands, develop arts and culture, conduct diplomacy, and go head-to-head with rivals to prove they are the greatest leader ever known. To ensure the team ships the best possible version of the game when it releases, players can sign up for the

Ara: History Untold Insider Program starting today, where you'll join a passionate community of strategy game fans in the first technical alpha later this year and leave your mark on the game throughout development.

Coming to Windows PCs and Day One PC Game Pass.



Play As Dusk Falls, an Original Interactive Drama from INTERIOR/NIGHT, with up to 8 Players When it Launches on July 19

INTERIOR/NIGHT's debut game is an uncompromising tale of family, resilience and sacrifice, coming to Xbox, Windows, Steam and Xbox Game Pass on July 19. In *As Dusk Falls*, you'll have agency over the lives of relatable, far from perfect human beings, inviting you to empathize with their real-life struggles and aspirations. This cinematic story is brought to life by the performance of actors that are digitally rendered into a beautiful art style, creating a unique experience that plays like a motion graphic novel.

Console Launch Exclusive on Xbox Series X/S and Xbox One, coming to Windows PCs, Day One on Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

The Most Anticipated and Beloved Franchises from Our Partners

Riot is Bringing Its Biggest Games to Game Pass

In a first for Game Pass, the partnership will extend beyond PC to include Riot's mobile-only and mobile-accessible titles. Coming this winter, all Game Pass members will receive bonuses across titles like *League of Legends* (PC), *League of Legends: Wild Rift* (Mobile), *Legends of Runeterra* (PC & Mobile), *Teamfight Tactics* (PC & Mobile), and *Valorant* (PC).

All Hell Breaks Loose in *Diablo IV*, Coming in 2023

We are excited to announce that *Diablo IV* will launch in 2023, and will be available on PC, Xbox One X/S, and Xbox Series X/S. It will feature cross-play and cross-progression for all platforms. On console, players can play alongside a friend with couch-co-op. Explore what the next generation of the genre-defining Action RPG has in store, with player choice at the forefront of a truly unique journey and every inch of Sanctuary built for combat. Learn about *Diablo IV*'s end game, where the story concludes but the quest for true power really begins.

Coming to Xbox Series X/S, Xbox One, and Windows PCs.

Celebrate 25 Years of Persona by Experiencing *Persona 5 Royal*, *Persona 4 Golden* and *Persona 3 Portable*

Cheers to 25 years of Persona! In celebration of this monumental anniversary, we are bringing the worldwide hits *Persona 5 Royal*, *Persona 4 Golden* and *Persona 3 Portable* to Xbox and Windows. Fans will get to experience this beloved RPG series starting this Fall! On October 21, 2022, don the mask of Joker and join the Phantom Thieves of Hearts in *Persona 5 Royal*.

Coming to Xbox Series X/S, Xbox One, and Windows PCs, on Xbox Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.



Enter the Dark Fantasy World of Team NINJA's *Wo Long: Fallen Dynasty*

A joint creation by Team NINJA producers Fumihiko Yasuda (Nioh) and Masaaki Yamagiwa (Bloodborne), *Wo Long: Fallen Dynasty* follows the dramatic, action-packed story of a nameless militia soldier fighting for survival in a dark fantasy version of the Later Han Dynasty where demons plague the Three Kingdoms. Players will fight off deadly creatures and enemy soldiers using swordplay based on the Chinese martial arts, attempting to overcome the odds by awakening the true power from within when *Wo Long: Fallen Dynasty* launches in early 2023.

Coming to Xbox Series X/S, Windows PCs, Day One on Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

***A Plague Tale: Requiem* Continues the Journey of Amicia and Hugo**

Witness the end of Innocence in *A Plague Tale: Requiem*, and embark on a heartrending journey into a brutal, breathtaking world, and discover the cost of saving those you love in a desperate struggle for survival. Strike from the shadows or unleash hell with a variety of weapons, tools and unearthly powers when *A Plague Tale: Requiem* releases in 2022.

Coming to Xbox Series X/S, Windows PCs, Day One on Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

Play *Overwatch 2* for Free Starting in October

Attention all heroes! *Overwatch 2* arrives on October 4 as a free-to-play live service. Tune into the *Overwatch 2* Reveal Event on *Overwatch*'s Youtube Channel on June 16 to learn more about what is to come for the game. And stick around until the end of the event to watch the full-length version of the new animated short "The Wastelander", featuring new Tank hero Junker Queen.

Coming to Xbox Series X/S, Xbox One, and Windows PCs.

More Memorable Experiences from the Games You Love

Hot Wheels Returns to Forza in the First, Eagerly Awaited Expansion to Forza Horizon 5

Forza Horizon and Hot Wheels are back together, with the *Forza Horizon 5: Hot Wheels* expansion. Coming July 19 to Xbox consoles, PC on Windows and Steam, and Cloud Gaming (Beta), this new expansion introduces players to the visually stunning, exhilarating new Horizon HOT WHEELS Park, in the clouds high above Mexico. Complete missions to unlock special Hot Wheels Heats events and celebrate the history of Hot Wheels in a new five-part Horizon Story. In a first for Forza, join friends and play the entire expansion from the very beginning in co-op. We're excited to expand the *Forza Horizon 5* fleet with 10 incredible new to Forza cars, including four new Hot Wheels scaled up to life size.

Available now for Xbox Series X/S and Windows PCs, with Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

Microsoft Flight Simulator Celebrates 40 Years and Exclusive Halo Infinite Pelican Release

The longest-running game franchise at Microsoft, *Microsoft Flight Simulator*, today announced that it looks forward to celebrating 40 years of flying around the world with the *Microsoft Flight Simulator* 40th Anniversary Edition, a completely free offering for Xbox Game Pass members and those who already own *Microsoft Flight Simulator*. The 40th Anniversary Edition will be a comprehensive celebration of the franchise and

serves as a tribute to past editions as well as an introduction to new and highly anticipated aircraft types, including helicopters and gliders. The 40th Anniversary Edition will also offer the famous “Spirit of St. Louis”, a true-to-life Airbus A310, and more. Finally, in an exclusive partnership with the Halo franchise and 343 Industries, *Microsoft Flight Simulator* introduces an incredibly detailed Halo Infinite Pelican add-on. It’s available for free today in the in-sim marketplace. For the latest information on *Microsoft Flight Simulator*, visit our Xbox Wire post here and stay tuned to [@MSFSOfficial](#) on Twitter.

Available now for Xbox Series X|S and Windows PCs, with Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.



Grounded Graduates from Game Preview to Full Game this September

Grounded is preparing to leave Game Preview this September as it launches its full 1.0 release. Find out how the teens got into the yard and the mad scientist behind it in the fully playable campaign – all of which can be experienced alone or with a group of friends! This release also opens an entirely new part of the *Grounded* world – the upper yard. New armor recipes, new weapon recipes, and the giant Mantis wait for the players with this update. So, hop into the backyard today!

Available now for Xbox Series X|S, Xbox One, and Windows PCs, with Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

It’s Time to Become a Captain of Adventure in *Sea of Thieves*!

With a harmonious flourish, the latest *Sea of Thieves* trailer has unveiled a major addition coming in Season Seven: Captaincy! Offering players the ability to name and customise their ships, save loadouts between sessions and much more, this is a suite of highly anticipated features that the team are excited to bring to all who sail the *Sea of Thieves*.

Available now for Xbox Series X|S, Xbox One, and Windows PCs, with Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

A Brand-New *Elder Scrolls* Adventure Awaits

Protect the Legacy of the Bretons and explore a never-before-seen part of Tamriel in *The Elder Scrolls Online: High Isle*, coming to Xbox One and Xbox Series X|S on June 21. Travel to the Systres Archipelago, idyllic home of the Breton noble elite and uncover the dire

schemes of the Ascendant Order. As part of the year-long Legacy of the Bretons adventure, this new Chapter allows you to dive deep into the history and culture of the proud Breton people and develops the epic story that will continue throughout the rest of 2022!

Available now for Xbox Series X|S, Xbox One, Windows PCs, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

Take a Journey to The Pitt This September with *Fallout 76*’s Expeditions

For the first time, players will be able to go on adventures beyond the natural expanse of *Fallout 76*’s Appalachia with Expeditions! Arriving free for all *Fallout 76* players this September, Expeditions takes players to the rusted ruins of post-nuclear Pittsburgh. Now known as The Pitt, the area is in conflict as the local Union is under siege from deadly Raiders, savage Tregs and more. With Expeditions, players can venture out and take on missions to earn XP, loot and even legendary items. Are you and your crew tough enough to enter The Pitt? Find out later this year!

Available now for Xbox Series X|S, Xbox One, and Windows PCs, with Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

Amazing Game Pass Titles from Developers Around the World

Explore *Scorn*’s Mesmerizing Labyrinth this Halloween!

With Halloween fast approaching, we’re so excited to officially announce that *Scorn* will launch this year on the 21st of October! With this nightmarish first-person horror adventure, players will be able to fully immerse themselves within a mesmerizing maze of odd forms and somber tapestries. Since reaching our last major milestone back in December, the team has been working hard to add all the finishing touches. With that being said, we’re thrilled to finally be able to reveal some new, exclusive gameplay footage – we hope you like it!

Console Launch Exclusive on Xbox Series X|S, coming to Windows PCs, Day One on Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

The Future of Survival Games Begins with *ARK 2*

Starring Vin Diesel as the hero Santiago, *ARK 2* tells the story of a father and a daughter (“Meeke” played by Auli’i Cravalho!), of betrayal & broken promises, and the strength of the family bond – and of course, it’s a story of badass giant dinosaurs. But even more importantly, this is about players’ own stories – like any good persistent-world online survival game, ‘Survivors’ in *ARK 2* each have their own unique path through the game, as they form their own tribe, make their own friends, and

attempt to build their own creature-aided civilization.

Console Launch Exclusive on Xbox Series X|S, coming to Windows PCs, Day One on Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.



Fight for the Fate of a Haunted Land in *Hollow Knight: Silksong*

Discover a vast, haunted kingdom in *Hollow Knight: Silksong*! The sequel to the award-winning action-adventure. Explore, fight and survive as you ascend to the peak of a land ruled by silk and song when *Hollow Knight: Silksong* launches with Xbox Game Pass.

Coming to Xbox Series X|S, Windows PCs, Day One on Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

Uncover a Grim Family Story in *The Last Case of Benedict Fox*

Dive into a twisted world of secret organizations, forbidden rituals, and cold-blooded murders in the evocative and hand-crafted Metrodvania that is *The Last Case of Benedict Fox*. Enter the consciousness of the victims to explore their memories in search for clues. Take up the last case of Benedict Fox, a self-proclaimed detective bound to his demon companion.

Console Launch Exclusive on Xbox Series X|S and Xbox One, coming to Windows PCs, Day One on Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

Flintlock: The Siege of Dawn’s Offers Gunpowder-packed and Magic-fueled Gameplay

Take to *Flintlock*’s vast battlefields, combining and mastering an arsenal of tools and magical abilities. Join Nor and her mysterious companion, Enki, in this open-world RPG adventure and embark on an epic journey of vengeance, gunpowder and magic in humanity’s last stand.

Coming to Xbox Series X|S, Xbox One, and Windows PCs, Day One on Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

Start Your Homestead at the Far End of the Galaxy in *Lightyear Frontier*

Welcome to the Frontier! Begin your new life on a strange and beautiful planet as you build up your homestead, farm alien crops, and use your mech to explore what this new landscape has to offer. Enjoy our relaxing farming adventure with up to three friends when it lands in Early Access, Spring 2023!

Console Launch Exclusive on Xbox Series X|S and Xbox One, coming to Windows PCs, Day One on Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

High On Life is a Hilarious Sci-Fi Shooter from Rick and Morty's Justin Roiland

Fresh out of high school with no job and no ambition, you've really got nothing going for you until an alien cartel that wants to get high off humanity invades Earth. Now, you and a team of charismatic talking guns must answer the hero's call and become the deadliest intergalactic bounty hunter the cosmos has ever seen. Travel to a variety of biomes and locations across the cosmos, go up against the nefarious Garmantuous and his gang of goons, collect loot, meet unique characters, and more, in the latest comedy adventure from Justin Roiland!

Console Launch Exclusive on Xbox Series X|S and Xbox One, coming to Windows PCs, Day One on Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.



