

That Nerd Show W

M NTHLY



October 2022

Vol. 19



REVIEWS &

**WHAT YOU SHOULD
BINGE-WATCH**



60

Years of

JAMES BOND

007

By Alex Moore



REVIEW BY
MARCUS BLAKE

60

007
YEARS OF BOND



Table of Contents

60 Years of James Bond: 007 by Alex Moore	Pg. 5
Film and TV News	Pg. 11
Monthly Movie Reviews	Pg. 14
“Black Adam” Review by Marcus Blake	Pg. 14
“Halloween Ends” Review by Chloe James	Pg. 15
“T’ar” Review by Alex Moore	Pg. 16
“Lyle, Lyle Crocodile” Review by Marcus Blake	Pg. 17
“Amsterdam” Review by Chloe James	Pg. 17
“Luckiest Girl Alive” Review by Alex Moore	Pg. 18
“Hocus Pocus 2” Review by Chloe James	Pg. 19
What You Should Binge Watch	Pg. 23
“House of the Dragon: Season 1” Review by Chloe Hames	Pg. 23
“The Midnight Club: Season 1 Review” Review by Marcus Blake	Pg. 24
Gaming News	Pg. 27
PlayStation Plus FREE Games for November 2022	Pg. 29
“Gotham Knights” Review by Marcus Blake	Pg. 33
Comic Book News	Pg. 37
Cosplay: <i>The Best of James Bond Cosplay</i>	Pg. 47
Music Stuff	Pg. 51
Purple Ruminations: “Don’t Worry, I Won’t Hurt You – October 1982” by Chad Womack	Pg. 54
Science News	Pg. 57
Storytellers	Pg. 63
James Bond Fan Fiction: “The End of Everything” by Komodo 13 (Online Name)	Pg. 65
Word Games	Pg. 75
James Bond Crossword	Pg. 72



Your Place To Talk!



DISCORD



60 Years of James Bond: *007*

By Alex Moore



We all started somewhere. For me, it was at Baylor, in Dallas, almost 60 years ago. Everything has a beginning. For James Bond, as a film franchise, it was in the United Kingdom, 60 years ago. What a time I have had!... and what a time Agent 007 has had, as well.

Today, 60 years is a long time for a series of movies to endure. During that time, James Bond has had 25, official Eon Productions, plus several, other projects, independent of that company. I will solely be focusing on the Eon-labeled films, as this is, also, the customary approach for the majority of fans and critics, alike. So, with all that being said, WHY has Agent 007 stood the test of time so well?

To answer that question in its simplest terms, relevancy is the greatest key. Have you ever watched “Dr. No,” the original big-screen movie, and then followed it up with “No Time to Die,” the latest franchise installment to grace the worldwide movie theaters? To do so might be as comparable as taking a trip on a small helicopter lift and then switching over to a double-decker airliner, right after. Does this

mean there was anything wrong with taking that helicopter ride? No, but it DOES mean that the experience between the two is obviously different and you might find yourself preferring the latter, merely because of the timing involved with that double-decker flight. In other words, what was acceptable in 1962 may not be the same as what is acceptable for 2021. However, you should keep in mind that both of these films were relevant to their respective eras. You can rest assured that the most likely preference for nearly all, average observers will have to do with their age group. This is, predictably, common across most topics, whether it be: movies, music or sports, just to name a few. Be that as it may, you could, hypothetically, watch 10 films from 1962 and be in awe of “Dr. No” for what it accomplished at the time and feel a similar impact after watching 10 movies in 2021, including “No Time to Die.” THIS is what it means to stand the test of time, in my view.



Is James Bond the greatest fictional spy of all time? Well, if longstanding endurance is the lone criteria, then the answer would have to be “yes,” but I would be willing to bet that if I took a poll on YouTube and listed the company of, say, Ethan Hunt of “Mission Impossible” and Simon Templar from “The Saint” there would be some dedicated fans of THOSE franchises/series who would beg to disagree with my previous statement, regardless of what reasons I would choose to give... did I omit Jason Bourne? Sorry!

As many of us probably already know, Agent 007 began as a character from a series of novels and short stories, written by Ian Fleming. Admittedly, I have not spent nearly as much time reading any off those books as I have spent rewatching the films, but a number of individuals, especially of the male persuasion, grew up on the paperbacks before graduating to the big screen adaptations. So, it begs the question: how is it that James Bond was able to adapt so well from book to screen? As it so happens, my dear Stepdad was a child of the ‘50s and a teen from the ‘60s, which made him a perfect subject to provide commentary on this topic. Back in 2010, I interviewed him from a small studio at a broadcasting school and we discussed Agent 007; in particular, the character that originated from the aforementioned decades. As it turns out, Fleming was involved with certain aspects of the first film and he had a hand in deciding who would portray James Bond, from the get-go. Believe it or not, he was not on board, so to speak, with bringing along

Sean Connery to play the titular role, mainly because he was Scottish and the novelized character was NOT. As Connery was leaving the room, after his audition, Fleming caught a glimpse of him walking down the hall and uttered the words, “By God, he walks like a cat. I think he’ll do.” Eventually, Fleming became so enamored with Connery as Agent 007, he even wrote in some new, additional background information, which remade James Bond as being half Scottish. The books were still popular at the time and the rest, as they say, is history. Keep this in mind if you are ever creating a movie adaptation for a popular series of stories: gain the approval of the author and you will, more-than-likely, gain the approval of its fanbase, as well.



Clearly, Connery had direct approval from the creator, himself, who preferred Roger Moore before this final decision was made. This means that Connery and Moore were BOTH highly-rated, from the outset. It just so happens that, based on the number of film entries, these two actors have portrayed Agent 007 more times than anyone else in the great history of the movie franchise. That would be: six for Connery, from 1962 to 1971, with a brief break in between involving George Lazenby AND seven for Moore, from 1973 to 1985. Does this mean that one of them must be the greatest James Bond of all time? In a word, no. In two words, not necessarily. It is not unusual for viewers to suffer from recency bias or to show preference for the first variation they were exposed to. If that were the case, I would, personally, have to choose either: Daniel Craig or Pierce Brosnan, but that is not the case. If I am being as objective as possible, I have to stick with Connery as the greatest. He set the precedence for everyone who came after him and he was even asked to play him again in a non-Eon remake while Moore was still around. Nearly every aspect of the character we love started with Connery and to this day he his beloved for what he brought to the table. Having said all that, I have great affection for another, who remains something of a black sheep to the series of films...

Timothy Dalton portrayed Agent 007 for a mere two movies: “The Living Daylights,” from 1987 and then, in 1989, in “A Licence to Kill.” If you know anything about the original novels and short stories, there has probably never been a greater portrayal, in terms of accuracy, than

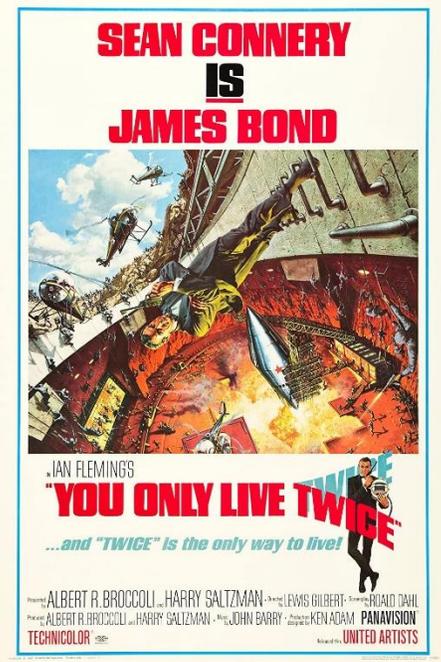
Dalton. In fact, he was a fan of the books, himself, and even rejected a chance to play James Bond sooner than he actually did because he believed himself to be too young. While Connery was suave and Moore was cheeky, Dalton was dark and most critics and audience members were turned off by this sudden shift. Still, the movies were a financial success and Dalton was expected to take Agent 007 into the 1990s. That was when Eon Productions got into some legal disputes with their distribution company, MGM. By the time things had been resolved, several years had passed and Dalton was only willing to come back for one more James Bond film. Eon wanted a new contract for at least three, additional movies and that presented a timing conflict for Dalton. “Goldeneye” then went to Brosnan, who was the one Eon Productions originally wanted, instead of Dalton, until he was unavailable due to a timing conflict of his own. The cycle of irony is truly astounding. If you ask me, the main reason why Dalton is still underrated is because he did not get to portray the titular character enough to leave a more lasting impression. Since Craig was able to stick around with a similar style for a greater amount of time, he is the one many praise for a grittier approach, rather than Dalton and it is a real shame. Now, it is time to open up your listening ears...



The music. Oh, the music! Better yet, the music should be coupled with the title cards, in the case of this franchise. I will even throw in the gun barrel sequences, since they are all unique, as well. Keep in mind, the first two movies had no actual song during the opening credits and “Dr. No” did not have the typical gun barrel theme, either. “Goldfinger” was the first one to include a title song during the title cards sequence, which became the first of three theme songs for Shirley Bassey and “Thunderball” was the first to use body shadows. From there, everything was pretty standard, but had its own, unique look and feel. This brings me to “You Only Live Twice,” which is arguably John Barry’s strongest and most-memorable theme of the 11 that he wrote for the franchise. For a

while, he was the only composer, aside from Monty Norman, who was only credited with the score to “Dr. No,” though he still gets credit for the music playing during the gun barrel sequence. In the ‘70s, the music and songs became more interesting and mainstream. Although Tom Jones and Nancy Sinatra were big names during the ‘60s, few could ever touch the level of Paul McCartney, with “Live and Let Die.” By then, Barry was no longer by himself as the composer, either. It had become very common for the music and/or the song to be nominated for an Academy Award and then, by the ‘80s, the songs were also making big waves on the charts. “All Time High” reached #1 on the Adult Contemporary list and “A View to a Kill” reached the coveted top spot for the Billboard Hot 100. Big names continued to record new songs for the latest Agent 007 films throughout the ‘90s, though the music was not automatically written by the composer of the movie score. Today, the franchise has now won three consecutive Oscars for Best Original Song: “Skyfall,” “Spectre” and “No Time to Die.” After losing for so many years, the success has become record-breaking.

The time has come to rate the films. In my head, I know which ones I favor, personally, but is there a difference between that and rating the best movies? Perhaps there is just some overlap, instead. I believe that each era should also be represented. The eras are as follows: Connery/Lazenby, Moore, Dalton/Brosnan, Craig. First, we will go over the Top 7 films and then the Bottom 7. That might sound arbitrary, but it is my list, so we will go with it...



TOP 7 JAMES BOND 007 MOVIES
(Chronological Order)

1. You Only Live Twice
2. The Spy Who Loved Me
3. For Your Eyes Only
4. The Living Daylights
5. A Licence to Kill
6. Goldeneye
7. Casino Royale

And Just for fun!

BOTTOM 7 JAMES BOND 007 MOVIES
(Chronological Order)

1. On Her Majesty's Secret Service
2. Diamonds Are Forever
3. The Man with the Golden Gun
4. Moonraker
5. A View to a Kill
6. Die Another Day
7. Quantum of Solace

The factors considered for these categories included: the portrayal of Bond, the music/title sequences, the Bond girls/villains, the story/pacing/gadgets/cars. These factors will likely, always, be a mainstay for the future of the franchise, but where does it go from here? The movies from the first two eras felt like a chronological sequence that just happened to have three, different guys playing the role. I wish Dalton had either started playing Bond sooner or would have stayed a little bit longer cause he was really hitting a good stride and Brosnan was not the actor he was, ultimately. Craig's era really feels more like a stand-alone era with a story that feels more linear and has concrete bookends to it. I think we have had enough of the dark and serious edge for a while. Why not bring back the light entertainment that we once saw with Moore? Perhaps, he will be younger and more "exotic" in a way, but if the standards are to stay the same, I would love to see Henry Cavill fill in. Watch him in "The Man From U.N.C.L.E." to get an idea of how he might be as 007. I believe it works, but no matter what Eon decides to do, you can bet your bottom dollar that the fans will still be flocking to the theaters and their streaming devices to see what they have next. Maybe, in another 20 years, we can discuss "7 Great Bond Titles From 7 Decades of 007." You saw it here, ladies and gentlemen.