Defy the Light in Ereban: Shadow Legacy
Ereban: Shadow Legacy is a fast-paced story-driven stealth platformer game where you become Ayana, the last descendant of a forgotten race. Harness mystical shadow powers, high-tech gadgets and avoid or kill to uncover the truth about your past and the key to saving a dying, morally grey universe.

Console Launch Exclusive on Xbox Series X|S and Xbox One, coming to Windows PCs, Day One on Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

Expand Your Mind with COCOON

From Jeppe Carlsen, the lead gameplay designer of LIMBO and INSIDE — *COCOON* takes you on an adventure through worlds within worlds. Master the world-leaping mechanics to unravel a cosmic mystery.

Console Launch Exclusive on Xbox Series X|S and Xbox One, coming to Windows PCs, Day One on Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

Explore an Immersive Fallen World in Ravenlok

An action-packed fable from Cococucumber, *Ravenlok* is a fairytale reimagining of a kingdom troubled by a corrupted Queen and a young girl's destiny to fulfill a dangerous prophecy. After stumbling upon a magical mirror, Ravenlok finds herself pulled away from reality and into a land shrouded in darkness, cursed by the corruption of the Caterpillar Queen. Seeking only to return home at first, she rises to the occasion by challenging fearsome foes to save the fallen kingdom. Slash through sinister jesters in the Mask Mansion and burn down the Weeping Fungi in the mystical Mushroom Forest in an unforgettable, action-packed adventure.

Coming to Xbox Series X|S, Xbox One, and Windows PCs, Day One on Xbox Game Pass and PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

Naraka: Bladepoint Will Be Unleashed on June 23 with Xbox Game Pass

A mythical action combat game for up to 60 players, *NARAKA: BLADEPOINT* is one of the best-selling PC games in 2021 with over 10 million players since last August. NetEase's debut on Xbox Series X|S and Windows PC, players can experience the excitement of melee combat and world exploration with their selected heroes and weapons, competing with other foes to be the last one standing when it launches with Game Pass on June 23.

Console Launch Exclusive on Xbox Series X|S, coming to Windows PCs, Day One on Xbox Game Pass, coming to PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming

Gunfire Reborn is Coming to Xbox Game Pass in October!

Action-packed roguelike, *Gunfire Reborn*, brings its fun and exciting world to Game Pass this October. Pick your hero, each with their own abilities and powers, and dive into the action. Defeat nefarious enemies, discover awesome abilities and pick up dropped weapons and items to become more powerful! Collect scrolls and copper throughout your adventures to upgrade your hero and refill supplies. Play in single-player or recruit your friends for 2-4 player co-op.

Coming to Xbox Series X|S, Xbox One, and Windows PCs, Day One on Xbox Game Pass, coming to PC Game Pass, and via Xbox Cloud Gaming.

THE DARK PICTURES ANTHOLOGY: THE DEVIL IN ME REVEALS ITS DISTRESSING LOCATION – Coming this Fall



Coming this fall from Bandai Namco Entertainment America Inc., **THE DARK PICTURES ANTHOLOGY: THE DEVIL IN ME** opens its doors to a whole new cast and terrifying story. This trailer gives a short but disturbing tour of what's to come for its unsuspecting cast. The Lonnit Entertainment TV crew receive a pressing and mysterious phone call from a man called Granthem Du'Met, with a promise of a tour around a faithful recreation of the H. H. Holmes murder castle, an idea that Lonnit Entertainment founder Charlie Lonnit believes

might just save his show. Oscar nominee Jessie Buckley stars as a member of this ill-fated crew that visits this strange hotel location, a place that quickly turns into a deadly trap made by their disturbed host Granthem Du'Met. Observed, isolated, and manipulated like rats in a maze, it soon becomes clear that the crew's checkout is compromised, and they will have to make some impossible choices that they might live to regret or just not live at all!

THE DARK PICTURES ANTHOLOGY: THE DEVIL IN ME Standard edition is available now for pre-orders at www.bandainamcoent.com/games/the-dark-pictures-the-devil-in-me and at your local retailers. An Animatronic Collector's Edition and a new diorama of *The Curator* will also be available exclusively in the Bandai Namco Store for players in the United States and Canada later this summer. In addition to the game, the Animatronic Collector's Edition includes:

- An Animatronic bust figurine
- An exclusive postcard and envelope
- A Lonnit Entertainment business card
- A trusty map of the Hotel Island

The Dark Pictures Anthology is a series of stand-alone branching cinematic horror games designed to present a new terrifying experience on a regular basis. Each game is unconnected and will feature a brand-new story, setting, and new cast of characters.

For press only, static assets including new screenshots are available at the Bandai Namco Entertainment America Inc. press room at www.bneapressroom.com; a library of video trailers ready for embedding are available on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/c/BandaiNamcoEntertainmentAmerica.



THE SHOW

America's Video Game

By Marcus Blake

America's Video Game! Is there such a thing? I would like to think so. I believe that there is one video game that can truly be considered America's video game, a sports game that everybody would want to play. No, it's not Madden. Sure, Madden might be the most popular American sports game, but I don't know if it truly represents a type of sport that everybody loves or can get behind. Walt Whitman once said that baseball is America's game, so wouldn't it stand to reason that a baseball video game could be America's Video Game? I realize that this might be a bit of a stretch especially when it may not be the most popular sports game in America. However, everybody loves baseball. It's America's pastime and playing a truly authentic baseball video game that in a lot of ways is more realistic than any other sports game I think should make it America's video game. There's something fun for everybody in a baseball video game even if you don't play a full game. There is a great mode like Home "Run Derby!" MLB: The Show has been the premier baseball game for 20 years. It is the most realistic sports video game in the world, right down to the way that players move, to the strategy. When you pitch, you're not just throwing the ball and letting the computer do all the work, you can aim the ball and try to hit the corner. Pitching is that realistic. Aiming the direction of your hit and how you swing, to how you time your swing makes hitting extremely realistic *The Show*. There is strategy involved. You have to know your lineup and know each player's strengths and weaknesses. You have to know when a safety squeeze is better than having your hitter go for the home run. The evolution of baseball games has been incredible to the point where it actually feels like you're operating real-life baseball players. There's no question that the game itself is magnificent and more importantly you get to play a 162-game baseball season. You can create your own player and have him go

through the minor league system and have him become a star. You can be your own general manager and build a winning team over a few years.



Unfortunately, MLB The Show hasn't really been considered America's video game because it's only been available on one console. For more than 15 years it had been an exclusive title for the PlayStation and then all of that changed last year when it became available on the Xbox To make it even better, the game went straight to Game Pass and was a "day one" release. No sports game has become a day one release on the Xbox game Pass. And this wasn't just a one-year-and-done deal, Xbox did it again in 2022. I love playing baseball games and I have bought MLB The Show pretty much every year since I got a PlayStation 2 in 2005.... yes, I know I was late to the party on that console, but I got to play baseball every year in a video game format. Last year and this year are the first time that I haven't bought the game because it's been available on Game Pass. Still play it as I play it every year. I create myself as a player and become one of the top hitters for the Chicago Cubs. I play a 162-game season all the way to the playoffs and hopefully the World Series. But by making this game more universal and available on consoles like the Xbox and even the PC, MLB: The Show has become America's Video Game in a manner of speaking. Not every gamer will play Madden because there's too much strategy and too many controls you have to know in order to play a

football video. Some just don't have those skills, but every gamer can play a baseball game. It's an easier video game to play compared to other sports games even if there is more strategy involved. Novices can pick this game up and instantly become adequate playing it. Sony didn't make this American video game, but Microsoft and Xbox did especially by putting it on their game pass and therefore making it more available to gamers. We don't like to buy a console just to play one game haven't found a game yet that makes it worth spending hundreds of dollars on a console just to play that one game! But the Xbox game pass does make more games available to gamers. That is one of the best things that Xbox ever did. It changed the gaming model to the point that PlayStation has now come up with its own gaming subscription service!

However, not even PlayStation makes MLB: The show available on their service. There's a whole other demographic of gamers and a whole new generation that has primarily been PC or Xbox gamers who now get to play the best baseball game ever created. When you make your game more available to gamers that's when you become America's Video Game. But MLB: The Show truly does become America's Video Game because sports games are more popular, and baseball has always been the more popular sport! It's still more popular than football in America. It probably always will be. Now MLB: The Show 22 is not really any different than last year's version...they didn't really make any significant changes except updating the roster and changing the player on the cover! That really doesn't matter when it's been free on Xbox game pass since its release date In 2022. Like I said, no other sports game has been free on a subscription service on the day of its release except MLB: The Show. That reason alone makes it America's Video Game. If you don't think so, then prove me wrong. In the meantime, I have another game to play in MLB: The Show 2022...on Xbox!



SNIPER ELITE 5

★ ★ DELUXE EDITION ★ ★



AVAILABLE ON



XBOX
GAME PASS



HORIZON

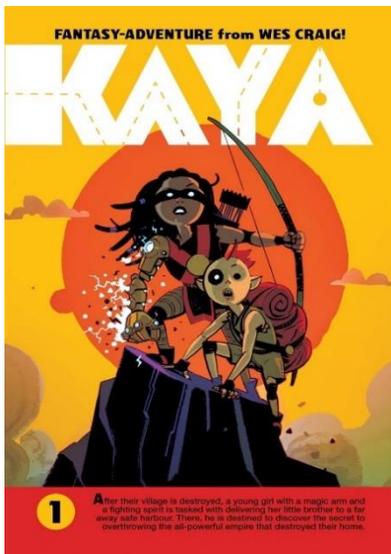
II

FORBIDDEN WEST™



COMIC BOOK NEWS

KAYA: DEADLY CLASS' WES CRAIG LAUNCHES ACTION-PACKED NEW SERIES THIS OCTOBER



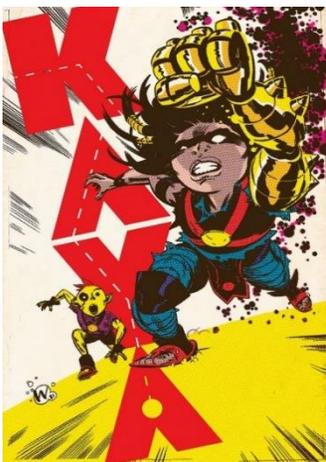
From writer and artist Wes Craig (*Deadly Class*, *Gravediggers Union*) comes an astonishing fantasy-adventure in the upcoming, *Kaya*. This new ongoing series will launch from Image Comics in October. *Kaya* is the story of siblings surviving in a world of monsters and mutants. After the destruction of their village, a young girl with a magic arm and a fighting spirit is tasked with delivering her little brother to a faraway safe haven. There, he's destined to discover the secret to overthrowing the all-powerful empire that destroyed their home. "I'm putting every bit of heart, action, and fun that I can into each issue," said Craig. "*Kaya*, her brother Jin, and the strange world they live in are very real to me, and I think readers are gonna have a blast discovering it, month

in, month out." First previewed in the [Image! Anthology](#), this jam-packed series premiere features 31 gorgeous story pages, bonus material, and a Jack Kirby-inspired variant cover by Craig. This new series is a must-have for readers on the hunt for their next favorite read.

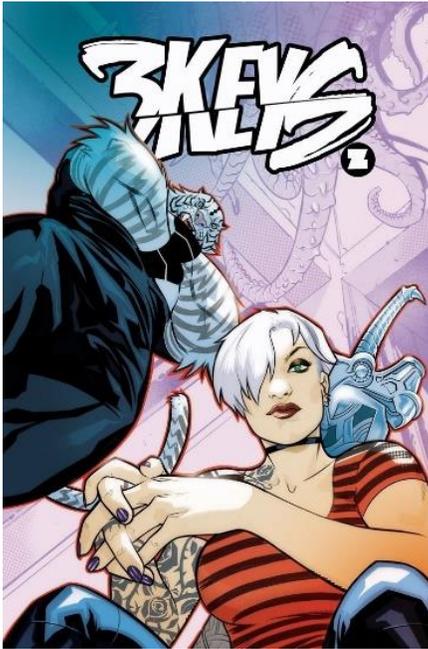
Kaya #1 will be available at [comic book shops](#) on Wednesday, October 5:

- *Kaya* #1 Cover A by Craig - [Diamond Code AUG220055](#)
- *Kaya* #1 Cover B by Craig - [Diamond Code AUG220056](#)

Kaya #1 will also be available for purchase across many digital platforms, including Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, and Google Play.



3KEYS: HAN SOLO ARTIST DAVID MESSINA LAUNCHES NEW URBAN FANTASY SERIES—*HITTING SHELVES IN OCTOBER*



Han Solo artist David Messina invites readers to explore the mysterious world of *3Keys*. This apocalyptic five-issue miniseries is set to launch from Image Comics this October.

In *3Keys*, writer/artist Messina invites you to explore a mysterious world where inhabitants of another dimension flee into our reality in order to save themselves from the terrible wrath of the Great Old Ones... or to perhaps instead prepare us for a final, devastating invasion, with only an impetuous young comic-store clerk and her sardonic, furry and surprisingly violent mentor standing in the way.

"*3Keys* is not only an action-horror story about a friendship greater than the apocalypse," said Messina. "But it is also a declaration of love toward pop culture and the sense of wonder that kept us in suspense as we read the books and comic books that have really stayed with us."

3Keys #1 will be available at [comic book shops](#) on Wednesday, October 5:

Cover A by Messina - [Diamond Code AUG220044](#)

Cover B by Werther Dell'Edera - [Diamond Code AUG220045](#)

Cover C (1:25) copy incentive "Action Figure" - [Diamond Code AUG220046](#)

3Keys #1 will also be available for purchase across many digital platforms, including Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, and Google Play.



FLAWED: KILL BILL MEETS NAILBITER IN THE HIGH-OCTANE NEW SERIES - LAUNCHING THIS SEPTEMBER



Chuck Brown—co-writer of the Eisner Award winning series *Bitter Root*—reunites with *On the Stump* artist Prenzy for the ultra-violent, high-octane new story in *Flawed*. This six issue miniseries is set to launch from Image Comics in September.

Flawed follows Gem Ezz, a psychiatrist in the Kafkaesque city of Setham, where corruption and brutality rule the streets. By day, she uses words to solve her patients' problems. By night, she takes a more direct—and sometimes deadly—approach. But when her practice puts her in the sights of an immortal serial killer, Gem finds herself embroiled in a power struggle that threatens everything she's ever known.

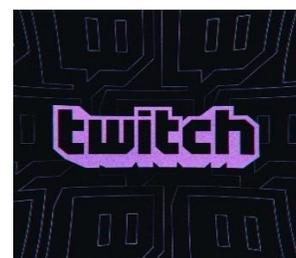
"The city of Setham holds many different strange tales and Gem Ezz's story is only the beginning" said Brown.

Flawed #1 will be available at comic book shops on Wednesday, September 28:

Flawed #1 (of 6) Cover A Prenzy - [Diamond Code JUL220062](#)

Flawed #1 (of 6) Cover B Prenzy - [Diamond Code JUL220063](#)

Flawed #1 will also be available across many digital platforms, including Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, and Google Play.



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ABOUT DFW WONDER WOMAN



IN 2016 I started volunteering as Wonder Woman in Dallas Children's Hospital. Towards the middle of the year I was at an event and was amongst Cosplayers who volunteered for a charity event. I thought hmmm this looks fun. So I applied to that charity and was accepted. In 2017 is when I went to my first ComicCon and brought 3 obscure Wonder Woman builds. I was bit by the bug for sure. Started doing mashups and other characters. Today I have over 60 versions of Wonder Woman that I portray as well as other characters. I recently debuted The Cheetah (comic book version), and Queen Atlanna. In my arsenal 3 versions of Captain Marvel, Princess Leia, Sleeping Beauty and soon BlackWidow new movie version. One of my favorite characters is Diana The Wonder Fish where I have taken my mermaid cosplay and mashed it up with Wonder Woman. Nothing better than being a

WonderFish. I adore cosplay and how you can bring your artistry. This world has enabled me to be creative with photoshoots. That is a huge area that I get to bring some magic to the character with the help of talented photographers. For my day job I am a Director of Business Development for a Digital Transformation company. In my free time I run a charity Cause to Play where we suit up for the sick, needy, disabled and children with special needs in the DFW area.

INTERVIEW

How did you get into cosplay?

Was volunteering for Dallas children's hospital as Wonder Woman and found a charity during that time and learned about cosplay.

Who is your favorite character to cosplay and why?

Wonder Woman because she is just good. She is one of the only superheroes that nothing happened to her to cause her to have powers. She was born with innate abilities and has been driven by her inner good to fight for those who cannot fight for themselves. Who doesn't dig her lasso?!?!?!?

What tips do you have on making a costume?

Well, I am not crafty. I commission my suits out. My tips are to do your research and find a maker who can do the suit justice and make it for your measurements.

What is your favorite memory of being a cosplayer?

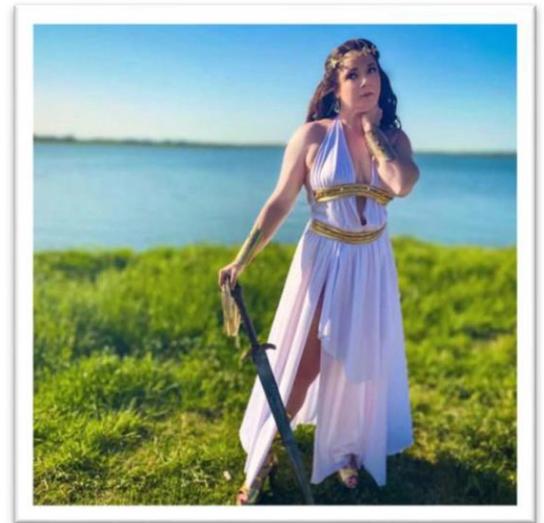
For me my first convention. I was being asked for pics throughout the day. I had 2 sisters who were so wanting me to do an action pose. Was my very first one. I will never forget the joy and excitement they had that I was "playing" with them.

What advice do you have for fans getting into cosplay?

Do it for you! If it makes you happy, that is all that matters. Have fun. This world is a blast. Don't be shy. and ask for help if you need it. This community is rich with tips and knowledge.

If you could have a weapon or superpower to fight the forces of evil, what would you choose?

That is so easy. Lasso of Truth!





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ABOUT AMERICAS SASS

Will Coherd is a father of two and has been cosplaying for 15 Years. And avid comics and superhero fans, Will has done some of the best Superhero Cosplay in Dallas. From Captain America to Dr. Strange, his attention to detail rivals anything by Marvel. Will has even tried his hand at “Homelander” from The Boys. When he is not Cosplaying, he is making sure customers are happy with Telecom carriers and that they are doing right by the customer. Will Coherd is also a big VR Gaming fan. A Nerd at heart, you can find Will at Conventions, especially in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area cosplaying his favorite characters.

INTERVIEW

How did you get into cosplay?

Like lots of other cosplayers, I think it started with Halloween. My dad was really into unique and elaborate costumes for Halloween, so I naturally followed his lead. He eventually became a Civil War reenactor later in life. My first real cosplay was a Ghostbuster, which I still do today. I had put together a full costume, proton pack and all, when I met the DWF Ghostbusters. They asked if I would like to join and wear it for charity. My immediate response was, “You mean I can spend all this money and cost justify it with my wife because its for charity? I’m in!

Who is your favorite character to cosplay and why?

Out of all the cosplays, I would have to say Captain America. He was the first character that put me on the local cosplay map. More than that though, the message he portrays and how kids and adults alike just love him. He is also the closest to my own personality. Most other characters I have worn, I have to put on an act or make an effort to portray. Cap is just me in a cool uniform, I don’t have to act.

What tips do you have on making a costume?

Don’t be afraid to try new things or learn a new skill. YouTube has so many great tutorials and videos of other cosplayers that make them to help others. Use things from around the house and get your other family members involved as well. Cosplay can be a great bonding experience with your friends and family and 2 or more brains can be better than 1 when it comes to figuring out how to make things.

What is your favorite memory of being a cosplayer?

Hands down it’s being on the court at a Dallas Mavericks game, standing next t Dirk Nowitzki, singing the National Anthem during Superhero night, dressed as Captain America. Superhero night fell on Inauguration Day that year, so it was extra special.

What advice do you have for fans getting into cosplay?

When making a new cosplay, do things that make sense to you. Don’t be afraid to put your spin on a character. Also, it’s not about the money you spend or how screen accurate it can be. This is supposed to be a fun hobby. Stop worrying about looking better than someone else, that also portrays the same character. I will bet you \$1000 that they didn’t start out looking like that. The DFW cosplay community is very warm and welcoming. When I started, I didn’t know anyone, so I had no one to ask for advice. The first step is to put yourself out there and learn from others by asking questions. Every cosplayer I know, loves to talk about their cosplay’s.

If you could have a weapon or superpower to fight the forces of evil, what would you choose?

This is gonna sound cheesy, but it very much plays into the people pleasing and lift others up part of my personality. That and its not really shown in most Superhero movies and TV shows. I would love to have the ability to super heal other heroes and innocent bystanders.

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EDITED BY JAMES HAMILTON MUSIC BY JONAS MYRBERG PRODUCTION DESIGNER JAMES HAMILTON EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS KEVIN FEIGE AND MICHAEL BACHMANN PRODUCED BY KERRY CONRAD WRITTEN BY TAVIUS REEVES AND JEFF LUDWIG DIRECTED BY TAIKA WAITITI CASTING BY SARAH HILLEY FROM COSTUME DESIGNER ERIC JORDAN EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MICHAEL BACHMANN

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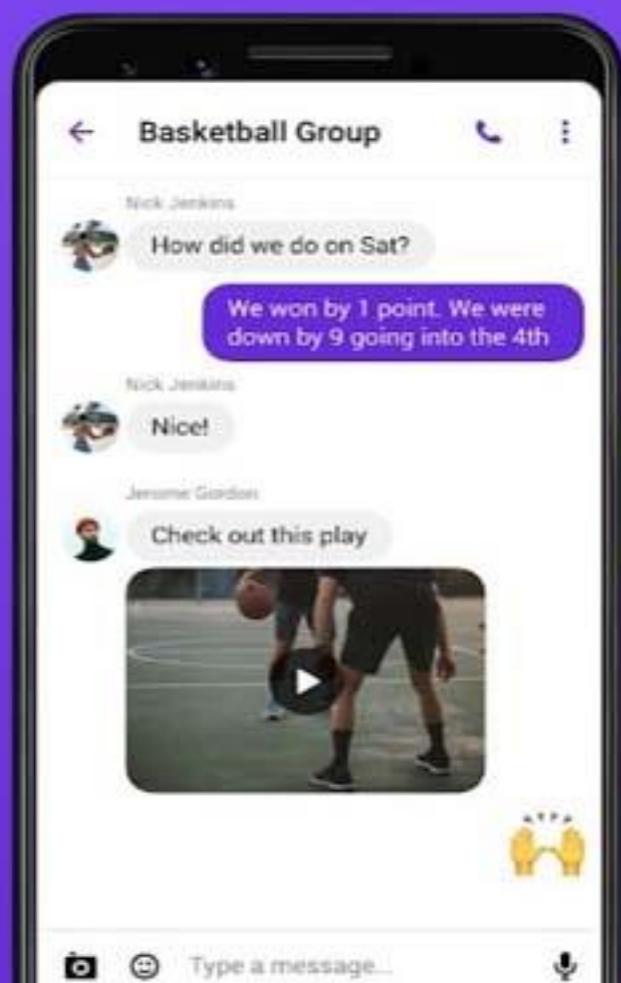
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Music News



Queen's Greatest Hits Named UK's Best-Selling Album of All Time



Queen have become the first act in the UK to sell seven million copies of an album. The rock legends' 1981 'Greatest Hits' collection is owned by 1 in 4 households in the UK, the Official Charts Company announced. Guitarist Brian May said: "No album has done this before in history. "Thank you, we appreciate it." Drummer Roger Taylor said: "The British public and their infinitely-great taste have made this the biggest-selling album in history.

"Thank you very much; we're humbled and honoured. We salute you!" The LP beat ABBA's 1992 compilation 'Gold' by a million copies. Martin Talbot, chief executive of the Official Charts, commented: "When it was released for the first time in 1981, career-spanning packages such as Greatest Hits were relatively rare, the preserve of only the very biggest acts. "There is no doubt that its massive success has done as much as any other release to turn hits packages into the omnipresent album concept that they are today." In 2014, Queen's collection reached six million copies, but now audio streams are included, with 1,000 streams amounting to a single sale.