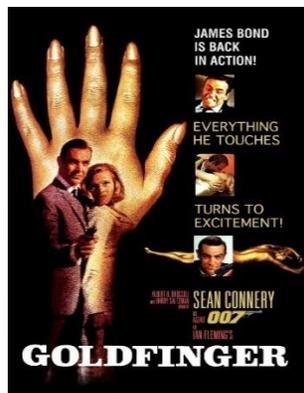


Marcus Blake's Top 7 James Bond Movies

1. From Russia With Love
2. Skyfall
3. Goldeneye
4. Casino Royale
5. For Your Eyes Only
6. The Spy Who Loved Me
7. You Only Live Twice

Brendan Smith's Top 7 James Bond Movies

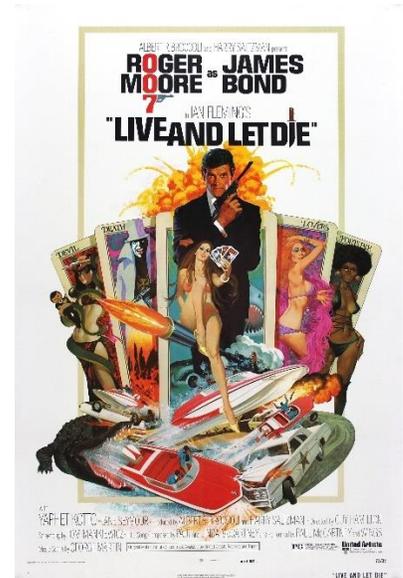
1. From Russia with Love
2. Skyfall
3. Goldeneye
4. Casino Royale
5. Goldfinger
6. The Spy Who Loved Me
7. License to Kill



Chloe James Top 7 James Bond Movies

1. Goldfinger
2. Casino Royale
3. Skyfall
4. Dr. No
5. Goldeneye
6. Thunderball

7. The World is Not Enough



Chad Womack Top 7 James Bond Movies

1. Live and Let Die
2. From Russia with Love
3. For Your Eyes Only
4. License to Kill
5. Goldeneye
6. Casino Royale
7. Skyfall



Allison Costa's Top 7 James Bond Movies

1. Skyfall
2. You Only Live Twice
3. The Spy Who Loved Me
4. Live and Let Die
5. On Her Majesty's Secret Service
6. View to a Kill
7. Moonraker

GOD OF WAR

RAGNARÖK



11-9-2022

BLACK RIFLE

— COFFEE COMPANY —

CLUB

COFFEE

APPAREL

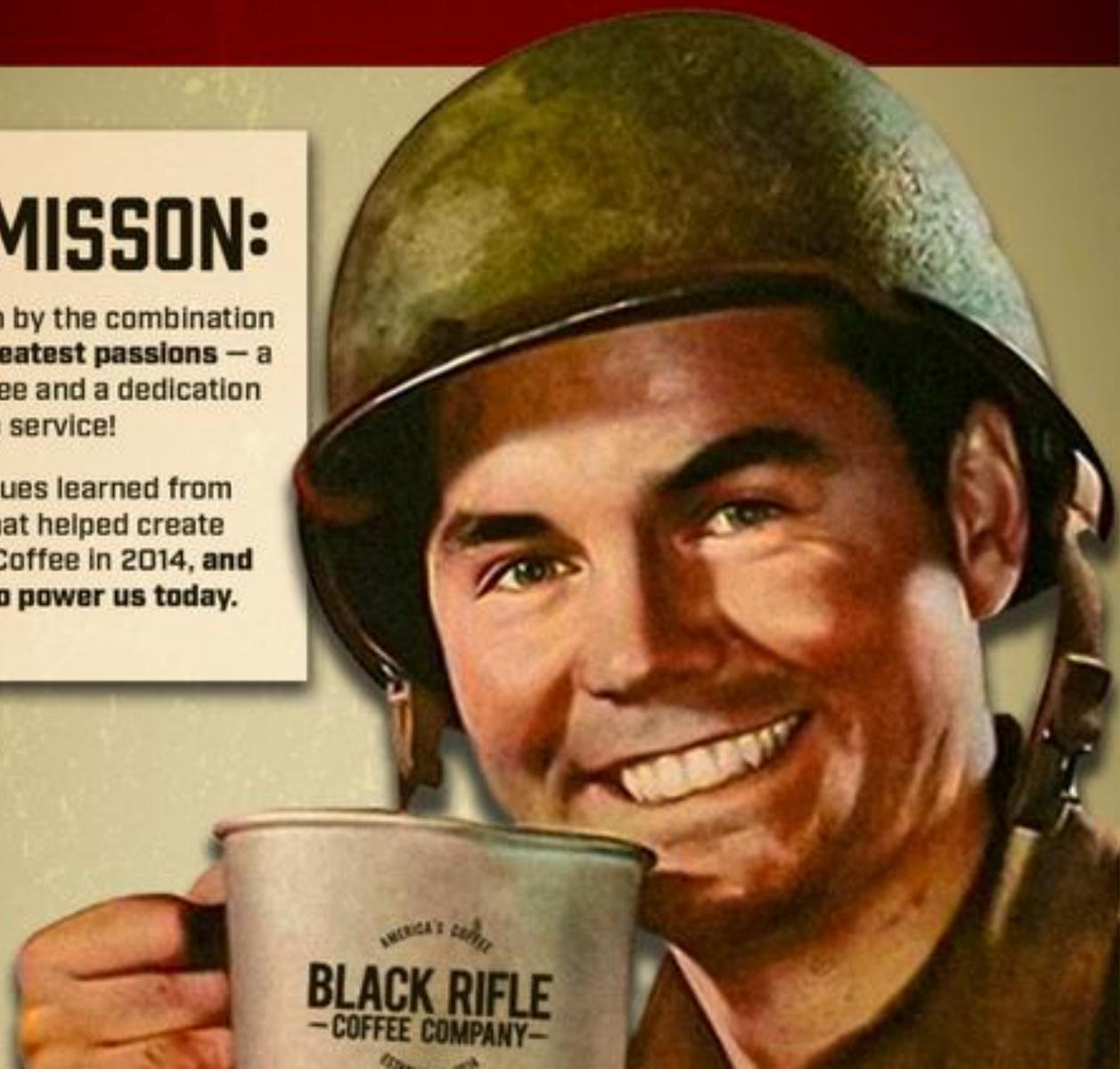
GEAR

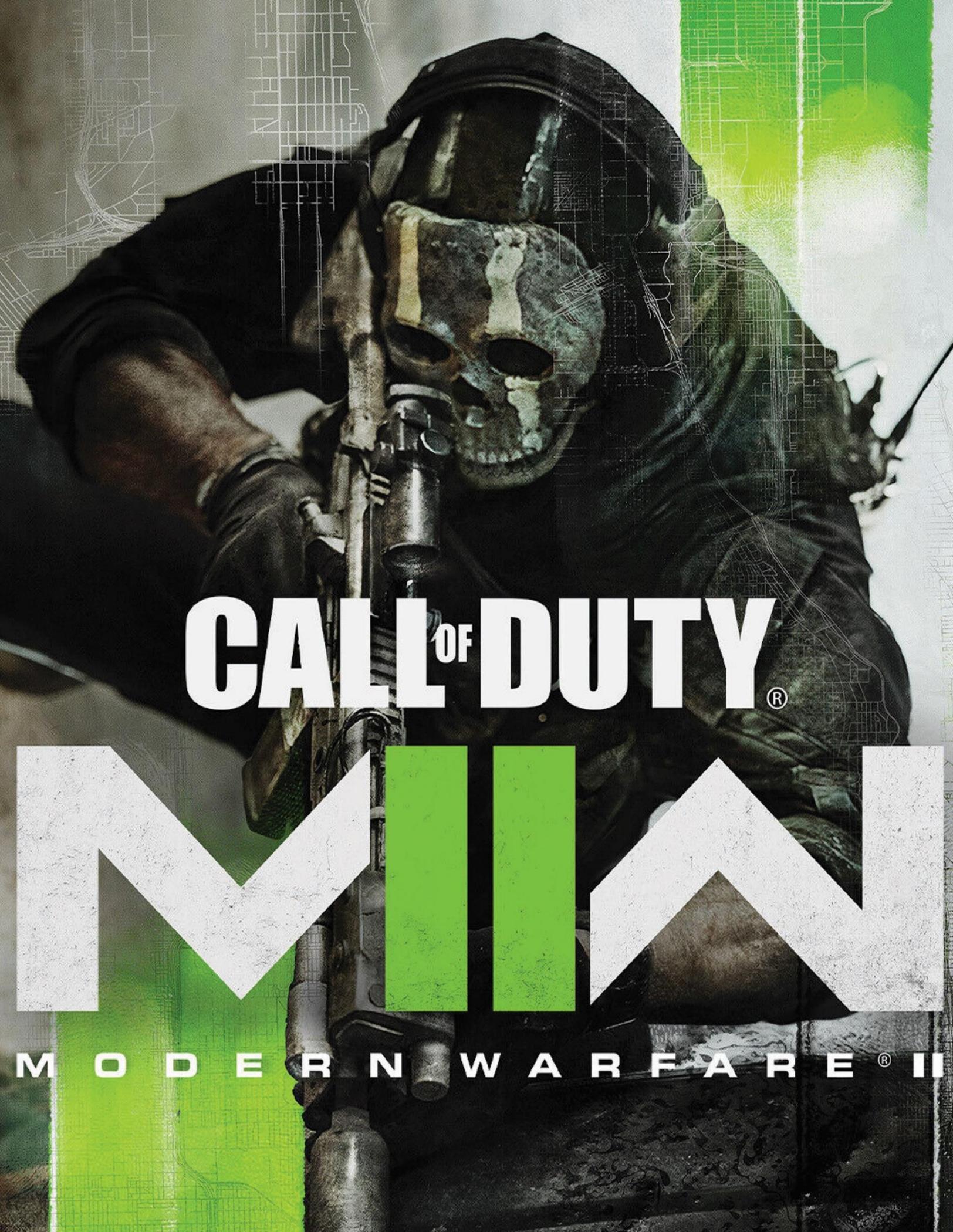
★ CONNECTED BY SERVICE ★
FUELED BY COFFEE

OUR MISSION:

We are driven by the combination of our **two greatest passions** — a love for coffee and a dedication to service!

It's the values learned from service that helped create Black Rifle Coffee in 2014, and **continue to power us today.**

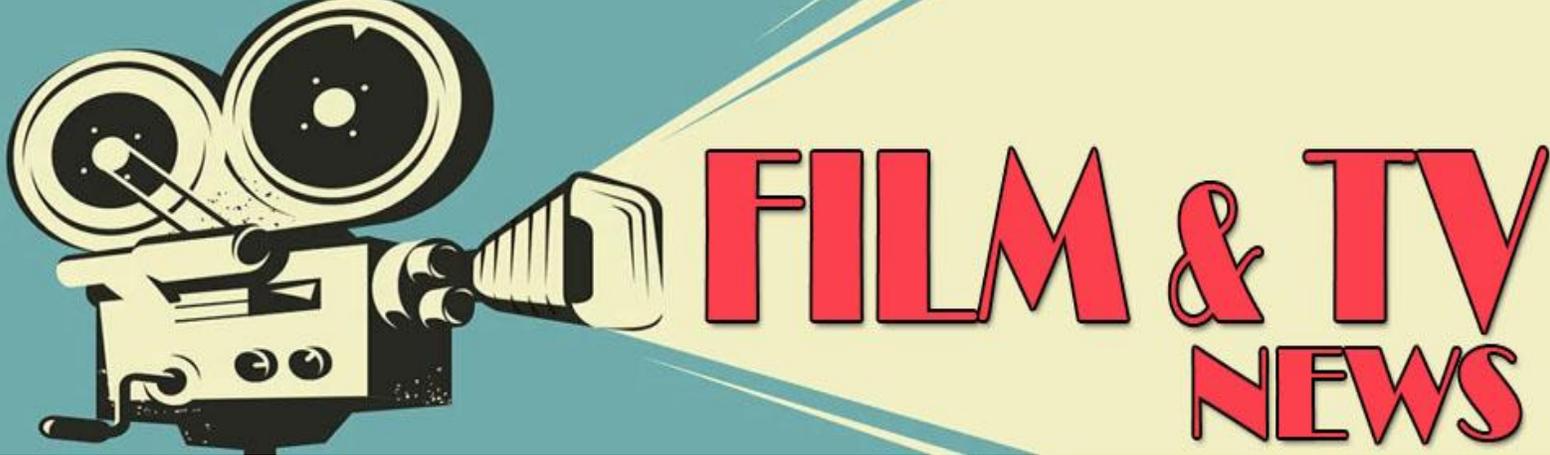


The cover art features a soldier in a dark, tactical uniform and a skull mask, holding a rifle. The background is a mix of dark, textured surfaces and bright green vertical bars. Faint circuit-like patterns are visible in the upper left and right corners.

CALL OF DUTY®

M W 2

M O D E R N W A R F A R E® II



Henry Cavill Returning As “Superman”



Nothing shocking here especially since he appeared in the end of this weekend’s \$140M grossing No. 1 global hit *Black Adam*, but Henry Cavill has made it official he’s back as Superman. The teased sequel is that Dwayne Johnson’s anti-hero and the Man of Steel are poised to go at in part 2 of *Black Adam*. This is

no way a surprise — we told you this was in the works back in May 2020 despite some at Warner Bros. throwing furniture at the time, upset that Deadline went with the news so early.

Deadline hears that Cavill is still in final talks, and that there’s no *Man of Steel 2* yet as there’s no director or writer, but this is the way the universe is moving. Warner Bros. had no comment when reached. “I wanted to wait the weekend before posting this,” Cavill says in the video he posted to social, “because I wanted to give you a chance to watch *Black Adam*.” The actor teamed with Instagram and dozens of creators in a one-of-a-kind team-up to announce today’s news. It’s the first time, I understand, Instagram has teamed with an actor on an announcement. A variation of it was done prior

with Beyoncé on her *Renaissance* album release. The social media platform is encouraging fans to remix the video, audio and photo assets on their IG Reels. Cavill’s favorites will be posted on his Destinations channel in the coming days.