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The 'We Will Rock You' hitmakers have amassed 1.26 billion total UK streams, while 'Bohemian Rhapsody' has been streamed 240 million times. The iconic band - which was fronted by the late Freddie Mercury, until his death in 1991, and now performs with Adam Lambert on lead vocals - join the late King of Pop, Michael Jackson, as the only acts to make the top 10 sales list twice. Queen's 1991 'Greatest Hits II' sold four million copies, placing 10th, while Michael Jackson's 'Thriller'

and 'Bad' albums placed sixth and ninth, respectively. The Beatles' 'Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band', Adele's '21', Oasis' '(What's The Story) Morning Glory?', Pink Floyd's 'Dark Side Of The Moon' and Dire Straits' 'Brother In Arms' also made the list of the UK's best-selling albums of all time.

The UK's best-selling albums of all time:

1. Queen - 'Greatest Hits'
2. Abba - 'Gold'
3. The Beatles - 'Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band'
4. Adele - '21'
5. Oasis - '(What's The Story) Morning Glory?'
6. Michael Jackson - 'Thriller'
7. Pink Floyd - 'Dark Side Of The Moon'
8. Dire Straits - 'Brothers In Arms'
9. Michael Jackson - 'Bad'
10. Queen - 'Greatest Hits II'



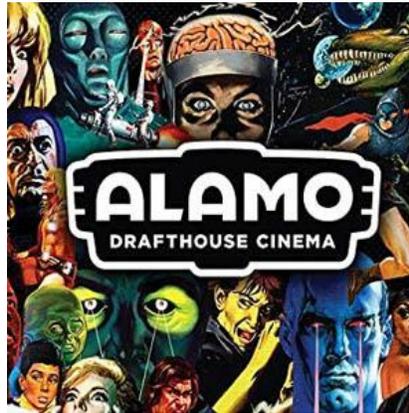
Steven Spielberg Directs First Ever Music Video for Marcus Mumford



Steven Spielberg has directed Marcus Mumford's first solo music video. The iconic filmmaker - known for his legendary big screen career working on the likes of 'E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial' and 'Schindler's List' as well as the 'Jurassic Park' and 'Indiana Jones' franchises - has now moved into the world of music. The 75-year-old director was at the helm of the video for the Mumford and Sons frontman's new single 'Cannibal'. Taking to Twitter, Marcus revealed Spielberg created the piece 'in one shot' using his phone, while the filmmaker's wife Kate Capshaw was also on set. He wrote: "On Sunday 3rd July in a high school gym in New York, Steven Spielberg directed his first music video, in one shot, on his phone. Kate Capshaw was the almighty dolly grip. "I've been overwhelmed by the support of the people around me to bring this music to you, and I cannot hope to express all of my gratitude.

"When people get it, it blows my mind. Kate and Steven just got it, and I cannot thank them enough." Marcus also thanked producer and behind the scenes videographer Kristie Macosko Krieger for her help on the project. 'Cannibal' will appear on the 'Little Lion Man' hitmaker's self-titled debut solo album, which is set to be

released on September 16. In a handwritten statement provided by Island Records announcing the single and LP last week, the singer said: "In January 2021, facing demons I danced with for a long time in isolation, I wrote a song called 'Cannibal'. "I took it to my friend Blake Mills, and we began the process of making this album, dear to my heart, called '(Self-Titled)'. "It comes out September 16th 2022, produced by Blake Mills, and featuring Brandi Carlile, Phoebe Bridgers, Clairo and Monica Martin."



Jimmy Cliff Returns with New Single Refugees



Jimmy Cliff is returning to music with a new single and album. The reggae legend has teamed up with Wyclef Jean for the new track 'Refugees', which was released on Friday (29.07.22). The new song is the title track for Jimmy's first album for over a decade which will be released on August 12. With both a Dance Version and Rap Version, 'Refugees' captures the spirit of Jimmy's classic output with a hip-hop twist courtesy of Fugees co-founder Wyclef Jean.

The son continues the creative connection between the pair after Wyclef inducted Jimmy into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2010. Jimmy, 77, said of the new track: "I'm very proud of this, because it sees Jimmy Cliff in a new musical direction. I'll always go into something new. Even though 'Refugees' is a heavy title, you're going to be moving your feet, because it's on the dancefloor. There we go. I love it." Wyclef commented: "For me, coming to America wasn't easy when I first got here. Having family members who suffered political torment, it wasn't easy for us. When I say 'Fugees', 'Fugees' is short for 'Refugees'. "I was always like, 'If I could penetrate a message, it would be that.' And who inspires that? Jimmy Cliff is one of my biggest inspirations ever, and he has always stayed on message when it comes to peace, love and unity. The collaboration with this record is just what we are, talking for the forgotten. In an era where love is needed, I don't think anybody can convey that better than the king." The 'Refugees' album has 13 tracks and the song 'Racism' features an emotional collaboration with his daughter Lilty Cliff.

Refugees Tracklist:

1. Money Love
2. Here I Am
3. Refugees (Rap Version) feat. Wyclef Jean
4. Security
5. One Song
6. My Love Song
7. Moving On
8. We Want Justice feat. Dwight Richards
9. Racism feat. Lilty Cliff
10. Bridges
11. Punus
12. Happy Day



B-SIDE REVIEWS

By Mariah Munn

Black Midi: Hellfire

“The Next Album You Should Check Out!”



The explosively talented experimental group of Londoners, Black Midi, are back with another uppercut to the mainstream. Complete with their signature cacophonous sound (is it prog? Jazz? King Crimson reborn?), the band’s third studio album *Hellfire* arrives during a time of global chaos, trepidation, and general squalor, and echoes these themes throughout. It provides an escape from reality with its theatrical sound, as well as a friendly shoulder to cry on regarding the human condition. This multifaceted approach is nothing new for black midi - it’s this dynamic energy that makes *Hellfire* a pleasant gondola ride through hell itself.

Right out of the gate, *Hellfire* bubbles with intense, magmatic energy. The album’s opening track, which also happens to be its namesake, greets us with Frontman Geordie Greep’s exasperated and theatrical monologue (re: global chaos and decay) layered over punchy marching band tones, propelling us straight into a feverish flurry of blistering brass and guitar, with quick-footed drums keeping perfect time throughout. The band, which includes Greep (vocals/guitar), Cameron Picton (vocals/bass/synths), and Morgan Simpson (drums), collectively takes us on a journey with *Hellfire* that may result in whiplash. The album, so dramatic that it is almost caricaturistic at times, delicately traipses up steep inclines and then barrels downhill with extreme force. This juxtaposition between calm and chaos can be heard in stand-out tracks like “Eat Men Eat”, with its placid opening that explodes into a chorus of screeching horns, and “Sugar/Tzu”, which takes us on a roller coaster ride through hushed dissonant tones, speeding bursts of ticking drumbeats and harmonic guitar and bass runs, and back again. That’s not to say that we don’t get some breathers within the album too - tracks like “Still”, teeming with charmingly folky heartland energy, and “The Defence,” paying homage to the prior crooners and big-band acts of yesteryear, allow us somerose to take a moment and reflect on the speed runs we’ve just done through the rest of hard-hitting tracks.



As a whole, the album feels like a fever dream in which you’re constantly sprinting through a tight maze in an attempt to evade the thing that’s chasing you - a giant, human-like monster named Destruction. In “Welcome to Hell”, Greep muses that “to die for your country does not win a war - to kill for your country is what wins a war.” This commentary on death, the human condition, and capitalism as a killing machine is peppered throughout. If you were to sample any ten seconds of the album, you would be inundated with unconventional rhythms and expertly complex chord progressions. However, the band’s work still remains widely accessible and impossibly groovy. This remains true for their prior two albums, *Schlagenheim* and *Cavalcade*, as well. For every complicated jazz chord, we are met with a melodic sequence or catchy hook. It’s this dedication to creating something that is, as always, both impossibly complex and pleasantly digestible that allows Black Midi to blur the lines of genre and tick all the boxes with their work, and *Hellfire* is no exception!



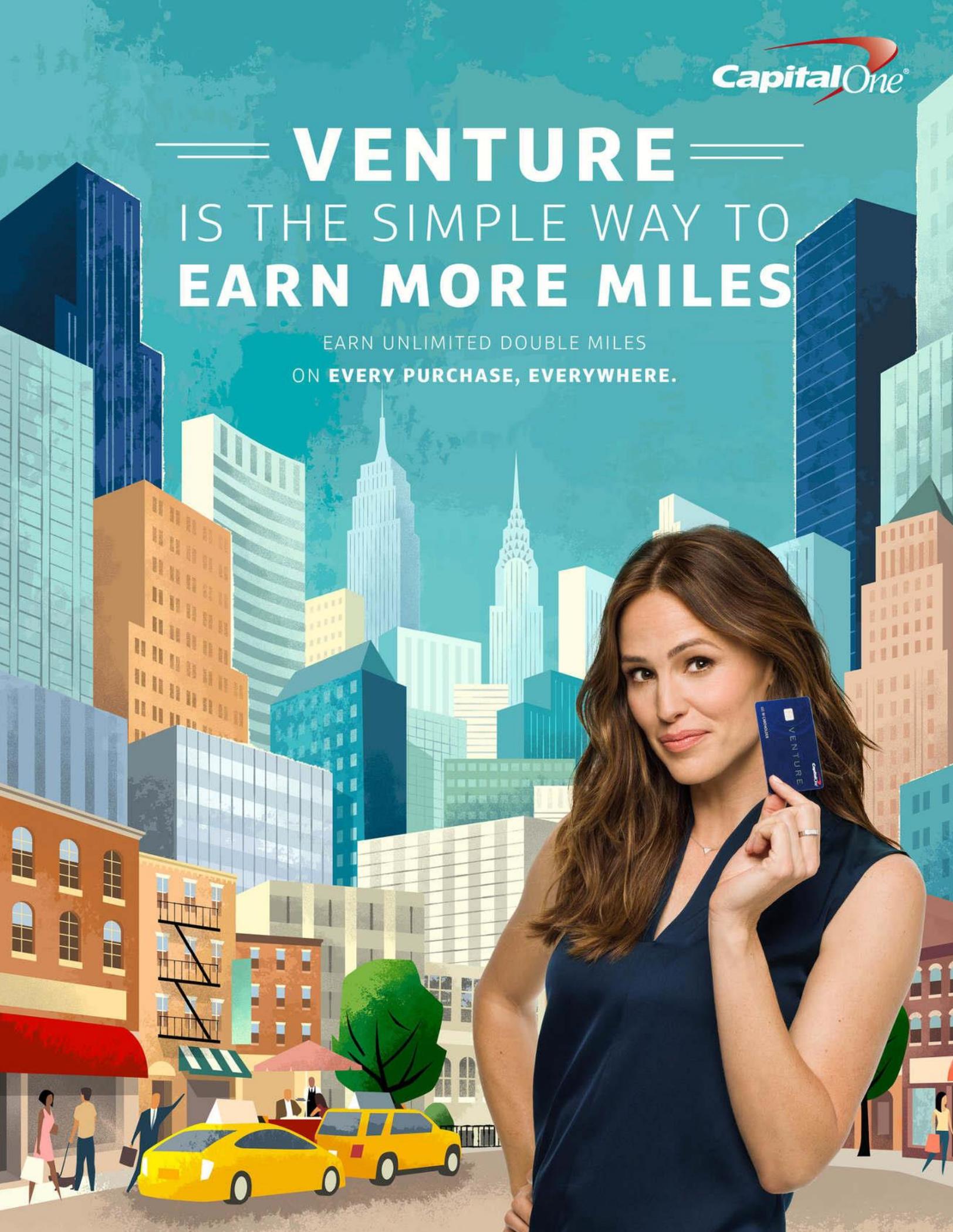
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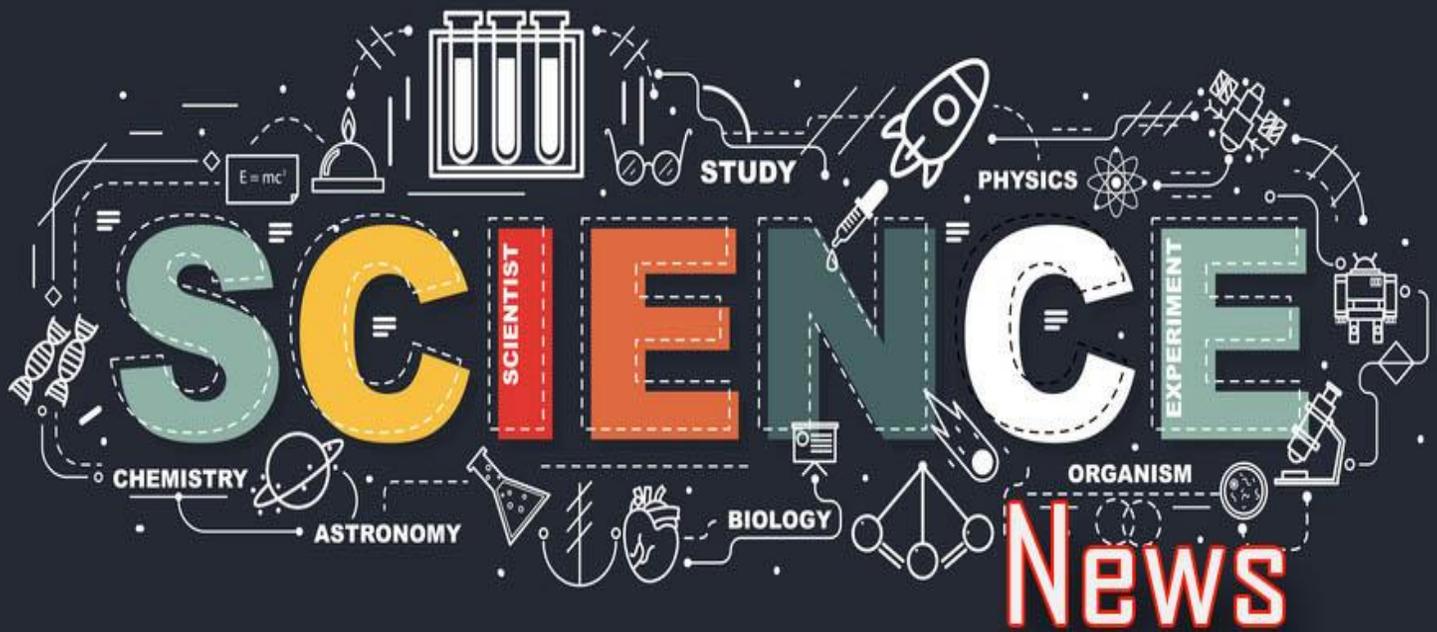


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Astronomers Detect a Radio 'Heartbeat' Billions of Light-Years from Earth



Astronomers at MIT and elsewhere have detected a strange and persistent radio signal from a far-off galaxy that appears to be flashing with surprising regularity.

The signal is classified as a fast radio burst, or FRB -- an intensely strong burst of radio waves of unknown astrophysical origin, that typically lasts for a few milliseconds at most. However, this new signal persists for up to three seconds, about 1,000 times longer than the average FRB. Within this window, the team detected bursts of radio waves that repeat every 0.2 seconds in a clear periodic pattern, similar to a beating heart.

The researchers have labeled the signal FRB 20191221A, and it is currently the longest-lasting FRB, with the clearest periodic pattern, detected to date.

The source of the signal lies in a distant galaxy, several billion light-years from Earth. Exactly what that source might be remains a mystery, though astronomers suspect the signal could emanate from either a radio pulsar or a magnetar, both of which are types of neutron stars -- extremely dense, rapidly spinning collapsed cores of giant stars.

"There are not many things in the universe that emit strictly periodic signals," says Daniele Michilli, a postdoc in MIT's Kavli Institute for Astrophysics and Space Research. "Examples that we know of in our own galaxy are radio pulsars and magnetars, which rotate and produce a beamed emission similar to a lighthouse. And we think this new signal could be a magnetar or pulsar on steroids."

The team hopes to detect more periodic signals from this source, which could then be used as an astrophysical clock. For instance, the frequency of the bursts, and how they change as the source moves away from Earth, could be used to measure the rate at which the universe is expanding.

co-authors Calvin Leung, Juan Mena-Parra, Kaitlyn Shin, and Kiyoshi Masui at MIT, along with Michilli, who led the discovery first as a researcher at McGill University, and then as a postdoc at MIT.

"Boom, boom, boom"

Since the first FRB was discovered in 2007, hundreds of similar radio flashes have been detected across the universe, most recently by the Canadian Hydrogen Intensity Mapping Experiment, or CHIME, an interferometric radio telescope consisting of four large parabolic reflectors that is located at the Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory in British Columbia, Canada.



CHIME continuously observes the sky as the Earth rotates, and is designed to pick up radio waves emitted by hydrogen in the very earliest stages of the universe. The telescope also happens to be sensitive to fast radio bursts, and since it began observing the sky in 2018, CHIME has detected hundreds of FRBs emanating from different parts of the sky.

The vast majority of FRBs observed to date are one-offs -- ultrabright bursts of radio waves

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The discovery is reported today in the journal *Nature*, and is authored by members of the CHIME/FRB Collaboration, including MIT

that last for a few milliseconds before blinking off. Recently, researchers discovered the first periodic FRB that appeared to emit a regular pattern of radio waves. This signal consisted of a four-day window of random bursts that then repeated every 16 days. This 16-day cycle indicated a periodic pattern of activity, though the signal of the actual radio bursts was random rather than periodic.

On Dec. 21, 2019, CHIME picked up a signal of a potential FRB, which immediately drew the attention of Michilli, who was scanning the incoming data.

"It was unusual," he recalls. "Not only was it very long, lasting about three seconds, but there were periodic peaks that were remarkably precise, emitting every fraction of a second -- boom, boom, boom -- like a heartbeat. This is the first time the signal itself is periodic."

Brilliant bursts

In analyzing the pattern of FRB 20191221A's radio bursts, Michilli and his colleagues found similarities with emissions from radio pulsars and magnetars in our own galaxy. Radio pulsars are neutron stars that emit beams of radio waves, appearing to pulse as the star rotates, while a similar emission is produced by magnetars due to their extreme magnetic fields.

The main difference between the new signal and radio emissions from our own galactic pulsars and magnetars is that FRB 20191221A appears to be more than a million times brighter. Michilli says the luminous flashes may originate from a distant radio pulsar or magnetar that is normally less bright as it rotates and for some unknown reason ejected a train of brilliant bursts, in a rare three-second window that CHIME was luckily positioned to catch.

"CHIME has now detected many FRBs with different properties," Michilli says. "We've seen some that live inside clouds that are very turbulent, while others look like they're in clean environments. From the properties of this new signal, we can say that around this source, there's a cloud of plasma that must be extremely turbulent."

The astronomers hope to catch additional bursts from the periodic FRB 20191221A, which can help to refine their understanding of its source, and of neutron stars in general. "This detection raises the question of what could cause this extreme signal that we've never seen before, and how can we use this signal to study the universe," Michilli says. "Future telescopes promise to discover thousands of FRBs a month, and at that point we may find many more of these periodic signals." This research was supported, in part, by the Canada Foundation for Innovation. JOURNAL SOURCE: The CHIME/FRB Collaboration., Andersen, B.C., Bandura, K. et al. **Sub-second periodicity in a fast radio burst.** *Nature*, 2022 DOI: [10.1038/s41586-022-04841-8](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-022-04841-8)

What a Martian Meteorite Can Teach us About Earth's Origins



What do Mars and Iceland have in common?

These days, not so much. But more than 4.5 billion years ago, it's possible the Red Planet had a crust comparable to Iceland today. This discovery, hidden in the oldest martian fragments found on Earth, could provide information about our planet that was lost over billions of years of geological movement and could help explain why the Earth developed into a planet that sustains a broad diversity of life and Mars did not.

These insights into Earth's past came out of a new study, published today in *Nature Communications*, by an international team that includes an NAU researcher. The study details how they found the likely martian origin of the 4.48-billion-year-old meteorite, informally named Black Beauty. Its origin is one of the oldest regions of Mars.

"This meteorite recorded the first stage of the evolution of Mars and, by extension, of all terrestrial planets, including the Earth," said Valerie Payré, a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Astronomy and Planetary Science. "As the Earth lost its old surface

mainly due to plate tectonics, observing such settings in extremely ancient terrains on Mars is a rare window into the ancient Earth surface that we lost a long time ago."

What Mars can tell us about Earth

The team, led by Anthony Lagain from Curtin University in Australia, searched for the location of origin of a martian meteorite (officially named NWA -- Northwest Africa -- 7034 for where it was found on Earth). This meteorite, the chemistry of which indicates that Mars had volcanic activity to that found on Earth, recorded the first stage of Mars' evolution. Although it was ejected from the surface of Mars five to 10 million years ago after an asteroid impact, its source region and geological context has remained a mystery.

This team studied chemical and physical properties of Black Beauty to pinpoint where it came from; they determined it was from Terra Cimmeria-Sirenum, one of the most ancient regions of Mars. It may have a surface similar to Earth's continents. Planetary bodies like Mars have impacts craters all over their surface, so finding the right one is challenging. In a previous study, Lagain's team developed a crater detection algorithm that uses high-resolution images of the surface of Mars to identify small impact craters, finding about 90 million as small as 50 meters in diameter. In this study, they were able to isolate the most plausible ejection site -- the Karratha crater that excavated ejecta of an older crater named Khujirt.



"For the first time, we know the geological context of the only brecciated Martian sample available on Earth, 10 years before the NASA's Mars Sample Return mission is set to send back samples collected by the Perseverance rover currently exploring the Jezero crater," said Lagain, a research fellow in the School of Earth and Planetary Sciences at Curtin. "This research paved the way to locate the ejection site of other Martian meteorites, in order to create the most exhaustive view of the Red Planet's geological history."

Payré studies the nature and formation of Mars' crust to determine if Earth and Mars share a common past that include both a continent-like and ocean-like crust. She uses orbital observations captured in this region to

investigate whether traces of volcanism similar to Iceland exist on Mars.

"As of today, Mars' crust complexity is not understood, and knowing about the origin of these amazing ancient fragments could lead future rover and spatial missions to explore the Terra Sirenum-Cimmeria region that hides the truth of Mars' evolution, and perhaps the Earth's," she said. "This work paves the road to locate the ejection site of other martian meteorites that will provide the most exhaustive view of the geological history of Mars and will answer one of the most intriguing questions: why Mars, now dry and cold, evolved so differently from Earth, a flourishing planet for life?" The team's algorithm is adapted to detect impact craters constellating Mercury and the Moon, the other terrestrial bodies. This can be used to help unravel their geographical history and answer foundational questions regarding their formation and evolution. This work is a starting point to guide future investigations of the Solar System. JOURNAL SOURCE: A. Lagain, S. Bouley, B. Zanda, K. Miljković, A. Rajšić, D. Baratoux, V. Payré, L. S. Doucet, N. E. Timms, R. Hewins, G. K. Benedix, V. Malarewic, K. Servis, P. A. Bland. **Early crustal processes revealed by the ejection site of the oldest martian meteorite.** *Nature Communications*, 2022; 13 (1) DOI: [10.1038/s41467-022-31444-8](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-022-31444-8)

Does This Ring a Bell? Wild Bats Can Remember Sounds for Years



There are certain skills that once we acquire them, we rarely have to relearn them, like riding a bike or looking both ways before crossing a street. Most studies on learning and long-term memory in the wild focus on a handful of animal species. Now, in a publication in *Current Biology*, researchers working at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI) share the first report of long-term memory in frog-eating bats (*Trachops cirrhosus*).