Cavill was introduced as Superman in Zack Snyder’s *Man of Steel* in 2013 and continued in the helmer’s DC titles, *Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice*, *Justice League* and its HBO Max director’s cut. All three movies combined grossed \$2.2 billion worldwide. Cavill is managed by Johnson’s manager and former spouse Dany Garcia at the Garcia Companies. Reported by Deadline.com

Secret ‘Star Wars’ Film From Damon Lindelof And Lucasfilm Sets ‘Ms Marvel’s Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy As Director



Following months of speculation, Deadline is now hearing from several sources close to the project that not only is Damon Lindelof developing a new *Star Wars* film for Lucasfilm but that Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy has been set as director. Lindelof is co-writing the project, though it is unknown at this time who his writing partner might be. Insiders say the

script is still being written which means production is likely far out. That said, sources add it was important to Lucasfilm and Lindelof that a director be brought on so that person’s own vision for where they see this story headed gets included in the script.

As for what the film is actually focused on, that will remain a under wraps as this project remains one of more guarded secrets in all of Hollywood. As for when we will see this film, while it still seems a ways off, the feeling is given how pro-active execs were in finding a director for this film, that this *Star Wars* feature seems to have the most momentum out of all the films currently in development at the studio. 2019’s *Star Wars Episode IX: The Rise of Skywalker* was the last film to bow in theaters with the studio focusing on its TV projects over

recent years since then. That said they have a number of films in development including this one and Lucasfilm has been pretty clear they want to make sure the next series of films has a story they are happy with and don’t see a need to rush out that next franchise.

As for Obaid-Chinoy, the highly-sought after director continues to build on her strong ties with Disney after successfully directing several episodes of *Ms. Marvel* for Marvel Studios. Best known for directing her Oscar-winning documentary shorts *Saving Face* and *A Girl in the River*, *The Price of Forgiveness*, the Oscar and Emmy-winning director also recently committed to directing Paramount’s adaptation of *Brilliance* which is being developed as a starring Vehicle for Will Smith. Reported by Deadline

Harrison Ford Set As General Thaddeus “Thunderbolt” Ross For ‘Captain America: New World Order’, Will Star Opposite Anthony Mackie



It’s official. Oscar nominee [Harrison Ford](#) (*Indiana Jones* franchise) will be taking over the [Marvel](#) role of General Thaddeus “Thunderbolt” Ross, beginning with Phase 5 title *Captain America: New World Order*. He’ll star there opposite Anthony Mackie, with Shira Haas, Tim Blake Nelson and Carl Lumbly also amongst the ensemble.

Ford’s *Captain America* casting had been in the rumor mill for some time, with [The Ankler’s](#) Jeff Sneider among those [speaking to it](#) of late. While the new film’s plot is being kept under wraps, Mackie will reprise his role as Sam Wilson, who assumed the mantle of Captain America in [Disney+](#)’s hit series *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier*. Julius Onah will serve as the pic’s director.

Ford’s General Ross is a top-ranking military official, first introduced in the [Marvel](#) comics in 1962, who comes to lead the team of anti-heroes known as the Thunderbolts. The actor assumes the role last played by Oscar winner William Hurt, in films ranging from 2008’s *The Incredible Hulk* through to 2021’s *Black Widow*, prior to his passing in March, aged 71.

Falcon creator Malcolm Spellman wrote the script for the upcoming superhero pic with the

show’s staff writer Dalan Musson, and will produce alongside [Marvel Studios](#) President Kevin Feige. *Captain America: New World Order* is the fourth film set for [Marvel’s](#) Phase 5, with titles including *Thunderbolts* and *Blade* to follow. Pic’s slated for release on May 3, 2024.

Ford is a screen icon known for turns in franchises ranging from *Star Wars* to *Indiana Jones* and *Blade Runner*, along with such big-screen titles as *The Fugitive*, *Witness*, *Apocalypse Now*, *The Conversation* and *American Graffiti*. He’ll reprise his role as the globe-trotting archaeologist Indiana Jones for the franchise’s as-yet-untitled fifth film, slated for release on June 30, 2023, and will also soon topline the [Apple](#) comedy series, *Shrinking*. Reported by [Deadline.com](#)

Dwayne Johnson & Chris Evans Prime Video Holiday Pic ‘Red One’ Adds Nick Kroll, Kristofer Hivju, Wesley Kimmel & Mary Elizabeth Ellis



In the wake of [Dwayne Johnson](#) notching the highest opening of his solo star career with this weekend’s *Black Adam* at \$67M, his holiday movie, currently titled *Red One*, is ramping up with additional castings: [Deadline](#) has learned that [Nick Kroll](#), [Kristofer Hivju](#), [Wesley Kimmel](#) and [Mary Elizabeth Ellis](#) are joining. They board alongside not just Johnson, but also [Chris Evans](#), [Lucy Liu](#), and [Kiernan Shipka](#). The pic’s plot is under wraps, however, the event film is looking to be a franchisable piece of IP which will extend to the tentacles of [Amazon](#) itself in merchandising. [Jake Kasdan](#), who helmed Johnson in the last two *Jumanji* movies, is directing off a script by [Chris Morgan](#). The project was won by [Prime](#) in a bidding war and was developed off an original

story by [Seven Bucks](#) President of Production, [Hiram Garcia](#). [Morgan](#) has also been a frequent collaborator with [Seven Bucks Productions](#) on titles such as *Fast and Furious Presents: Hobbs and Shaw*, *The Fate of the Furious*, *Furious 7*, *Fast & Furious 6*, and *Fast Five*.

[Kasdan](#), [Melvin Mar](#) via the [Detective Agency](#), [Morgan](#) via [Chris Morgan Productions](#); [Hiram Garcia](#), [Dany Garcia](#) and [Johnson](#) through their [Seven Bucks](#) are producing. [Sky Salem Robinson](#) via [The Detective Agency](#) is co-producing. EP is [Ainsley Davies](#) via [Chris Morgan Productions](#). [Kroll](#)’s comedy special *Little Big Boy* recently debuted on [Netflix](#), and he can also be seen in [Warner Bros.](#) recently released psychological thriller *Don’t Worry Darling* alongside [Florence Pugh](#) and [Harry Styles](#) which has racked up north of \$82M WW. He also co-created [Netflix](#)’s animated series *Human Resources* and *Big Mouth*, the sixth season of which hits Oct. 28. He’s also starring in the upcoming [Hulu](#) feature sequel, *History of the World Part II*. [Kroll](#) is represented by [UTA](#), [Rise Management](#), and [Schreck Rose](#).

[Hivju](#) is well-known for playing the role of [Tormund Giantsbane](#) on [HBO](#)’s critically acclaimed series *Game of Thrones*. On the film side, he previously appeared in *The Fate of the Furious* for [Universal](#) and will appear in the horror comedy *Cocaine Bear* and the sci-fi film *Distant*, also for [Universal](#). Some of his other credits include *After Earth* for director [M. Night Shyamalan](#), the critically acclaimed dramedy *Force Majeure*, [Universal](#)’s *The Thing* and the second season of [Netflix](#)’s *The Witcher*. [Hivju](#) is represented by [UTA](#), [Panorama Agency](#), and [Felker Toczek](#).

[Ellis](#)’s previous credits include [MGM](#)’s critically acclaimed film *Licorice Pizza*, *Godmothered* for [Disney+](#), and on the television side, *It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia* for [FX](#). [Ellis](#) is represented by [UTA](#) and [Haven Entertainment](#). [Kimmel](#)’s previous credits include *The Book of Boba Fett* and *WandaVision* on [Disney+](#), *Good Girls* on [NBC](#), and [Netflix](#)’s upcoming romantic comedy *Your Place or Mine* starring [Reese Witherspoon](#) and [Ashton Kutcher](#). [Kimmel](#) is represented by [Zuri Agency](#) and [Jackoway Tyerman](#). Reported by [Deadline.com](#)

'Doctor Who' Moves To Disney+ Outside UK And Ireland Via BBC-Disney Branded Television Partnership



Doctor Who is teleporting to Disney+ outside the UK and Ireland. In announcing the move, the BBC and Disney Branded Television said they intend to take the already well-established franchise to even greater heights. New episodes of the series, starring Ncuti Gatwa in the title role, will debut on the BBC and Disney+ in late 2023. In the U.S., the show — which originated in 1963 — had aired in recent years on BBC

America. (HBO Max also has past seasons.) Showrunner Russell T. Davies is overseeing the new phase of the series, having steered its revival in 2005. The show will be produced in Wales by Bad Wolf with BBC Studios Production. Disney CEO Bob Chapek Outlines Vision Of Blending Streaming With Theme Parks, Responds To "Wokeness" Charges, Reflects On Lessons From Florida Gauntlet

"It is the best of both worlds," Davies said of the new teaming. With "the vision and joy of the BBC and Disney+, together we can launch the TARDIS all around the planet, reaching a new generation of fans while keeping our traditional home firmly on the BBC in the UK."

Disney+, which launched in November 2019, has expanded to 42 additional countries across Europe, Asia and Africa this year, bringing its total footprint to more than 150 territories. The service had 152.1 million global subscribers as of the end of Disney's most recent fiscal quarter on July 2.

Over the years, the show has been a permanent fixture on broadcasters such as the ABC in Australia and TVNZ in New Zealand. It has also aired on many public and commercial

channels and numerous BBC-branded services around the world.

BBC Chief Content Officer Charlotte Moore described Disney as "the perfect partners to bring this very British show to the rest of the world." Teaming with the company "will elevate the show to even greater heights and reach new audiences."

Disney+ President Alisa Bowen called the show "a perfect addition" to the growing range of global programming on the streaming service. "We're excited by the opportunity to bring new seasons of this beloved franchise exclusively to Disney+ and introduce the show to the next generation of audiences," she said.

"*Doctor Who* has captivated the imaginations of families around the world for the past six decades," Ayo Davis, President, Disney Branded Television said. "We are so excited about this collaboration with the BBC, and the opportunity to bring this iconic franchise — and Russell T. Davies' brilliant vision — to life for a huge new global audience."

Rebecca Glashow, CEO, Global Distribution, BBC Studios, said the shift is "great news for everyone who loves Doctor Who, and for all the new fans we will reach through this powerful partnership. Reported by Deadline.com

Taylor Sheridan's Dutton Dynasty Growing: '1923' To Span Two 8-Episode Seasons, With '40s- & '60s-Era Series Also Eyed



Taylor Sheridan's limited series *1923* has turned out to be such a sprawling saga that he'll need two seasons to get it done, The Dish hears. 101 Studios and MTV Entertainment Studios have given a thumbs up to Sheridan's ambitions for the Paramount+ limited series, and sources said that negotiations are underway to bring back the cast for another season.

We also hear that Sheridan is so drilled down into the Dutton ranch family dynasty behind *Yellowstone* that he is contemplating two separate limited series that encompass the struggle to hang onto the ranch in the 1940s and the 1960s.

Each *1923* season will be eight episodes, starring Harrison Ford, Helen Mirren, and a cast of bright young actors playing the three young sons and two daughters. While the bulk of the action focuses on the construction of the sprawling Yellowstone ranch in Montana, the series is also shooting in South Africa, Tanzania, and Malta, to give a sense of the saga's scope.

All this is happening while the Taylor Sheridan Universe continues to spin. *Yellowstone*, the series that started it all, returns for a fifth season with a two-hour-episode premiere on Paramount Network on

November 13. Kevin Costner, Kelly Reilly, Luke Grimes, Cole Hauser, Wes Bentley, Kelsey Asbille, Gil Birmingham, Breckin Merrill, Jefferson White, and the rest of the regular cast are back. The series continues to grow in popularity, with the Season 4 finale viewed by an audience of 10 million.

The *Yellowstone* premiere leads into the first episode of *Tulsa King*, the new drama Sheridan created as a star vehicle for Sylvester Stallone, with Terence Winter serving as showrunner. Jeremy Renner and the cast of *Mayor of Kingstown* are set to return for a second season.

There are also plans for a *Yellowstone* spinoff *6666*, shooting on the storied Four Sixes ranch in Texas where much of *1883* was shot. Reported by Deadline.com

MONTHLY MOVIE

★★ REVIEWS ★★

Black Adam

Review by Marcus Blake



It's about time Dwayne Johnson was in a superhero film. After all, it was only a matter of time that he would conquer the superhero genre. And The Rock playing Black Adam seems like a perfect fit. But does that mean the movie is actually good? It's a DC movie so it's always a 50/50 proposition that the movie is going to be good or complete shit. For the initiated, Black Adam is not really a superhero but has been considered one of the greatest supervillains in the DC universe. If we're getting technical, he's really just an antihero depending on what origin story you go with. The Black Adam movie is based on the rebooted origin story written by Geoff Johns and David S. Goyer when they were writers for DC comics almost 20 years ago. Black Adam is a former slave of a North African country of Khandaq set about 5,000 years ago who is inadvertently given the powers of Shazam. Before the original Captain Marvel, yes that's what he was called in the DC universe, was given the powers of Shazam by the wizards. They had another hero that didn't quite turn out to be the hero they wanted. His anger and murderous revenge cause the wizards to rethink their choice and essentially, they imprison him by stripping away his powers. There's more to the origin story, but that's essentially what happens. The movie takes on

this origin story and shows in the very beginning what happens which will lead to the other main character, Isis played by Sarah Shahi awakening him as she's looking for an ancient artifact. She perceives him to be the champion that was promised and will deliver her home from the clutches of the soldiers and the warlords that have controlled her home for over 20 years.