"Frog-eating bats are an excellent emerging model organism for studying cognitive and sensory ecology," explains biologist M. May

Dixon, lead author of the paper, who just finished her doctoral degree at the University of Texas at Austin, "learning plays a big part in their lives." The bats' ability to learn and retain information means that when they are hunting frogs, their main prey, they don't have to continuously relearn which frog calls indicate that a frog is good to eat, poisonous, or too big to carry. Dixon and colleagues trained 49 wild bats to respond to cellphone ringtones played through speakers. Bats responding to two of the tones found a bait fish reward on the speaker every time, but when they responded to three other tones, they were never rewarded. They quickly learned to fly to the speaker when ringtones indicated a snack, and not to respond to the other tones. The bats were then microchipped and released back into Panama's Soberania National Park. Researchers recaptured eight trained bats between one to four years later, and when they played the experimental sounds again, the bats recognized and responded to the two rewarded ringtones even four years later. For comparison, the experiment included 17 untrained frog-eating bats that usually twitched their ears attentively but did not fly to the sounds. When Dixon was working as a STRI intern with PhD student and co-author Patricia Jones to find out if the bats could learn which novel tones meant a reward by watching the responses of other bats, she realized that she could also find out if the bats could remember the tones.



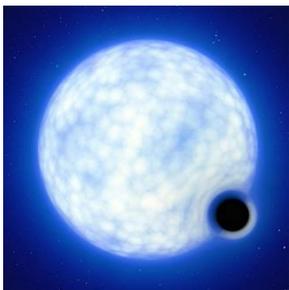
The ringtones they chose for the experiments, the ping of an incoming text message alert, and the beep of a car being unlocked, sounded clearly human-generated, so that the bats wouldn't casually hear them in nature, but frog-like enough that the bats were interested. As for the extinguished tones, the unrewarded ones that the bats learned to disregard, researchers played one of them to the recaptured bats, and six of the eight trained bats approached it. "It's possible that they remember the extinguished sound, but enough time had gone by that they thought to check it out once more," said Dixon. "Or it's possible that they couldn't remember the exact difference between the ringtones, and that

extinguished sound was close enough to the rewarded one that they decided to check that out too. Sort of like a generalization of memory." To make sure that the bats were not responding to every sound they heard, she played a pure tone, and most of the bats did not fly to it, only twitched their ears. This experiment raises more questions regarding how memory works in these bats and other animals, including the metabolic cost of remembering.

"I'm interested in memory capacity in animals and what causes long-term or short-term memories, what ecological conditions select for different memory lengths, what is important to remember and to forget," she explains. "But studying long-term memory is very difficult, because it takes a long time by definition. And testing memory in captive animals, even if it's more convenient, isn't necessarily representative of what animals can remember in the wild." She wants to go back to the BatLab, directed by STRI staff scientist and co-author Rachel Page, to learn more. "STRI has been the basis for so much research done with bats. They have gathered a large database on frog-eating bats, on experiments done with bats, what stimulus have been used, so if you capture a bat that has been caught before, you already have its whole history. There are few places in the world where you can have that amount of detail," she says. "I went from liking bats but not thinking they were very interesting, to realizing they are very complex little creatures, with deep personalities and very engaging ways of interacting with the world." JOURNAL SOURCE: M. May Dixon, Patricia L. Jones, Michael J. Ryan, Gerald G. Carter, Rachel A. Page. **Long-term memory in frog-eating bats.** *Current Biology*, 2022; 32 (12): R557 DOI: [10.1016/j.cub.2022.05.031](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2022.05.031)



'Black Hole Police' Discover a Dormant Black Hole Outside Our Galaxy



A team of international experts, renowned for debunking several black hole discoveries, have found a stellar-mass black hole in the Large Magellanic Cloud, a neighbour galaxy to our own. "For the first time, our team got together to report on a black hole discovery, instead of rejecting one," says study leader Tomer Shenar. Moreover, they found that the star that gave rise to the black hole vanished without any sign of a powerful explosion. The discovery was made thanks to six years of observations obtained with the European Southern Observatory's (ESO's) Very Large Telescope (VLT). "We identified a 'needle in a haystack'," says Shenar who started the study at KU Leuven in Belgium [1] and is now a Marie-Curie Fellow at Amsterdam University, the Netherlands. Though other similar black hole candidates [have been] -- proposed, the team claims this is the first 'dormant' stellar-mass black hole to be unambiguously detected outside our galaxy. Stellar-mass black holes are formed when massive stars reach the end of their lives and collapse under their own gravity. In a binary, a system of two stars revolving around each other, this process leaves behind a black hole in orbit with a luminous companion star. The black hole is 'dormant' if it does not emit high levels of X-ray radiation, which is how such black holes are typically detected. "It is incredible that we hardly know of any dormant black holes, given how common astronomers believe them to be," explains co-author Pablo Marchant of KU Leuven. The newly found black hole is at least nine times the mass of our Sun, and orbits a hot, blue star weighing 25 times the Sun's mass.

Dormant black holes are particularly hard to spot since they do not interact much with their surroundings. "For more than two years now, we have been looking for such black-hole-binary systems," says co-author Julia Bodensteiner, a research fellow at ESO in

Germany. "I was very excited when I heard about VFTS 243, which in my opinion is the most convincing candidate reported to date." [2]

To find VFTS 243, the collaboration searched nearly 1000 massive stars in the Tarantula Nebula region of the Large Magellanic Cloud, looking for the ones that could have black holes as companions. Identifying these companions as black holes is extremely difficult, as so many alternative possibilities exist.

"As a researcher who has [debunked] -- potential black holes in recent years, I was extremely skeptical regarding this discovery," says Shenar. The skepticism was shared by co-author Kareem El-Badry of the Center for Astrophysics | Harvard & Smithsonian in the USA, whom Shenar calls the "black hole destroyer." "When Tomer asked me to double check his findings, I had my doubts. But I could not find a plausible explanation for the data that did not involve a black hole," explains El-Badry.

The discovery also allows the team a unique view into the processes that accompany the formation of black holes. Astronomers believe that a stellar-mass black hole forms as the core of a dying massive star collapses, but it remains uncertain whether or not this is accompanied by a powerful supernova explosion.

"The star that formed the black hole in VFTS 243 appears to have collapsed entirely, with no sign of a previous explosion," explains Shenar. "Evidence for this 'direct-collapse' scenario has been emerging recently, but our study arguably provides one of the most direct indications. This has enormous implications for the origin of black-hole mergers in the cosmos."

The black hole in VFTS 243 was found using six years of observations of the Tarantula Nebula by the Fibre Large Array Multi Element Spectrograph (FLAMES) -- instrument on ESO's [VLT] [3].

Despite the nickname 'black hole police', the team actively encourages scrutiny, and hopes that their work, published today in *Nature Astronomy*, will enable the discovery of other stellar-mass black holes orbiting massive stars, thousands of which are predicted to exist in Milky Way and in the Magellanic Clouds.

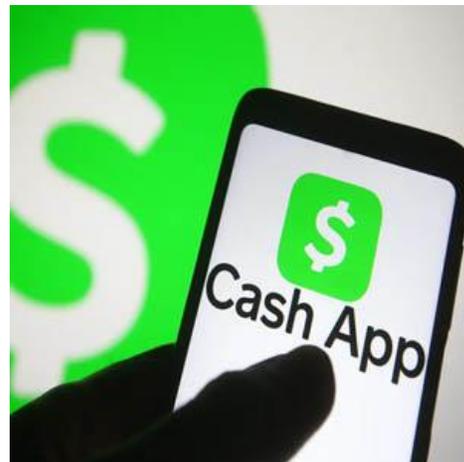
"Of course I expect others in the field to pore over our analysis carefully, and to try to cook up alternative models," concludes El-Badry. "It's a very exciting project to be involved in."

Notes

[1] The work was conducted in the team lead by Hugues Sana at KU Leuven's Institute of Astronomy.

[2] A separate study led by Laurent Mahy, involving many of the same team members and accepted for publication in *Astronomy & Astrophysics*, reports on another promising stellar-mass black hole candidate, in the HD 130298 system in our own Milky Way galaxy.

[3] The observations used in the study cover about six years: they consist of data from the [VLT FLAMES Tarantula Survey] -- (led by Chris Evans, United Kingdom Astronomy Technology Centre, STFC, Royal Observatory, Edinburgh; now at the European Space Agency) obtained from 2008 and 2009, and additional data from the [Tarantula Massive Binary Monitoring] -- programme (led by Hugues Sana, KU Leuven), obtained between 2012 and 2014. JOURNAL SOURCE: Tomer Shenar, Hugues Sana, Laurent Mahy, Kareem El-Badry, Pablo Marchant, Norbert Langer, Calum Hawcroft, Matthias Fabry, Koushik Sen, Leonardo A. Almeida, Michael Abdul-Masih, Julia Bodensteiner, Paul A. Crowther, Mark Gieles, Mariusz Gromadzki, Vincent Hénault-Brunet, Artemio Herrero, Alex de Koter, Patryk Iwanek, Szymon Kozłowski, Daniel J. Lennon, Jesús Maíz Apellániz, Przemysław Mróz, Anthony F. J. Moffat, Annachiara Picco, Paweł Pietrukowicz, Radosław Poleski, Krzysztof Rybicki, Fabian R. N. Schneider, Dorota M. Skowron, Jan Skowron, Igor Soszyński, Michał K. Szymański, Silvia Toonen, Andrzej Udalski, Krzysztof Ulaczyk, Jorick S. Vink, Marcin Wrona. **An X-ray-quiet black hole born with a negligible kick in a massive binary within the Large Magellanic Cloud.** *Nature Astronomy*, 2022; DOI: [10.1038/s41550-022-01730-y](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41550-022-01730-y)



Virtual Reality App Trial Shown to Reduce Common Phobias



Results from a University of Otago, Christchurch trial suggest fresh hope for the estimated one-in-twelve people worldwide suffering from a fear of flying, needles, heights, spiders and dogs. The trial, led by Associate Professor Cameron Lacey, from the Department of Psychological Medicine, studied phobia patients using a headset and a smartphone app treatment programme -- a combination of Virtual Reality (VR) 360-degree video exposure therapy and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). Participants downloaded a fully self-guided smartphone app called "oVRcome," developed by Christchurch tech entrepreneur Adam Hutchinson, aimed at treating patients with phobia and anxiety. The app was paired with a headset to immerse participants in virtual environments to help treat their phobia.

The results from the trial, just published in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, showed a 75 per cent reduction in phobia symptoms after six weeks of the treatment programme. "The improvements they reported suggests there's great potential for the use of VR and mobile phone apps as a means of self-guided treatment for people struggling with often-crippling phobias," Associate Professor Lacey says.

"Participants demonstrated a strong acceptability of the app, highlighting its potential for delivering easily accessible, cost-

effective treatment at scale, of particular use for those unable to access in-person exposure therapy to treat their phobias."

A total of 129 people took part in the six-week randomised, controlled trial, between May 2021 and December 2021, with a 12-week follow-up. Participants needed to be aged between 18-64 years, have a fear of either flying, heights, needles, spiders and dogs. They were emailed weekly questionnaires to record their progress. Those experiencing adverse events could request contact from a clinical psychologist at any stage.

"Participants experiencing all five types of phobia showed comparable improvements in the Severity Measures for Specific Phobia scale over the course of the trial. The average severity score decreased from 28/40 (moderate to severe symptoms) to 7/40 (minimal symptoms) after six weeks. There were no participant withdrawals due to intervention-related adverse events.

"The oVRcome app involves what's called "exposure therapy," a form of CBT exposing participants to their specific phobias in short bursts, to build up their tolerance to the phobia in a clinically-approved and controlled way," Associate Professor Lacey says.

"Some participants reported significant progress in overcoming their phobias after the trial period, with one feeling confident enough to now book an overseas family holiday, another lining up for a Covid vaccine and another reporting they now felt confident not only knowing there was a spider in the house but that they could possibly remove it themselves."

The app programme consisted of standard CBT components including psychoeducation, relaxation, mindfulness, cognitive techniques, exposure through VR, and a relapse prevention model. Participants were able to select their own exposure levels to their particular phobia from a large library of VR videos.