Black Adam is not as well known in the DC universe as some of the other supervillains compared to the Joker or Lex Luther, but he is one of the most popular superheroes when it comes to the use of the powers of the gods or magical powers. He is considered just as powerful as Superman whereas Superman is the only one who can bring him down. Black Adam is an interesting character and it's easy to see why he is being introduced because just like Batman, he's really just an antihero that will be used for the greater good. This movie is his origin story. That is the entire premise and how he goes up against the Justice League society headed by Hawkman and Dr. Fate! Like most origin stories, you're just going to get a film that introduces him as a character and by the end of the story reconciles who he is and his role to play among other heroes or villains. Let me be the first to say that this is not a bad movie, it's not the best DC movie, but it's a typical origin story that will introduce a character we'll see down the road, so we get a little bit of his history and then mostly an action movie. I like the movie for what it is. DC and WarnerMedia are trying to write the ship of all the controversy surrounding their movies for the past 10 years while trying to do the same thing that Marvel did with having an origin story for each of their main characters and then bringing them all together for a bigger story. That's why Black Adam is necessary. But this movie, if I can make a comparison is for the most part like the Captain Marvel movie. It really isn't unnecessary except for the simple fact that you have to introduce this character and tell his story so that the audience knows why he's involved in the bigger story when you bring all your heroes and villains together. If you've watched the Justice League: Snyder Cut, you see in greater detail how Bruce Wayne is putting together the Justice League that will fight off greater villains

who come to Earth and also a little bit of connection to the Justice League Society. That's essentially DC's version of the Infinity Wars from Marvel. My point is Black Adam is only necessary because of his connection to the bigger story so you have to give the character an origin story. That's the only reason it's necessary.

Here's why the movie is worth seeing. It's a decent superhero movie that introduces an interesting character. Antiheroes are always more interesting that's why we tend to like Batman more than Superman. An antihero that's on the same level as Superman always makes for good entertainment. This film has a great cast not only with Dwayne Johnson as Black Adam, but Aldis Hodge as Hawkman and Pierce Brosnan making his superhero debut as Dr. Fate. That was my personal favorite among the casting. I almost feel like Pierce Brosnan, AKA James Bond is perfect to play Doctor Fate. You know just as perfect as Chris Pine playing Steve Trevor. And you get a nice introduction to the Justice League Society which is different from the Justice League but they'll all come together down the road just like superheroes do as we have seen with all the CW shows. You can't really complain about the cast because it does work for this movie. Honestly, I don't know if there's any better choice than Dwayne Johnson to play Black Adam or Sarah Shahi to play Isis. That's the one thing this movie has going for it.

2 x 6 FT. BANNER

1ST STOP PRINT

Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

Custom Vinyl
BANNERS

\$72

14 OZ. Premium Vinyl
1 Sided - 4 x 10 FT.
Glossy or Matte Finish

The catch-22 of whether this is a good movie or not is the fact that it's mostly action. You don't have a lot of time to catch your breath once Black Adam is awakened. From him killing bad guys to dueling it out with the Justice League society. As an origin story, you need to slow down a little bit and catch your breath and really get the backstory of a character. It isn't until he explains who he really is that the movie slows down and has some great dramatic moments. But that means that for the first 90 minutes you're getting pure action and silliness. There's nothing wrong with that as long as you know what the movie is but I think for a great origin story there should be a balance between those two things. Man of steel is a great example. The action doesn't really pick up until General Zod invades Earth. The first half of the movie is about Lois Lane discovering who Clark Kent really is and getting Clark's backstory, especially through flashbacks. That movie had a perfect balance. I feel that one of the biggest downfalls of Black Adam is it's too much action crammed into a 2-hour movie. That's what you do with a sequel, not the origin story, but for fans of Black Adam, again he's an antihero so you expect more destruction from a character like him. What it really comes down to is how do you edit an origin story to where you have the perfect balance of drama and action so the real flaws don't come from the cast or even the story itself, it really comes down to how the movie was put together. We don't need 90 minutes of action before we get to the more dramatic moments until the final battle. We need more backstory. We need more time to understand Black Adam's motivation and how he fits into the grand scheme of things.

While it is exciting to have Black Adam on the big screen, it's a bit of an auspicious introduction. Dwayne Johnson is perfect as Black Adam, but I don't need to see another action movie with him. We've seen plenty. I want to know more about Black Adam and how he really connects to everybody. The best moments of the film are when he explains who he really is and then of course the great cameo during the credit scene. It's not really a spoiler because it was already announced, but yes Henry Cavill as Superman shows up to introduce himself. It's a fun movie with a good introduction to one of the greatest anti-heroes in the DC universe, but what should be a good origin story and a perfect balance between drama and action gives way to more action and that's the movie's downfall. That's what fans should expect when they go to the theater to see Black Adam. However, we do get a great introduction to the Justice League society and what role they will play later when hopefully we finally get a movie where they have to defeat Darkseid. There are some great moments of comedy when the young boy is trying to teach Black Adam the right catchphrases because he's now a superhero so to speak but it really doesn't

make up for the fact that this is just one big action movie and that they could have done more with the character. I guess we'll actually need a sequel to flesh out a more dramatic story, but for now, we do have a good introduction to Black Adam and that is a good thing. Hopefully, WarnerMedia with their merger going into 2023 won't completely screw up the DC properties despite all of the cancellations of movies and TV shows. Hopefully, we'll get to see more of Black Adam because if this is the only time we get to see of him on the big screen then it is kind of a waste. But despite what may happen nobody can deny that Dwayne Johnson is pretty damn near perfect to play Black Adam and he's the real savior of this movie!

Final Grade: 7 /10 (Okay)



Halloween Ends

Review by Chloe James



Apparently, this will be the last time I get to review a "Halloween" franchise film. That's right, according to everyone involved with the property from creator John Carpenter to leading lady Jamie Lee-Curtis herself, the saga of Michael Myers is finally being laid to rest. Yeah, much like any horror franchise when they say that, my belief is microscopic. But still, for now it seems that this iteration of the films is done. As I've mentioned in a review several years back, I myself, and a majority of other people put quite a lot of importance in how a

story wraps up. The longer the story, the more the last chapter of it needs to "wow" us. I can name a dozen beloved series off the top of my head that many viewers think were "ruined" by their last season, (one of which I have a very opposite opinion about which shall not be named.) Why are we so much less forgiving with endings? Is it because we feel like the momentum of any story must reach its climax at this point? Or are we just disappointed if a story doesn't end exactly the way we always envisioned it. Whatever the reasons may be, it seems that Halloween Ends is no exception to the curse of the ending hatred. I've already seen many early audience reviews ripping it apart like so many of Michael's victims. And to be honest, I'm not entirely sure why.

On Halloween 2019, one year after the events of Halloween and Halloween Kills, a family asks a favor of an engineering student, Corey Cunningham (Rohan Campbell), to look after their young son, Jeremy. Jeremy stays up all night with the sole intention of breaking his parents' rules and to torment Corey, culminating in Jeremy pulling a prank on his babysitter by locking him in the attic. Just as the parents come back from the party, Corey kicks open the door, which accidentally hits Jeremy off the railing and causes him to fall to his death. Three years later, after being cleared of manslaughter, Corey is bullied by the town to which Laurie Strode (Jamie Lee Curtis) helps him as she knows what it's like to be disliked by the whole town. She inadvertently introduces him to her granddaughter Allyson Nelson (Andi Maticchak), who is also still dealing with the death of her mother from the previous film. Allyson and Corey begin a relationship, while Laurie Strode writes her memoir of her post-Michael Myers life. Little does she know that the evil that's in Michael Myers (James Jude Courtney and Nick Castle) is brewing in Corey, while Michael is planning his triumphant return.

Halloween Ends is the last film in the trilogy of films directed by David Gordon Green, written by Danny McBride and the director, and produced by Jason Blum; which serves as direct sequels to the first film in 1978, ignoring the sequels made in the 80's and 90s. This film utilizes nearly the exact crew from the first two films of this series which aids in its similar look and tone.

Maybe this is proof that I'm no "true" horror fan, but I actually prefer this type of approach to a slasher film over a mindless bloodbath, ie Halloween Kills. The addition of Corey to the story as a good kid slowly giving into his deepest impulses felt like a breath of fresh air to me, as I approached this movie expecting more of the usual Michael Myers shows up and murders half the town. And while murder he certainly does, it feels almost restrained when compared to the last few entries.

And I think this is precisely the type of thing that would give long time fans a nasty reaction to a supposedly “last” film. The previous film, *Halloween Kills*, gave us the highest kill count to date, but now we’re ending things by having Michael hide throughout the majority of the movie? And some entirely new character swoops in, and takes attention not only away from Michael, but also from Laurie and her granddaughter? Aren’t these pretty negative elements to have? On paper, yes, I totally agree that it would be disappointing.

Yet, I found myself far more interested in this story than expected. I’ll level with you guys, my main problem with most horror movies out there is their predictability, doubly so if they are part of a large franchise. My favorite horror films are the ones that throw me not cheap jump scares, but stories that really make me think (and also terrify me long afterwards.) Of course, I won’t say this one was by any means the most scary horror, or even *Halloween* out there, but it still had its moments. If anything, this movie felt like a subtle nod to 80’s horror, including much of the color palate. If I had any major complaints about this movie, it could have committed even more to its unique spin on the story.

Somehow, (and I may be the odd person out on this one) but this movie mostly works for me, a little less as a *Halloween* movie, but more as an interesting horror in its own right. Laurie still has her time to show us ultimately how she’s come to grips with herself and her tumultuous journey with Michael. And even more interesting, we are reminded that Michael Myers may not be a completely unique entity, but rather the horrific end result of a person who loses their humanity entirely. Yes, it lessons his importance in the long run, but it lends to a much scarier notion that true evil can be found anywhere.

Final Grade: 7 /10 (Okay)



T’ar

Review by Alex Moore



I have been officially writing movie reviews since the year of 2012. By 2014, I had become something of an expert on analyzing independent films. They tend to focus more on the characters than they do the stories, primarily because they cannot afford anything super cinematic, at least in theory.

What I have discovered, over these past eight years, is that indie films are often lumped in with foreign language and international movies. Mind you, these out-of-nation films are not necessarily low-budget or independent, but they tend to share one thing in common: low to moderate fanfare or promotional work.

With that in mind, earlier this month, I was asked to see the latest offering by sporadic moviemaker, Todd Field (“*Little Children*”). He has also done his fair share of acting, though that is something he has done a lot less of since he began writing and directing. He appeared in 1996’s “*Twister*,” which just announced an upcoming sequel. Perhaps he will return?...

“T’ar” stars Cate Blanchett (“*Pinocchio*”) as a modern, high-profile classical composer/conductor by the name of Lydia T’ar. She is witty and sophisticated, but also stubborn and pretentious. Although she did not originate from there, she now lives in Germany with her

wife, Sharon Goodnow, played by Nina Hoss (“*The Contractor*”). Together, they have a daughter, Petra, played by Mila Bogojevic.

As Lydia navigates through a new orchestral concert, there is drama seemingly all around her. She has an obsessive assistant, who can mouth Lydia’s words as she says them while speaking in an interview, Francesca Lentini played by Noemie Merlant (“*One Year, One Night*”). She seems to have a stalker, who sends her objects to remind her of her past, which she tries to hide or run away from. Lydia is dealing with inner-office politics, as her predecessor shows his age, Andris Davis played by Julian Glover (“*Prizefighter: The Life of Jem Belcher*”).

Tension really begins to mount once three events coincide: a disgruntled student, which Lydia taught, has edited together an offensive video of her, Max played by Zethphan Smith-Gneist; an attractive young cellist joins the orchestra, Olga Meakins played by Sophie Kauer; a former member of the orchestra has committed suicide and Lydia attempts to cover up her relationship with this individual. As you might imagine, the stress is building up inside of Lydia and she is bound to crack, sooner or later, but when?

Allow me to address some of the oddities at this point: the movie begins with a quiet screen of production credits. At first, I wondered if I was about to be watching a concept in step with “*Memento*” or “*Irreversible*.” That was not the case, however. At various times, I awaited a jump scare or a twist of fate, but to no avail. Yes, many filmmakers have taken up the practice to make their stories more true-to-life, but then where are audience members meant to find a break from reality for a couple of hours?... in this case, almost three hours. Believe it or not, major things do sometimes happen to everyday people, but movies are meant to suspend reality; not emulate it. Leave that to the documentaries.

Cate Blanchett is astounding in the titular role of Lydia T’ar. I have seen her perform wonderfully numerous times over the years, but this might be the best she has ever done. Maybe her time has finally arrived? If I recall correctly, she has not yet won an Oscar. Outside of this epic portrayal, the cinematography is interesting, at least for the first half of the film. I have to add, the costume/wardrobe is also on point, though I am not certain if too many will notice.

The critics’ reactions for “T’ar” have largely been positive. I was rooting for this movie for as long as I could, but after two hours, I began to wonder if anything would happen or if the suspense of the atmosphere would just continue to linger without any revelation. You could say that I was becoming frustrated and began to lose track of the details in the story. To me, it seemed like so much was left unexplained. I appreciate a film that treats

its audience with enough respect to follow the story, but why be so ambiguous?