"This means the levels of exposure therapy could be tailored to an individual's needs which is a particular strength. The more traditional in-person exposure treatment for specific phobias have a notoriously high dropout rate due to

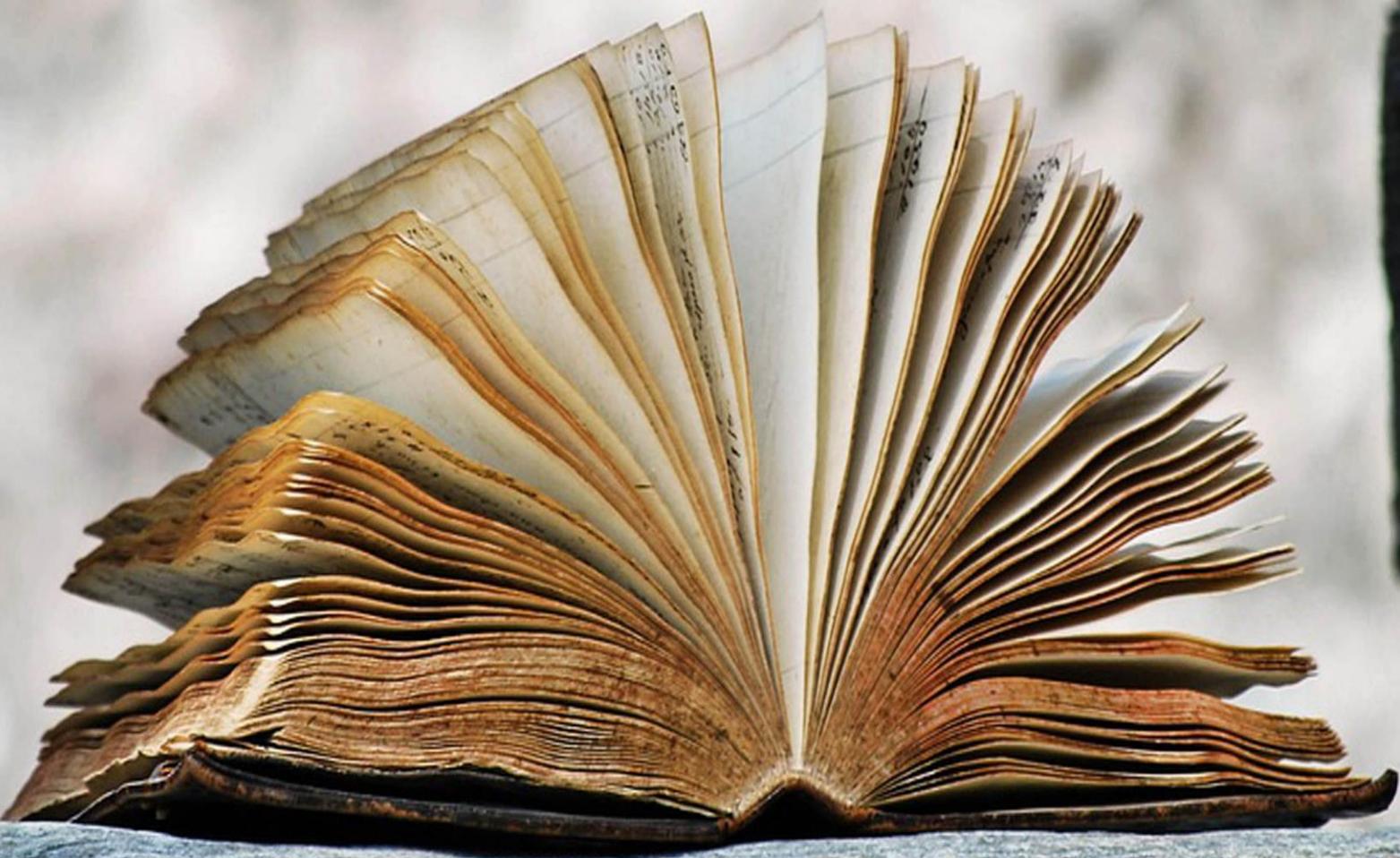
discomfort, inconvenience and a lack of motivation in people seeking out fears to expose themselves to. With this VR app treatment, trialists had increased control in exposure to their fears, as well as control over when and where exposure occurs," says Associate Professor Lacey.

The researchers say this trial was novel, due to the cost-effective availability of the app and headsets and the fact that multiple phobias were tested at once. They say most comparative VR studies to date have investigated high-end VR devices which are only available in research and limited clinical settings. One Dutch study examined a low-cost VR Dutch-language program using animated imagery that demonstrated improvement in fear-of-height symptoms, however this study only examined a single type of specific phobia.

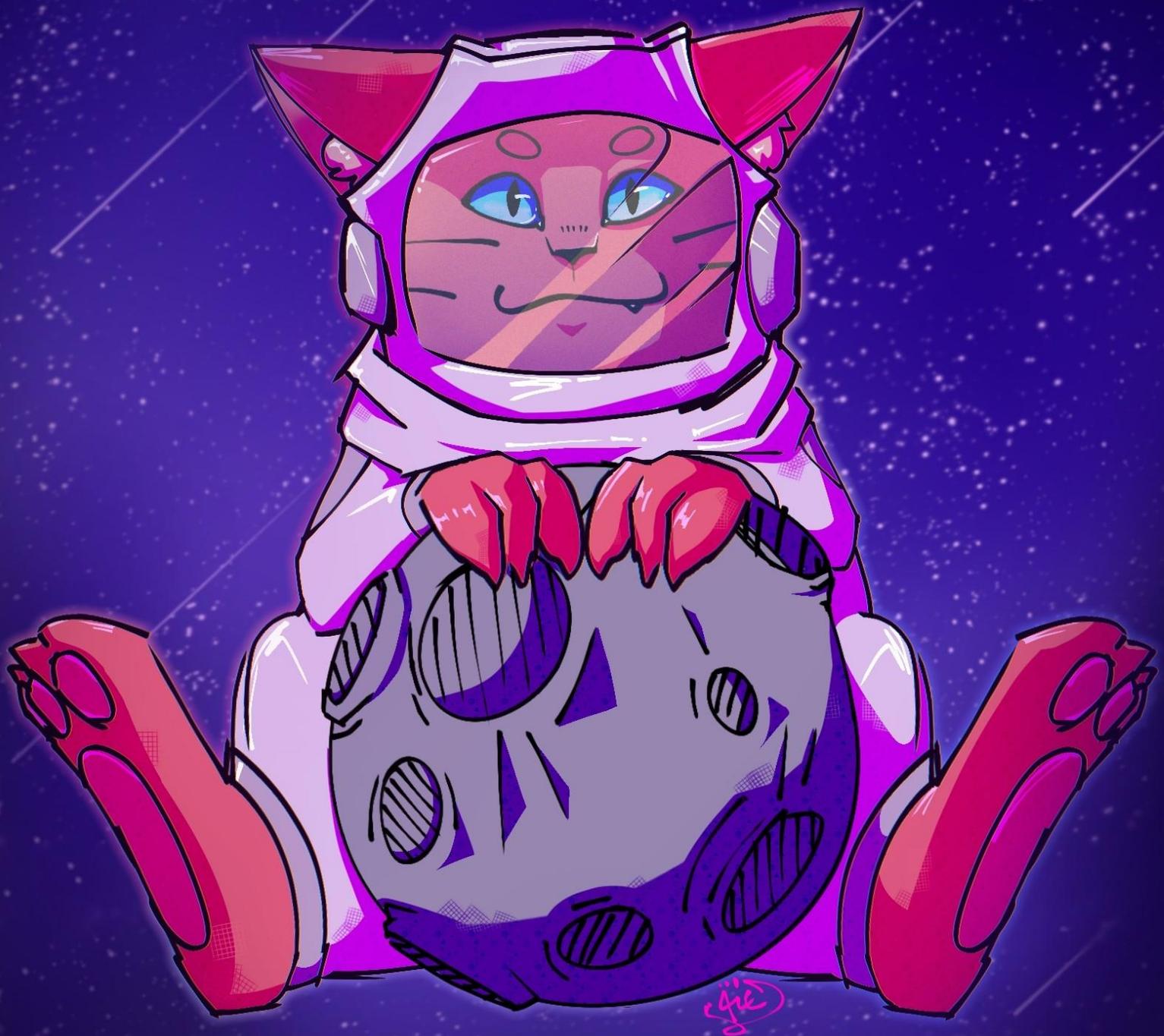
Associate Professor Lacey says public demand to take part in the trial was unprecedented, demonstrating the increasing need and desire for phobia treatment in the community.

"An estimated ten per cent of New Zealanders have been hesitant to take part in the government's COVID-19 vaccination programme due to needle phobia. This hasn't been helped by a significant shortage of psychologists. A petition to Parliament last year claimed New Zealand is 1,000 psychologists short, causing ballooning wait times nationwide, making it difficult for people to access help if needed. We need to further research and explore the use of more cost-effective, easily-accessible, home-based solutions such as this oVRcome app, to provide people with the treatment and support they need." This study builds on the Department of Psychological Medicine's existing research into structured psychotherapy for mental distress. JOURNAL SOURCE: Cameron Lacey, Chris Frampton, Ben Beaglehole. **oVRcome – Self-guided virtual reality for specific phobias: A randomised controlled trial.** *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 2022; 000486742211107 DOI: [10.1177/00048674221110779](https://doi.org/10.1177/00048674221110779)

Storytellers



Space Pizza: Part 1 by Sydney Costa





Part 1

By Sydney Costa

“Tales From a Warped Teenage Brain”

“*Welcome* to the Cosmic Crust Pizza Palace, where our food is out of this world! What can I get for you today?” I recited in my Customer Service Voice.

“Uhhh....let’s see.....”

Oh, great. One of those people. I glanced at my phone while I waited for the customer to decide what he wanted. Another text from Mike asking when my shift ended—we were going to hang out when I got home, but if everyone kept going at this guy’s pace, I might as well just call it quits. Mike still didn’t know I worked at an intergalactic establishment; he still thought I’d been hired at the joint down the street. Unfortunately, I worked five million lightyears away, not five minutes.

I looked back up at the customer, who was still scratching his chin—well, the approximate area of where a chin would be—and sighed. *Only a few more minutes.* The customer cleared his throat.

“I think I’ll just take four planet-sized anchovy pizzas. Er, one with pickles. And stardust on all four, with a side of molten cheesy bread,” he burred. His voice was deep, but bubbly, and everything he said sounded slightly muffled. “Oh, and don’t forget the fish marinara, please. Just a bit on the side, if you don’t mind.”

“You’ve got good taste,” I remarked, scribbling down the order. *I hate anchovies, but it’s not like I’m gonna tell him that.* “Any special occasion?”

His eyes lit up. “It’s my daughter’s birthday today,” the squid-like alien said cheerily, his mouth (at least, that’s what I thought it was) scrunching into a well-worn grin. It filled his whole face, crinkling the smile lines by his eyes and pushing the fins in place of his ears up. “She loves pizza from here. And between you and me,” he added in a conspiratorial whisper, “I do too.” He patted his stomach and chuckled.

His happiness was infectious, and I smiled too. “That’s fun! How old is she turning?”

“Seven hundred. She’s still little.”

Right, not all species have human-adjacent lifespans. “I bet she’s a real sweetheart,” I told the father. “What’s the name for the order?”

He rubbed the tentacles on his face for a moment. “Gleuri.”

After writing that on the top of the slip of paper, I handed the order to the four-armed chef in the back. She grumbled something about ‘stupid messy human writing,’ sprinkling in a few words I didn’t recognize but sounded like swearing in a different language. I ignored her and turned back to the customer. “Okay, If you’ll just take a seat over there, your pizza should be ready in a few moments.”

He smiled again. “Thanks. It’s much appreciated, though I do have one question.”

“Go for it.”

“How’d a human like you get to work here?”

“Uh...” I thought back to when I’d first put up an ad for myself because I needed money to get a game. I was about 12, and it was a hand-written flyer that I recalled as being very unspecific. Apparently, aliens check the community pool cork

board too, because the next thing I knew, they'd kidnapped me to work at the Cosmic Crust Pizza Place. Good thing they weren't murderous.

"The owners wanted a less intimidating being behind the counter to be a friendly face, and, well, humans aren't exactly scary. So, they got me to work for them. And hey, what can I say, a job in space is just cool."

"Oh, that's wonderful! Sorry if I'm being intrusive with all these questions, but do you have a way home? Earth is quite a ways from here, and you look rather young." His tone turned slightly concerned.

"Yeah, totally. Don't worry about it," I reassured him.

"Alright, don't want to keep you," the squid-like creature said. "Thanks again!" he added as he walked over to the pick-up section of the restaurant.

"No problem; it's my pleasure," I called back. *Huh, what a nice guy.*

I remembered the time and glanced at the melting pizza clock. I'd spent an extra few minutes talking to the customer and hadn't even realized my shift was up.

"Gotta go!" I said to a bird-like alien that was walking over to switch with me, grabbing my phone and hurriedly tossing him my hat. He caught it and stared at me in confusion.

I changed out of my uniform and sprinted to the wormhole generator out back. *Oh, thank goodness it's still open.* I stepped inside the chamber and typed in the settings for a spot just outside the pizza place, preparing for the feeling of interdimensional warping. *I've been doing this for like three years. Maybe I'll be used to it this ti...*

The wormhole opened and my stomach lurched as the floor disappeared beneath me, the fabric of reality distorting and stretching around me. My molecules got pulled in every direction and every fiber of my being felt like it was being torn apart. I squeezed my eyes shut, trying to block out the kaleidoscopic whirls of color that seemed to attack me from every angle. Another wave of nausea washed over me and despite my best instincts, I managed to uncurl from the ball I'd hunched into and (sort of) stuck the landing on the pavement of the back parking lot on my hands and knees.

The breath rushed out of me as I collapsed, rolling over onto my back. I repressed the urge to vomit again. *Nope, still not used to it.*

I heard a quiet, drawn-out gasp to the side of me and looked towards the sound in alarm. My best friend, Mike, was standing there, holding his car keys and looking somewhere between dumbfounded and awestruck.

Crap!

"Blake, you have... a *lot* of explaining to do," was all he could manage to say. I flopped back onto the ground, staring at the sky. "Yeah, that... yeah. I'll... get to that in a... second." I said breathlessly.

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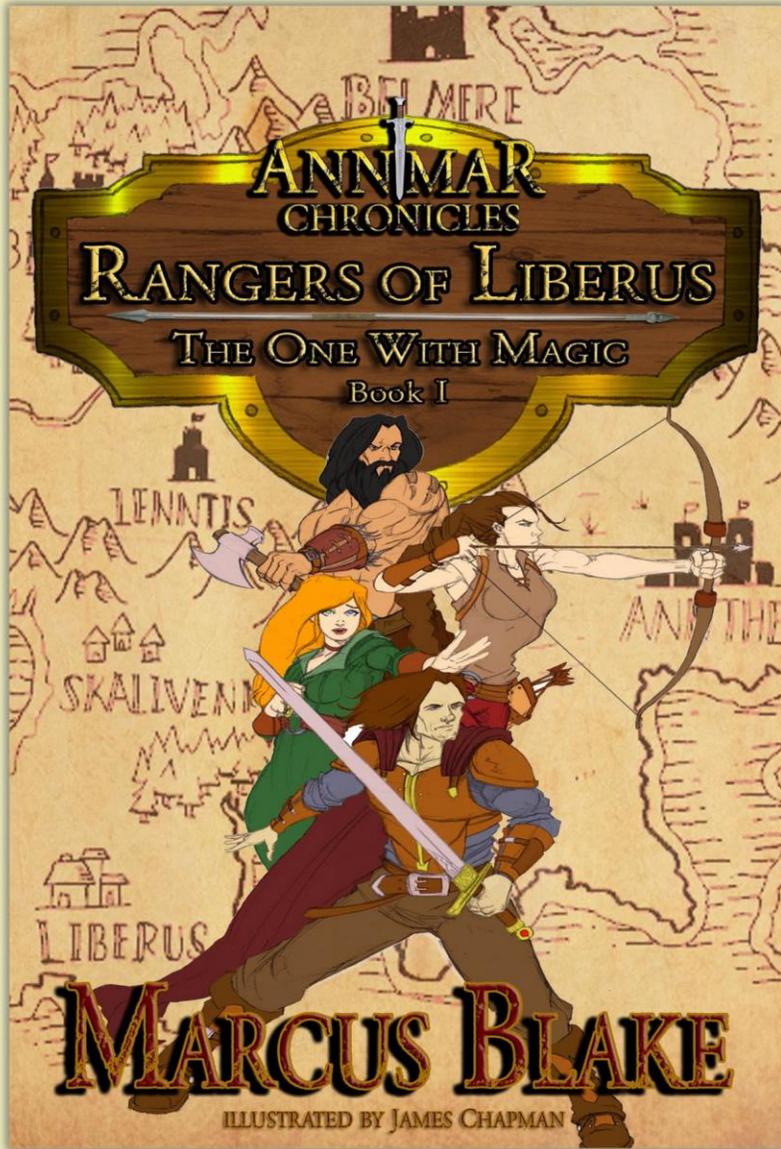


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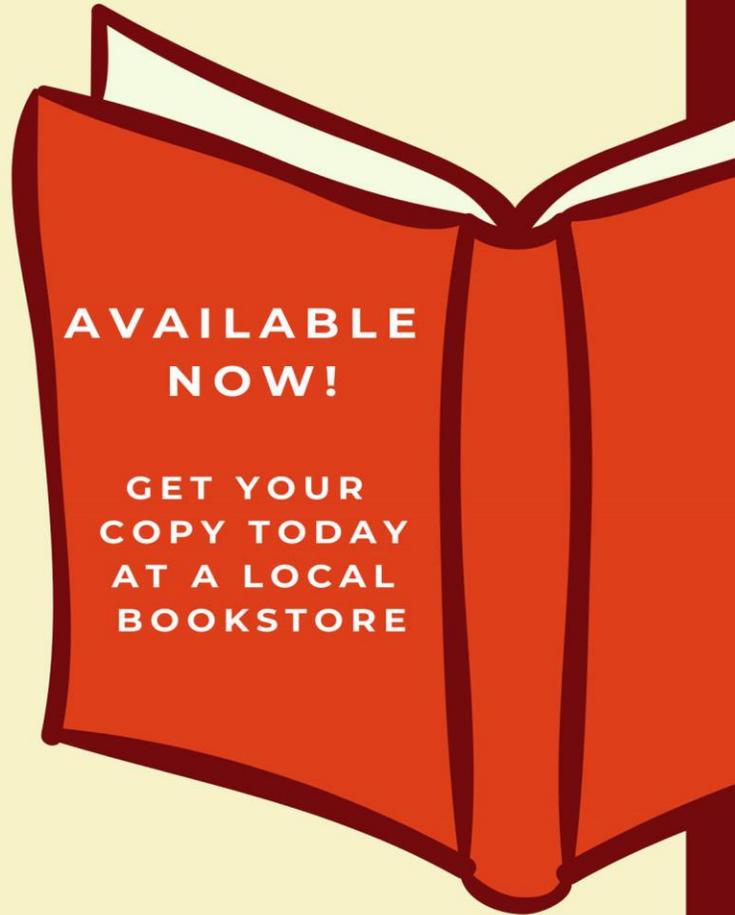
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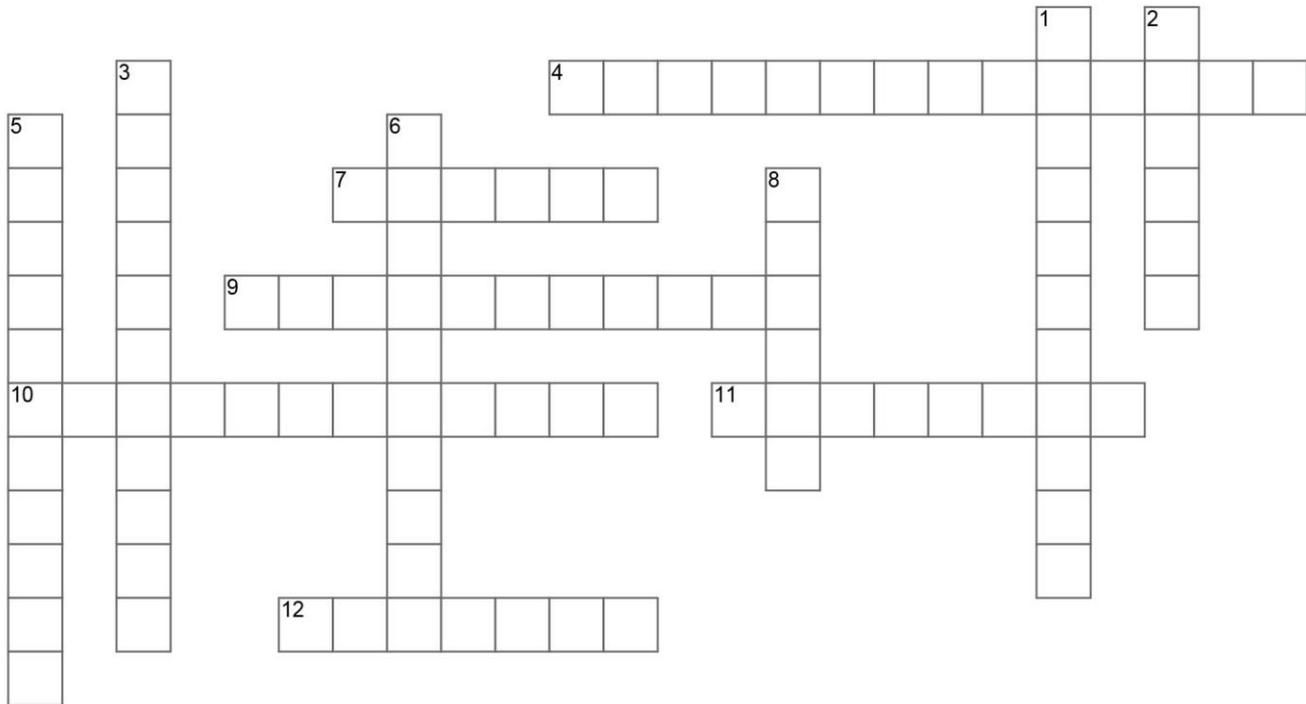
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12. Grandmaster archer, uses a variety of trick arrows.

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2. Powerful android created by Ultron.
3. Was struck full-force by a bomb blast. He survived, but was irradiated by the deadly gamma energy.
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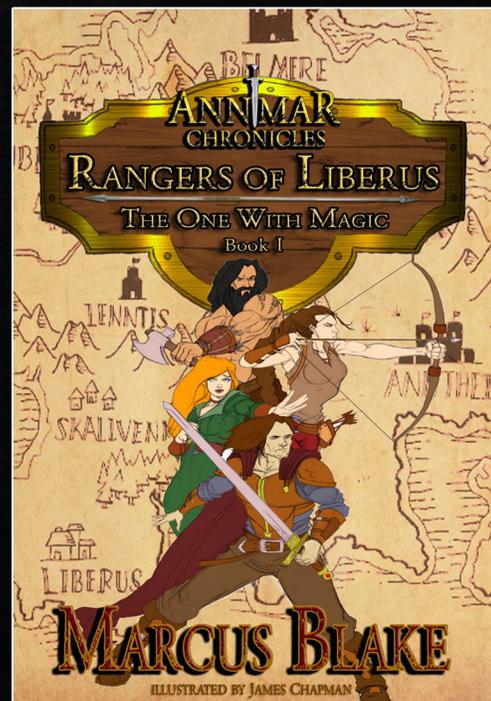
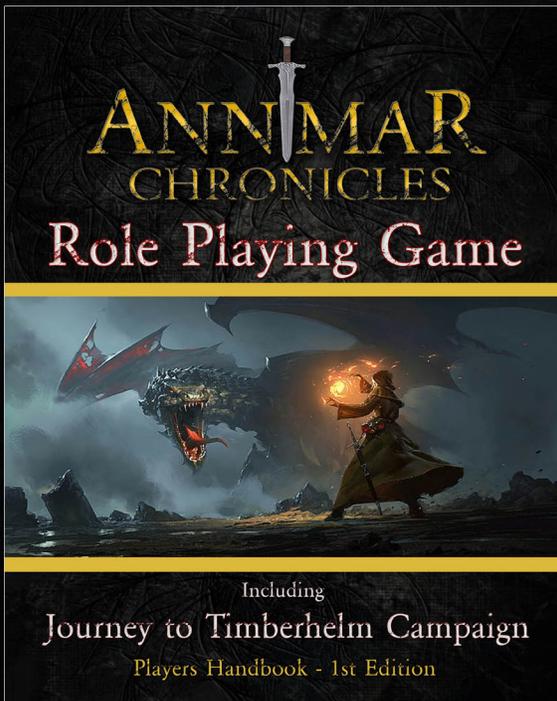
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