If you are a fan of Cate Blanchett, you will admire her performance and expect great things for her as award season arrives. Beyond the technical work, however, I was not as impressed as the majority of critics up to this point. Based on my overall opinion, I think it is overrated, but perhaps I am in the minority, including the average spectator. I will readily accept that. My recommendation: wait until you can see this in the comfort of your own home, but pay as close attention as possible. Otherwise, you might see the landscape change hands and wonder what in the world you are looking at by the time the screen goes totally black... again.

Final Grade: 6 / 10 (Adequate)

Amsterdam

Review by Chloe James



This being a completely out of left-field comparison here, but sometimes making a movie is a lot like baking a cake. You add just the right amount of ingredients, follow the recipe accordingly, and (hopefully!) get a good, if basic result. If you are a more “advanced” baker, you may spend more and get the best ingredients possible and add different amounts than the recipe suggests. You may disregard the instructions and experiment with the baking instructions. With any luck, the risk was worth taking, as your cake can turn out to be a gourmet masterpiece far beyond the basic. But all too often, not following the recipe can yield something messy — perhaps with a strange taste, or uneven texture. (Ok, I’ll admit I’ve been watching way too much Great British Bake-off lately, so this is how I’ve been thinking.)

Being a “messy cake” is the best way I could collect my thoughts to describe how I felt about Amsterdam. The film follows three World War I veteran friends; a doctor – Burt

Berendsen (Christian Bale), a nurse – Valerie Voze (Margot Robbie), and a lawyer – Harold Woodsman (John David Washington), who are hired to investigate the 1933 murder of US Senator Bill Meekins by his daughter Liz (Taylor Swift), while becoming the prime suspects in the case. Written and Directed by David O. Russell (Silver Linings Playbook, 3 Kings, American Hustle); Amsterdam, on top of the three above, has an all-star cast including Alessandro Nivola as Detective Hiltz, Anya Taylor-Joy as Libby Vose, Chris Rock as Milton King, Michael Shannon as Henry Norcross, Mike Myers as Paul Canterbury, Rami Malek as Tom Vose, Zoe Saldana as Irma St. Clair, Robert De Niro as General Gil Dillenbeck, and Timothy Olyphant as Taron Milfax.

Getting back to my weird cake comparison, the ingredients were all there for me. A period film about a murder mystery, with an all-star cast of actors I love, beautifully shot, and romanticizing group of friends from diverse backgrounds living their bohemian dream life? On paper, that sounds like the perfect film. And yet, this one left a strange taste in my mouth. O.Russell’s writing style this time around was...uneven to say the least. At times it was a wonderful script, I really “vibed” with what the characters were trying to convey. Other times it was just unnatural. I understand and normally appreciate when characters speak in riddles, but it got a little out of hand in this case. Then sometimes throughout the film, it was the complete opposite! The script would start feeling like a teenager wrote it for the CW, just spelling out very obvious things over and over again. Either way, people just don’t talk like that, even in a murder mystery taking place in the 1930s.

The direction and editing was about as uneven as the writing. It looked great, with lovely cinematography and color editing. But every time I was sort of getting into a scene, it felt like something would interrupt it a bit too quickly. And when I start to expect and get used to this sort of pacing, a scene would drag on for a bit too long. This move really gave me whiplash!

I can at least say for the most part, the acting remained consistently good. Bale created a very interesting and charming character in his portrayal of Berendsen, a very kind doctor who definitely has a different feel from your average protagonist. Robbie and Washington were just as likeable — Robbie playing the sort of manic pixie dream girl I can tolerate, and Washington exuded a subtle strength and class though his acting that’s rare to find. The relationships between the characters in general were the most redeeming part of this film, the lead cast in particular. It’s a shame that despite its best efforts, Amsterdam just didn’t quite work for me. While I usually love works of art with multiple genres, this film just didn’t know what

it wanted to be, making any attempt at a genre feel “muddy.” Still, it was entertaining enough and pleasant to look at. And like any experimental cake, I can see some people finding this film delicious. As for me, I’ll pass on seconds.

Final Grade: 6 / 10 (Adequate)



FREE ADVERTISING

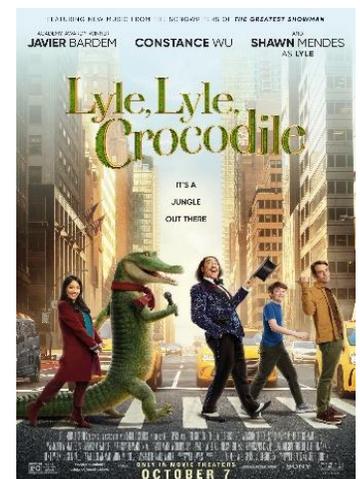
REACH OVER 12 MILLION CUSTOMERS

ASK ME HOW - Scan Code, Text Me, or Call

469-708-9954

Lyle, Lyle Crocodile

Review by Marcus Blake



Hey parents, good news, there’s a new movie that I’m sure you’ll have to watch over and over with your kids! Don’t worry, it’s not as bad as it seems. Lyle Lyle Crocodile hits theaters this weekend and it’s definitely an interesting film for kids. Yes, this is a kid’s film and certainly knows its audience! Now, I wasn’t completely disappointed by the movie, but I know what it is and even though I’m not a parent, I know I’ll have to watch this with my niece and nephews at least a few times. That’s okay. It’s not a horrible movie and has a great cast. Unfortunately, we can’t always say that about kids’ movies and that’s where it can become mind-numbing for parents who have to watch movies over and over.

The film is about a talking crocodile who speaks through music. His only way to communicate is by singing and he has a

fantastic voice. The character is voiced by the multi-talented Shawn Mendes. When a down-on-his-luck performer trying to make it big discovers the crocodile, he sees it as his big ticket to fame, but doesn't understand that Lyle suffers from stage fright and even though he enjoys singing, the only thing he really wants in the world as a friend. The performer is played by the brilliant Javier Bardem. This is an interesting role for him because we're used to seeing him play great villains. He was one of the best Bond villains ever. However, he's also done romantic comedies and he was great as Desi Arnaz in the I Love Lucy movie with Nicole Kidman. He truly shines in this movie as The Lovable villain who is well-intentioned, but he's still basically the villain of the movie until he learns in the end that he can't use Lyle for his own fame. Yes, it's predictable. The rest of the cast is great with Constance Wu and Winslow Fegley, the son who discovers Lyle living in their attic. He comes out of his shell, so to speak, by befriending Lyle, and learning to be confident and live life to its fullest. He's the one that truly recognizes how special Lyle is and also helps Lyle overcome his fears. Again, it's a bit predictable, but it works because this is a kid's movie and because of the audience doesn't need to be anything.

What makes this movie work is there's a lot of great music and very funny scenes. It's a heartwarming story. Javier Bardem shines as this great vaudeville type performer. And even though he's a bit of a villain, him matching wits with the true villain of the story affectionately known as Mr. Grumps played by the always entertaining Brett Gelman, who basically wants to kick everybody out of the house and put Lyle in a zoo. I admit that there isn't much to the story. We've seen these kinds of stories before. It reminded me a lot of the original Pete's Dragon which basically just had a heartfelt message about friendship and having empathy for things that are different. That's essentially what this story is. Yes, the story can be explored a little bit more and it seems like there aren't any great dramatic moments except when everybody finds inspiration with Lyle. It's true that you could probably have more of a backstory between the main characters, but this is a heartwarming comedic sing-along for kids. And the movie is made for parents who just want to enjoy some great comedy by fantastic actors while they watch a heartwarming movie with their children. My biggest critique is, the movie does feel short and that there isn't much of the story. But the movie plays out like a children's book which is what the story is based on so there's no need to be overly critical about a movie that knows what it is. I did find myself laughing many times throughout the film, but mostly at Javier Bardem and Brett Gelman.

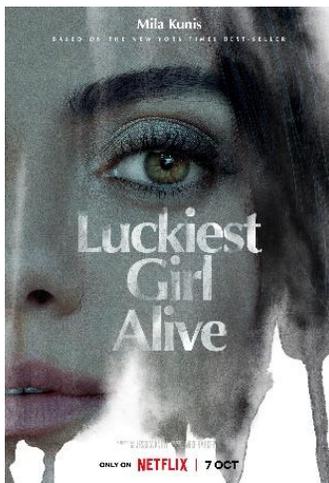
Overall, it's a fun film for kids. The music is great and it's a heartwarming story that has a positive message when it comes to friendship

and inclusivity, or simply, don't judge a book by its cover. There's a lot of positive things to this movie. What really makes it fun and entertaining is the cast. They picked a really good cast and picked a great singer to voice Lyle. While I am not a huge fan of Shawn Mendes, I recognize his talents and almost have to say that he was perfect for this role. Kid's movies when it comes to being good or bad should be based on one thing, how many times you're going to have to watch it and whether you will get bored. While this movie is not up there with *Frozen*, it's entertaining enough that it won't become so mind-numbing if you have to watch him many times. But if kids want to keep watching this movie, then you know you have a hit. They're the best people to judge whether this movie is good or not. But for me who's just an awesome uncle, yes, if I have to watch it a few more times then it's not that bad. The cast is what makes this movie worth watching more than once.

Final Grade: 6 / 10 (Adequate)

Luckiest Girl Alive

Review by Alex Moore



When I was a boy, at some point, I knew who I liked to watch when I was seeing a movie. You could say I had a celebrity crush, in other words. With each passing decade of life, I added to the list, slowly but surely. However, I made a rule, in my head: no more than one celebrity crush per decade. Perhaps, even in my fantasy world, I was attempting to be a one-woman man?...

Having said all that, "Luckiest Girl Alive" is a new addition to Netflix, starring Mila Kunis, and based on a New York Times best-seller. It is directed by Mike Barker, who has apparently not directed a feature-length movie since 2007, but has been very much involved in "small screen" work during the past 15 years. The screenplay is credited to Jessica Knoll,

which seems appropriate since the novel was written by the same woman, though it is a unique challenge to adapt your own work to a smaller scale; from book to film.

Kunis is Ani Fanelli, a successful writer in her late 20s (according to the novel description) who is also about to get married. Her future spouse is Luke Harrison, played by Finn Wittrock ("A Mouthful of Air"). However, beneath the comely façade, there is great turmoil. Fanelli seems to have cold feet about being wed. Furthermore, she seems cynical and manipulative, but why?...

In the early moments of "Luckiest Girl Alive" I saw the usual, solid cinematography I have come to expect from Netflix movies. In this case, it is Colin Watkinson, who has worked with the director, previously, in "A Handmaid's Tale." However, the supposed edgy quality to this movie lacks some originality due to Netflix's standard that I have just mentioned. Repeated stimulation of the same note can lose its luster, over time, but I digress...

The apparent premise for "Luckiest Girl Alive" reminded me of previous films, such as: "Trainwreck" or "Good on Paper." Those were comedies, through and through. This one faked like it was going to be a comedy and then took a turn into drama and never looked back. My thinking, at least during the first half of the film, was that Kunis' character is not very likable and, therefore, more difficult to sympathize with. She showcases what I would categorize as cliched insecurity for a modern, female character and seems to dislike masculinity, even when it is indirectly impacting her work life. I would caution any prospective viewer to stay patient, though. Her complaints and attitudes will, hopefully, make a lot more sense to you later on, as they did to me.

By supposed chance, Fanelli and Harrison meet up with some people for dinner, including a man from Fanelli's past, and this is where the story begins to get a lot more interesting. She knew him as Mr. Larson, but now he is Andrew, played by Scoot McNairy ("C'Mon C'Mon"). Something major happened to Fanelli when she was younger. Up to this point, we have only seen flashback moments, which look like post-traumatic stress, and affectively gain your attention, though they lack depth, at first. This is where I take issue with the story. I wonder if there could have been some way to make Kunis' character seem a little bit more likable BEFORE we learn about her past, but maybe the screenwriter AND the director decided to unveil things this way on purpose and I just do not agree with that decision. Shall we move on?...

Fanelli was raised, at least during her teenage years, without a father around. Her mother, played by Connie Britton (“Breaking”), entered her into an exclusive school so that she could be on an optimal track for big success. When she finds the transition a bit more challenging, she cozies up to some of the more mainstream students and this is what leads her to a traumatic moment, which will shape the rest of her life, both positively and negatively.

Without giving too much away, it was not just one thing that happened, but two things, which were somehow connected. As it turns out, a friend was trying to defend Fanelli’s honor, but did so in an irrational manner and many people suffered for it, in the process. One who suffered, went on to use that tragedy as a means to gain something in his life, and he did so at the expense of another, willfully, I might add. Fanelli is seeking to gain closure on this matter, but it takes some time and effort to handle things the way that she needs to. Ultimately, it is the way others respond to this that seems to matter more than how Fanelli deals with everything on her own terms, which is her right. In the end, her ability to find peace has several layers to it and no one else can do it for her; not her boss, played by Jennifer Beals (“After”) and not even her fiancé. As I mentioned before, this story requires some patience in order to really understand the full measure of Ani Fanelli. Hypothetically, if this were the real world, that would make perfect sense, but this is NOT real life; it is a movie. The trending theme to make films more applicable to reality is not going away. Some may not approve of it and will continue to argue that movies were meant to give us a break from reality and not to remind us of it and I completely understand that perspective. However, film can also be used as an effective teaching tool to show certain viewers something they may or may not be aware of, even if that THING makes the viewer uncomfortable.

“Luckiest Girl Alive” is a title that is meant to be ironic or even sarcastic, yet it is also true, which also makes it a bit of a paradox. In my opinion, the cleverness of that is a little bit better than the movie, itself, which gets good down the stretch, but is too weak in the

beginning to save itself from being “slightly above average.” The story-telling is a bit sloppy and does not play to Kunis’ strengths, in my view. Then, she shines through in the end, to at least provide us with a satisfying conclusion, which is fine, but not quite enough for me to give my full recommendation. In other words, it was “okay,” but not much more than that. I got the message, but would have preferred a different approach, overall. I do not say this as a victim, but merely as an observer, to be perfectly clear. My thoughts on the film are not related, in any way, to the material within it. So, separate the two and then you will see what I am saying.

Final Grade: 6 / 10 (Adequate)

Hocus Pocus 2

Review by Chloe James



There are times in which I’m totally cool with admitting I had some pretty basic tastes for my age and demographic. Was I obsessed with My Little Ponys (the first time around)? Yes. Disney Princesses? Before they even had an official line. Pokemon? Played the Blue version before I even knew it was going to be cool. There is one film in particular that has recently become synonymous for basic Halloween loving people of my generation. Almost to the level of pumpkin spice lattes and UGGs, *Hocus Pocus* has become a basic millennial kid Fall staple. I myself will proudly count myself as someone who could practically recite the movie in their sleep. (Repeatedly being syndicated all year long on the Disney Channel certainly made it easier.) Being such a beloved title, it was natural that in the 29 years since its release, there’s been a strong clamoring for a sequel. Well, my fellow witch loving, aging Millennials, Disney has finally decided to cash in on our nostalgia and release *Hocus Pocus 2*.

The film starts in 1653 Salem, where the church exiled a teenage Winifred Sanderson for refusing to marry. Knowing she could not live

without her sisters, Sarah and Mary, she escaped with them to the forest where they run into Mother Witch (Hannah Waddingham) who gives Winifred her book of spells and teaches them how to kill other children to stay young forever. In 2022, we meet up with two teenagers Izzy (Belissa Escobedo) and Becca (Whitney Peak) who visit their favorite magic shop for Becca’s birthday, a tradition they’ve had for years. The shop’s owner, Gilbert (Sam Richardson), gifts Becca a special candle for her 16th birthday. They realize that it is a Black Flame Candle when they accidentally resurrect the Sanderson sisters (Bette Midler, Sarah Jessica Parker, Kathy Najimy), 29 years after they were resurrected previously.

Directed by Anne Fletcher (Step Up, 27 Dresses, The Proposal) and written by Jen D’Angelo (her first film), this film has been rumored to be in production for the past 10-15 years. The first official hints of actual production was in 2016 when Doug Jones mentioned that Disney was considering it and in 2017 when original screenwriter Mick Garris admitted that Disney had asked him to write a new script. It wasn’t officially confirmed by Disney until October 2019 and wasn’t taken seriously until May 2021 when they announced the return of Bette Milder, Sarah Jessica Parker, and Kathy Najimy.

Given the overwhelming nostalgia I feel about the first one, it is so much harder to give an impartial critique of this long awaited sequel. Do I love it because it makes me feel like a happy, pre-9/11 era kid again? Do I hate it because it’s obviously trying to cater to me by throwing in a lot of gratuitous fan service moments? I guess I have a blend of both feelings?

One of my favorite things about this movie is the expansion of the characters of the Sanderson sisters. We’re actually treated with a bit more backstory about how they got their powers, as well as elaboration on their relationship with each other. And even better, they remained (mostly) evil rather than Disney’s recent trend of making villains “misunderstood.” Midler, Parker, and Najimy, despite reprising their roles almost three decades later, we’re still wonderfully energetic and quirky. If anything, they seem almost more “witchy” than before.

Of course, I must also address the “new” kid characters of this film. They are simply put, very Gen Z. And I will argue that’s a good thing. We *want* this movie to be just as relatable to kids now as it was in the 90s. I really did find Becca and Lizzy to be pretty likeable, representing the less toxic mindset that Gen Z is known for, without veering in too “preachy” territory. I’m just a little surprised that none of the “kid” characters from the first film made an appearance, but I guess it really wasn’t necessary.

I'm still unsure if it adds or detracts, but a *lot* of elements from the first movie did come back. Quite a few recycled jokes and plot elements were used. And while some were welcome, others were a bit awkward. To be honest, I much more appreciated the new jokes this film had to offer. As far as the overall story goes, it's just different enough to have kept me

interested, without making me think I'm just watching the first one all over again.

Thinking back, was the first film even good in the first place? I'm sure my nostalgia filters are far too strong to make a good judgment about that. I'm still wildly entertained by it to this day. As far as *Hocus Pocus 2* goes, while it doesn't quite add up to the charm of the

original, it was still pretty decent. Though it may not have been entirely necessary to even make this, *Hocus Pocus 2* was still a welcome Halloween treat.

Final Grade: 7/10 (Okay)

AMAZON ORIGINAL

The logo for the 60th anniversary of the James Bond franchise, featuring the number '60' in a large, stylized font with '007' and a gun barrel icon integrated into the '0'.

The Sound of 007 DOCUMENTARY

prime video



DAILY SPECIALS @ 1ST STOP PRINT

Your 1st Stop in Printing! Call: (888) 901-4665 Text: (469) 708-9954 Info@1ststopprint.com



www.1ststopprint.com

1,000 Business Cards

14 PT. Cardstock
2 x 3.5 Inches
Glossy or Matte Finish

\$40

Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

2,500 Business Cards

14 PT. Cardstock
2 x 3.5 Inches
Glossy or Matte Finish

\$68

Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

5,000 Business Cards

14 PT. Cardstock
2 x 3.5 Inches
Glossy or Matte Finish

\$88

Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

2 x 6 FT. BANNER

Custom Vinyl BANNERS

14 OZ. Premium Vinyl
1 Sided - 4 x 10 FT.
Glossy or Matte Finish

\$72

Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

3 x 8 FT. BANNER

Custom Vinyl BANNERS

14 OZ. Premium Vinyl
1 Sided - 4 x 10 FT.
Glossy or Matte Finish

\$90

Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

4 x 10 FT. BANNER

Custom Vinyl BANNERS

14 OZ. Premium Vinyl
1 Sided - 4 x 10 FT.
Glossy or Matte Finish

\$148

Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

Car Magnet Package 5

1 PAIR (18 x 24 inch)
"2 Car Magnets"
Full Color

\$75

Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

1,000 Postcard Flyers

14 PT. Cardstock
4 x 6 Inches - Both Sides
Glossy or Matte Finish

\$90

Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

2,500 Postcard Flyers

14 PT. Cardstock
4 x 6 Inches - Both Sides
Glossy or Matte Finish

\$140

Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

5,000 Postcard Flyers

14 PT. Cardstock
4 x 6 Inches - Both Sides
Glossy or Matte Finish

\$195

Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

RETRACTABLE BANNER

14 OZ. Premium Vinyl
1 Sided - 78 X 33 IN.
Glossy or Matte Finish

\$120

Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

1,000 Brochures

100 LB. Paper
8.5 x 11 inch, Tri-Fold
Glossy Finish

\$190

Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

2,500 Brochures

100 LB. Paper
8.5 x 11 inch, Tri-Fold
Glossy Finish

\$299

Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

5,000 Brochures

100 LB. Paper
8.5 x 11 inch, Tri-Fold
Glossy Finish

\$399

Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

1,000 Business Cards and Postcards

14 PT. Cardstock
2 x 3.5 & 4 x 6 Inches
Glossy or Matte Finish

\$110

Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

1,000 Door Hangers

100 LB. Cover
4.25 x 11 Inches - Both Sides
Glossy or Matte Finish

\$199

Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

2,500 Door Hangers

100 LB. Cover
4.25 x 11 Inches - Both Sides
Glossy or Matte Finish

\$299

Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

5,000 Door Hangers

100 LB. Cover
4.25 x 11 Inches - Both Sides
Glossy or Matte Finish

\$425

Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

FREE ADVERTISING

REACH OVER 12 MILLION CUSTOMERS

ASK ME HOW - Scan Code, Text Me, or Call

469-708-9954

"We Are Your Neighborhood Printer with FREE Shipping and No Sales Tax on Every Order!"

60 Years.
25 Films.
Included with Prime.

60
007[™]



OCT 5 | prime video

WHAT YOU SHOULD BINGE-WATCH

House of the Dragon: Season 1 Review by Chloe James



If you're any kind of Game of Thrones fan like I am, these past few years may have seemed...empty. Whether you agree with the majority that the last season was a disappointment, or you are in the quieter last season defender minority like myself, there's definitely been something missing in our lives since the series's wrap-up. Many of us have found some decent ways to fill that fantasy craving void, such as the excellent Witcher series, the ok-ish Wheel of Time adaptation, or the wonderful, yet tragically canceled after one season Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance. These have all given me a great deal of fantasy nerd serotonin to be sure, but not quite the same way of watching a new episode of GoT, with a giant glass of wine in hand and a box of tissues on the ready. Sure, HBO had teased us with a number of spin off series set in the world of Westeros, and when one finally got greenlit, I allowed myself a tiny allowance of cautious excitement. Not too much excitement, though, as I'm sure nothing could beat out the original for me.

Minor Spoilers Ahead

Well, the first season of House of the Dragon is finally over. And with it, I can finally say, that empty void left in me is finally filled once more. Taking place about 186 years before

the events of Game of Thrones, this series focuses on the Targaryen royal family during their golden age of rule and dragons were still numerous in the world. When peaceful King Veserys (Paddy Considine) loses his wife and son to childbirth, he makes the difficult decision to name his beloved only daughter Rhaenyra (Milly Alcock and later Emma D'Arcy) as heir to the throne. Problem is, Westeros isn't woke enough to accept a woman ruler just yet. Things start getting complicated when Rhaenyra's bestie Alicent Hightower (Emily Carey and later Olivia Cooke) marries Veserys and starts having male offspring with him. Adding to the drama, Rhaenyra's growing sexual tension with her uncle Daemon (Matt Smith) springs her to do some less than trustworthy actions that further alienate her from her subjects. This is just the start, as this season spans over the course of a couple of decades, culminating into the beginning of one of Westeros' bloodiest wars: The Dance of Dragons



Where do I start in describing how happy watching this has made me? I guess it would be easier to get the tiny criticisms out of the way before I delve into the goodness. For those of you who felt thrown off at the pretty fast pacing of seasons 7 and 8 of Game of Thrones, I got bad news for you. Season 1 of House of the Dragon goes so much faster. Don't get overly attached to any particular character in this one, because some of them will die off way faster than you expect. I know I know, that goes without saying with anyone in this universe. Still, I'll admit I was a bit disappointed with characters I was just learning their names and

liking to unceremoniously be killed off a couple of episodes later. I get it. This season, from what I understand, is mostly elaborated backstory to a much bigger one. It was an attempt to show a lot of key events that resulted in the war to come, so it had to be done at breakneck speed. At the same time, they wanted to give us much context behind these character's motivations as possible. So yes, a lot of characters that are set up to be "important" are killed off rather quickly as that is what happens to their book counterparts. This is a small price to pay to have well fleshed out characters overall.

1,000 Door Hangers

1 STOP PRITT
Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

SORRY WE MISSED YOU!
YOUR CARPET CLEANER NAME

\$199

We Buy Houses
www.YourDomain.com
Any Area - Any Price
Any Condition

We Pay Referral

100 LB. Cover
4.25 x 11 Inches - Both Sides
Glossy or Matte Finish

Speaking of characters, once again the casting department has outdone itself. This is one of the most talented series cast I've seen since...well, Game of Thrones, I guess. There were some naysayers initially doubting the casting of Matt Smith as Daemon Targaryen. I could tell within his first scene that he was going to be a fan darling of this series. Daemon didn't have the most lines out of anyone, but his physical acting alone told us everything we needed to know. I know I should be picking between "Team Green" or "Team Black", but in reality, I could never pick between how much I love Emma D'Arcy's Rhaenyra or Olivia Cooke's Alicent. The fact that such playful, charming actors (with now meme worthy chemistry with each other behind the scenes), can transform into such nuanced characters on film.

Most of all, I am absolutely blown away by Paddy Considine's performance as King Veserys. If I could sign a petition just so this

series is eligible to win Oscars (even though it's very much not in the movie category) I would. Constatine's performance wasn't just Emmy worthy. It's Oscar worthy. While we are on the subject, his best performance came from my (and I'm sure many other's) favorite episode of the season, Episode 8: "The Lord of The Tides". This one may beat out even some of my top favorites for GoT. Episode 8 really highlights what this show does better than GoT, the character's relationships with each other. In its core, this series is about a family and the families they married into. Episode 8 may be the most tragic of all because it shows so much of what might have been had egos not been too big, feelings not stayed hurt, or misunderstandings smoothed over. It shows that the war to come will be completely unnecessary.

While I greatly anticipated this series as my replacement Game of Thrones fix, I have already grown to love House of the Dragon in its own right. At times, it does feel a bit like a soap opera set in a medieval fantasy backdrop (nothing wrong with that!) Yet, there's something about it that seems more down to Earth, more human than its predecessor. Ironic as the main cast are platinum haired royalty who ride on dragons. I have a feeling the action is going to be much more intense in the seasons to come, so buckle up your dragon saddle friends, we're in for a bumpy ride!

Final Grade: 9 /10 (Great)



The Midnight Club: Season 1 Review by Marcus Blake



Halloween is around the corner and *The Midnight Club* is the perfect series to watch this time of year, but if you're like me, you'll probably be left with more questions than answers. After watching the first season, the only conclusion I have is we better get a second season to answer all the lingering questions left in season one. I enjoyed the series. Yes, I'm recommending it to fans, but just know that it's a long drawn-out process getting to the end only to be left with more mysteries rather than stuff being resolved among the characters. I probably need to watch it again and maybe that's the filmmaker's intent, which is not a bad thing, but I want answers. The series is based on a book by the same name about a group of terminally ill children who are staying at a facility for people with their type of conditions, let's just say, it's haunted. They get together at midnight and tell ghost stories, and part of their agreement is the first person to die, somehow has to come back and tell him what's on the other side. It seems simple enough, but there's always more going on. The idea of telling ghost stories within a ghost story is appealing. The main characters are not the first Midnight club as they soon discover. While I will not give any spoilers, The Midnight Club's original purpose was a little bit more sinister when it came to cheating death. With this being a show about the individual stories and how they connect to the overall story, it makes the audience more curious about the bigger story...the true purpose of the midnight club.

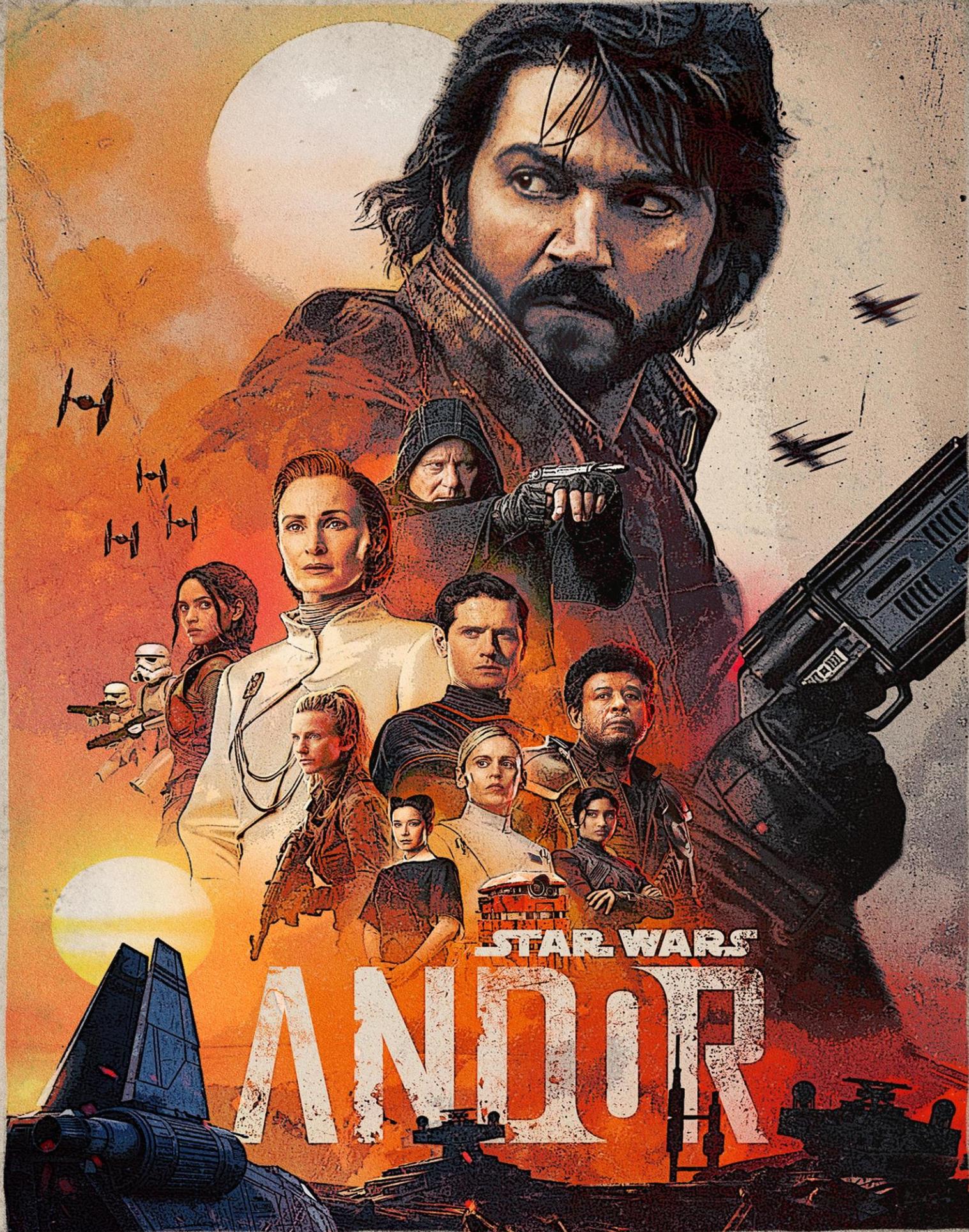
Like a good horror story, it's the suspense that makes the story worth watching because little by little through the stories the Midnight club tells, the overall story surrounding the deaths of original members and why the facility is haunted is the better story. The main character

of Ilonka is the one who figures out that there's more to the midnight club and just gathering to tell stories. Something happened long ago. There's a mystery to the full purpose of the midnight club as she is confronted with mysterious characters that are not whom they seem to be. I wish I could tell you that you figure all that out by the end of the first season, but that isn't true and unfortunately, that's one of the downfalls of this first season.

As I said, I liked it, but I don't know if it needed to be 10 episodes. I feel like this is a story that could have been told in six to eight episodes and not so drawn out. However, while the individual stories that the kids tell and how they connect to the overall story are fascinating and lead to the overall mystery, you want answers, and the first season doesn't give you enough answers. Like, who is Shasta really? A former member of the Midnight club? Is she on the run? And it's not hard to figure out that Dr. Stanton played by the great Heather Langenkamp from *The Nightmare on Elm Street* movies is another huge mystery. And of course, you realize that in the very last scene of the first season. No spoilers, you just got to get to the end to see what I'm talking about. There's so much going on in the first season with all of their individual stories connected to one another that it's hard to keep up at times. I can understand why there were 10 episodes, but the audience shouldn't be left more confused than what they were when watching the first season.

However, part of the saving Grace of this first season is the cast and the wonderful acting. There's not any big names in this season but all of the young actors were great, especially Ruth Codd who plays Anya. Sometimes when you have a show whose main cast is young actors, it doesn't always work. Experienced actors tend to make better shows, but it's not like we haven't seen young actors come in and make a show great. *Riverdale* at least through the first few seasons is a good example where the older actors played by teen heartthrobs from the early 90s were the background characters. I love the fact that Heather Langenkamp was in this. She rocks just like Jamie Lee Curtis in the latest *Halloween* movies. But not even good acting can make this a perfect show. It's true that there are a lot of stories to tell, but it's hard to keep up with the individual stories of *The Midnight club* are telling versus the overall story this is where I show like this needs to be tighter and more focused in 6 to 8 episodes. Whether *The Midnight Club* deserves a second season, we almost have to have one just to give us any kind of answers to season 1!

Final Grade: 6 / 10 Adequate



STAR WARS
ANDOR

THE REBELLION BEGINS

Original series
Sept 21 only on



OPENING
JULY
2022



film & fancy

THE CREATIVE PHOTO STUDIO FOR COSPLAY, FASHION, FILM, & MORE

- PRE-BUILT SETS
- 360 PLATFORM
- VANITY AREAS
- LOUNGE AREA
- RETAIL SHOP
- DRESSING ROOMS
- WORKSHOPS
- & FUN EVENTS



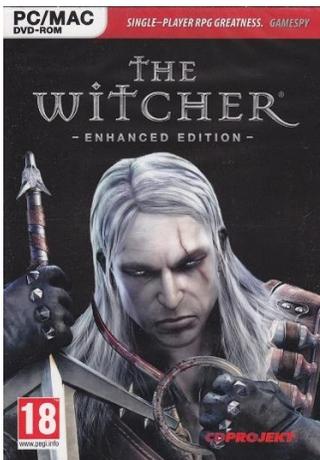
SUPPORT YOUR
LOCAL LGBTQ+ &
BLACK-OWNED BUSINESS!

BPP FILM & FANCY
MUSIC CITY MALL, SUITE 1280
LEWISVILLE, TX 75067
207-275-7390
WWW.BPPFILMFANCY.COM



GAMING NEWS

Witcher Remake:” The Original Witcher Game Is Being Remade from the Ground Up!



Coinciding with the 15th anniversary of the first Witcher game’s release, CD PROJEKT RED has announced today that The Witcher Remake is currently in the works, and has also shared the first details regarding the project. Previously referred to by the codename “Canis

Majoris” during the studio’s Strategy Update earlier in October, the remake will be a modern reimagining of 2007’s The Witcher — the first game in CD PROJEKT RED’s acclaimed RPG trilogy. The title will be built from the ground up using Unreal Engine 5 technology, and will use the toolset CDPR is creating for the new Witcher saga. The project is currently in the early stages of development at Fool’s Theory — a game development studio specializing in role-playing games. The team employs numerous veteran developers who previously worked on The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings and The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt, and CD PROJEKT RED is providing full creative supervision.

“The Witcher is where it all started for us, for CD PROJEKT RED. It was the first game we made, ever, and it was a big moment for us then. Going back to this place and remaking the game for the next generation of gamers to experience it feels just as big, if not bigger,” said Adam Badowski, Head of Studio, CD PROJEKT RED. “Collaborating with Fool’s Theory on the project is just as exciting, as

some of the people there have been previously involved in The Witcher games. They know the source material well, they know how much gamers have been looking forward to seeing the remake happen, and they know how to make incredible and ambitious games. And although it will take some time before we’re ready to share more about and from the game, I know it’ll be worth the wait.”

“I am very happy that my professional paths have crossed again with fellow developers from the time of working together on The Witcher 2 and The Witcher 3. Especially when it’s a remake of a project that is so close to our hearts,” said Jakub Rokosz, CEO, Fool’s Theory. “We are excited to join forces with CD PROJEKT RED, and our goal is to give players another great game from the iconic Witcher series.”

To keep up to date on The Witcher series of games, including The Witcher Remake, follow the official [website](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).



Dark Post-communist Adventure “Last Days of Lazarus” Arrives on Consoles



Darkania Works, GrimTalin and Perp Games are proud to announce that the supernatural adventure game Last Days of Lazarus is arriving on consoles imminently. With its disturbing story, religious imagery and the occasional scare, the title, heavily inspired by Romanian post-communist history, local superstitions and religious beliefs, is set to unsettle PlayStation and XBOX players this holiday season.

This first-person narrative driven game tells an enthralling story about family, loss and dark secrets, set on the backdrop of political turmoil and a spreading malediction. You play as Lazarus, a man with a troubled past, who returns home after his mother's suicide to spend the holidays with his sister Lyudmila. But when she turns out missing and unexplained supernatural events happen in their childhood home, Lazarus sets out on a quest to uncover not only his sister's fate, but also to reveal the dark secrets in this family's disturbing past.

As if the paranormal events and a spreading malediction wouldn't be enough, the country itself seems to be falling into disarray, with civil war brewing as the new political regime tightens its grip on power. Split into eight chapters, the story will take you to five detailed locations inspired by actual places

from Romania and its post-communist history. Explore, meet strange characters, find documents and solve light puzzles to learn about what happened to this troubled family.

The game releases on PlayStation 5 on November 29th, with the Xbox Series X version coming a bit earlier, on October 28th. It will retail digitally for \$19.99 / 19.99€. The PS5 physical edition made in collaboration with Perp Games, will release on 2nd December and will include a digital mini artbook and other bonus digital content. A Special Edition will also be available through the Perp Store.

Last Days of Lazarus was made in Unreal 4 as a collaboration between Darkania Works and GrimTalin, two small indie studios from Iasi, Romania.

“New Tales from the Borderlands®” is Now Available Worldwide



2K and Gearbox Software released *New Tales from the Borderlands*® worldwide. The new choice-based, narrative adventure game expands further the Borderlands universe and is available now on Xbox Series X|S, Xbox One, PlayStation®5 (PS5™), PlayStation®4 (PS4™), Nintendo Switch™ and PC via Steam and the Epic Games Store. You can watch the teaser [here](#). A spiritual successor to the beloved Telltale Games title, *New Tales from the Borderlands* is a brand-new game that carries forward the same sense of adventure and storytelling. Within the perpetually war-torn metropolis of Meridian City, players control three lovable losers on the worst day of their lives through deep, immersive story scenes,

mini-games and free-walk sequences. Every choice that players make can affect how the story unfolds, often in unexpected ways.

“With concept and writing collaboration between talent who worked on the original *Tales from the Borderlands* and an all-Gearbox production team driven by the incredible creative leadership of Gearbox Studio Quebec, we're stoked for everyone to play *New Tales from the Borderlands*,” said Randy Pitchford, founder of the Gearbox Entertainment Company. “The new storylines and characters will entertain newcomers to the Borderlands universe and those who have played and loved other Borderlands games.”

New Tales from the Borderlands contains a number of compelling narrative dynamics and features that bring the cinematic experience to new heights:

Three Nobodies on a Mission. Decide the fates of altruistic scientist Anu, her ambitious, “streetwise” brother Octavio, and the fierce, frogurt-slinging Fran. With nothing left to lose and everything to gain, you'll claw and con your way through this thrilling five-part story full of gun-toting goons, otherworldly beasts, and delicious tacos.

An Explosive Cinematic Adventure. The Borderlands aren't just home to Vault Hunters, bandits, and weapons-corp CEOs—they're full of downtrodden, intrepid civilians just trying to get

by. With a host of returning and fresh faces, including an assassin bot with comedic aspirations and a less-murderous-than-usual bandit, this unforgettable tale is sure to delight fans new and old.

You Control the Final Outcome. The decisions you make determine how your story ends. Whether it's Anu's vision of a universe that uses technology to save lives rather than destroy them, Octavio's dreams of fame and fortune, or Fran's frosty plot for revenge—their success or failure depends on you.

New Tales from the Borderlands is available in two editions:

New Tales from the Borderlands: Standard Edition is available for \$39.99* on Xbox Series X|S, Xbox One, PlayStation®5, PlayStation®4, Nintendo Switch and PC via Steam and the Epic Games Store in digital format only; *w Tales from the Borderlands: Deluxe Edition* is available for \$49.99* on Xbox Series X|S, Xbox One, PlayStation®5, PlayStation®4, Nintendo Switch and PC via Steam and the Epic Games Store in digital and physical formats, and includes the *New Tales from the Borderlands* as well as Tales from the Borderlands**.

Developed by Gearbox Software, *New Tales from the Borderlands* is rated “M for Mature” by the ESRB. For more information, please visit newtalesborderlands.com.

Asterigos: Curse Of The Stars is Available Now!



Publisher tinyBuild and developer Acme Gamestudio invite adventurers to the action-RPG world of [Asterigos: Curse Of The Stars](#), launching this Tuesday, October 11th on [PC](#), [PlayStation 4 & 5](#), plus [Xbox One and Series consoles](#). Prepare for the journey ahead now – see the treasures awaiting in the new [gameplay overview trailer](#) below, then venture into the depths of the Steam Next Fest; [A playable demo lurks there on PC](#), enhanced [with slicker combat, rebindable controls and a more dramatic boss battle finale](#).

Asterigos is a high-fantasy ‘souls-like’ action-RPG set in a world all its own, but inspired by Greek & Roman mythology. Set in the forsaken city of Aphes, young warrior Hilda embarks on a quest to uncover its secrets, and discover the truth behind the

terrible curse that has transfigured its inhabitants into deadly monsters. Trained in arts both martial and mystical, Hilda wields a varied arsenal of weapons conventional and otherwise. From the familiar sword & shield, dual blades, spears and hammers to spellcasting implements like magic staves and enchanted armlets.

Every last one of those weapons will have to be mastered to challenge the denizens of Aphes. Legions of varied monsters walk its streets, a deadly horde led by over twenty twisted and massive boss creatures. It’s not all horrors and battle. Aphes is a place of strange beauty. Ancient and proud architecture lies nestled in scenic valleys. Sprawling plazas lie wrapped in a spiderweb of streets, and beneath the city lies a warren of tunnels, dungeons and crystal-lined caverns. Treasure and mystery await those willing to explore it. If your soul is drawn to adventure, then you can take your first steps into Aphes today. Available on Steam, the Asterigos demo will prepare you for the quest ahead. The demo is [available to download now on Steam](#), with the full game launching next week. Asterigos: Curse Of The Stars arrives on October 11th on PC,

PlayStation 4 & 5, Xbox One and Xbox Series consoles.

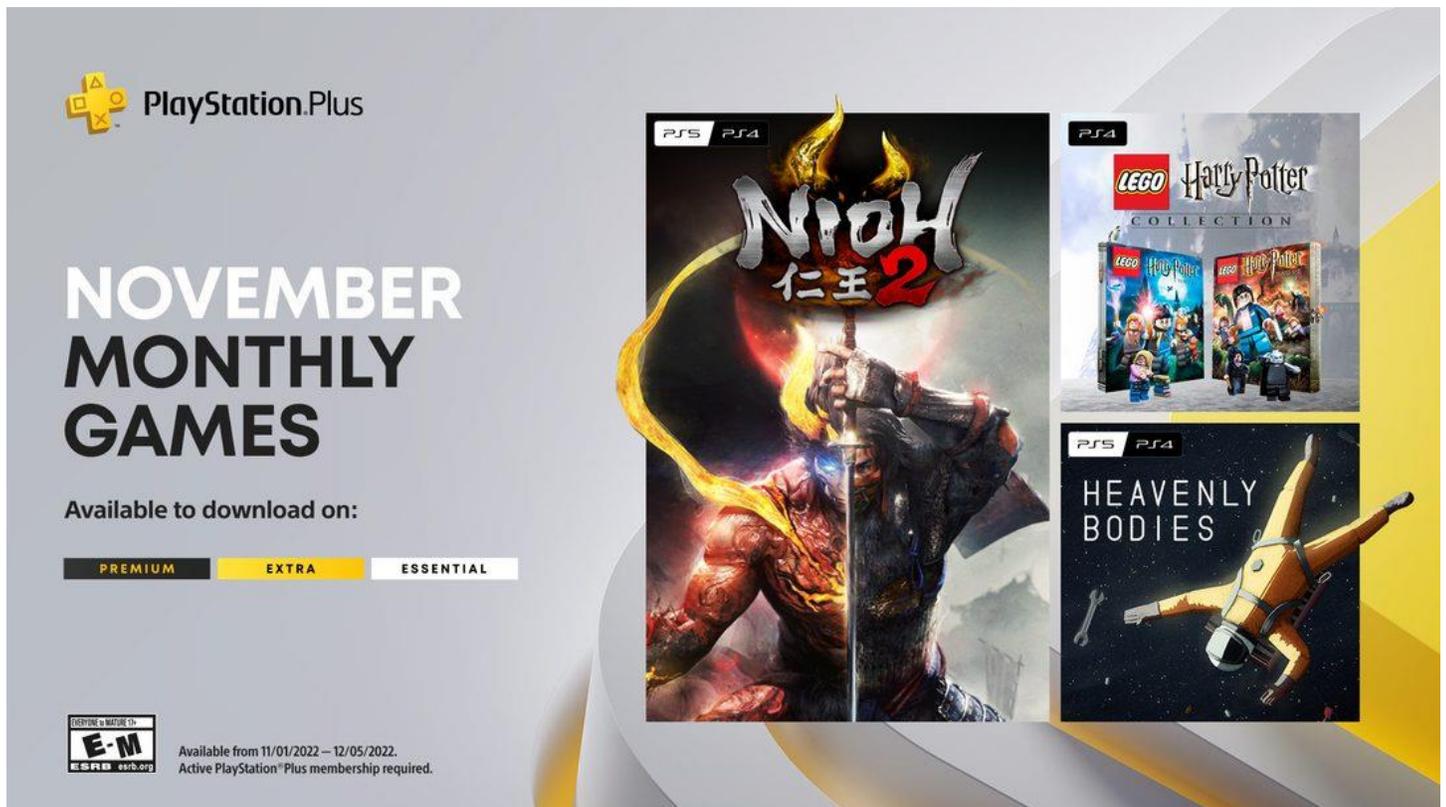
About tinyBuild
tinyBuild is a Seattle-based video game label behind the Hello Neighbor franchise and over 30 other renowned titles, including Potion Craft, Graveyard Keeper and Streets of Rogue. With additional offices in Amsterdam, Riga and Boise, ID, tinyBuild is rapidly building a portfolio of fun, high-quality games across multiple platforms.

About Acme GameStudio

Founded in 2016 by seasoned developers from Blizzard, X-Legend, XPEC, and Runewaker. Asterigos is the studios’ passion project and their first game.

Game Info

Title: Asterigos: Curse Of The Stars
Developer: Acme Gamestudio
Publisher: tinyBuildSite: <https://www.asterigos.com/en>Platforms: Windows PC, PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, Xbox One, Xbox Series
Release Date: October 11th 2022
RRP (Base Game): \$34.99/€34.99/£29.99
RRP (Deluxe): \$44.99/€44.99/£37.99
RRP (Ultimate): \$54.99/€54.99/£45.99



PlayStation.Plus

NOVEMBER MONTHLY GAMES

Available to download on:

PREMIUM **EXTRA** **ESSENTIAL**

NIOH 仁王2 (PS5, PS4)

LEGO Harry Potter COLLECTION (PS4)

HEAVENLY BODIES (PS5, PS4)

E-M (ESRB) ESRB.org

Available from 11/01/2022 – 12/05/2022.
Active PlayStation®Plus membership required.

PlayStation Plus Monthly Games for November: Nioh 2, Lego Harry Potter Collection, Heavenly Bodies

We're happy to reveal November's Monthly Games for PlayStation Plus. Take on savage foes with traditional weapons and supernatural abilities in Nioh 2, cast spells and solve puzzles in Lego Harry Potter Collection and take to the stars for physics sim Heavenly Bodies.

These titles can be enjoyed by PlayStation Plus Essential, Extra and Premium members from Tuesday November 1. The PlayStation Plus Extra and Premium Game Catalog lineup for October will be announced later this month.

Let's take a closer look at each of the Monthly Games.



Nioh 2 / Nioh 2 Remastered | PS4, PS5

Master the lethal arts of the samurai as a mysterious half-human, half-supernatural Yokai warrior, in this challenging single player action RPG sequel. Take down a host of deadly new Yokai, seasoned samurai warriors and

gargantuan boss monsters in Team Ninja's stylized vision of Japan's early Sengoku period. Unsheathe your deadly weapons and cut down all enemies in your path using a revamped combat system and the ability to transform into a full Yokai to unleash devastating paranormal powers.

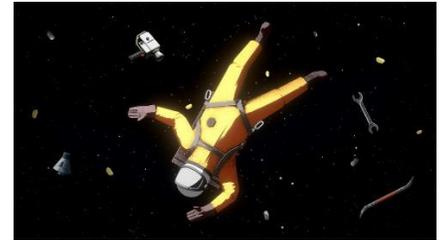
PlayStation Plus members can add both Nioh 2 on PS4 and Nioh 2 Remastered to their game library.



Lego Harry Potter Collection | PS4

The Lego Harry Potter Collection brings together Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4 and Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7 remastered! This compilation unites the creative prowess of Lego and the expansive world of Harry Potter, with an exciting journey full of spell-casting, potion-making, puzzle-solving, lessons, dueling and

much more. Enjoy two player fun either local or online.



Heavenly Bodies | PS4, PS5

Discover the ever-changing nuances of weightless motion in this challenging physics game, featuring a collection of stellar scenarios inspired by the feats of space explorers and researchers throughout history. Wrangle control of your cosmonaut's arms with the left and right thumbsticks to push, pull, and clamber through fully physically simulated scenarios aboard a scientific research station, alone or with a friend via local co-op.

Last chance to download October's Monthly Games

PlayStation Plus members have until Monday October 31 to add Hot Wheels Unleashed, Injustice 2 and Superhot to their game library.

A promotional graphic for Xbox Game Pass and EA Play. The background is a collage of various EA game covers, including Madden NFL 17, FIFA 18, Battlefield 1, Apex Legends, FIFA 21, EA Sports UFC 4, Titanfall, Injustice 2, and Battlefield 2042. The Xbox Game Pass logo is on the left, and the EA Play logo is on the right. A vertical line separates the two logos. At the bottom, the text 'Together for one low monthly price!' is written in a yellow, cursive font.

XBOX GAME PASS

EA Play

Together for one low monthly price!



FIFA 23

FIFA®

OFFICIAL
LICENSED
PRODUCT



KYLIAN MBAPPÉ



THE NEXT GREAT ROLE PLAYING GAME



Including
Journey to Timberhelm Campaign
Players Handbook - 1st Edition

WWW.ANNMARCHRONICLES.COM

THE NEW ROLE PLAYING GAME
IN THE ANNMAR CHRONICLES
"START PLAYING TODAY"

BARNES & NOBLE **amazon**

TARGET

BAM!
BOOKS-A-MILLION

POWELL'S
CITY of BOOKS



thriftbooks

HALF PRICE **BOOKS**

ANNMAR
CHRONICLES

For Fans of
"Dungeons and Dragons"
"Pathfinder"
"World of Warcraft"

Start Your Campaign in
a new Fantasy World!

Get the new Annmar
Chronicles Role Playing Game



**AVAILABLE
NOW!**

GET YOUR
COPY TODAY
AT A LOCAL
BOOKSTORE



REVIEWS

GOTHAM KNIGHTS

Game Review
by Marcus Blake



If you're looking for the next Batman game, this is not it! Don't worry, Gotham Knights is not a bad game, but after three great Batman games with the Arkham Trilogy, we have moved on to other characters in the DC universe. It's time for Batman's sidekicks. Again, that's not a bad thing. It's fair to say that superhero video games are hit or miss. Some are great and some are just 'meh!' I think we can all agree that the Arkham trilogy is one of the best video game series ever created. It was one of the highest-selling video series for the PS3 and the PS4 and it was the first time that we really got to play a fantastic superhero game in HD. Gotham Knights takes that to a whole new level. This game was made strictly for the PlayStation 5 and the Xbox Series X and double the frame rate and high definition that we normally see in a video game. But just because it looks good doesn't mean it's a great game.

Personally, I go back and forth on superhero games. As much as I love the Batman games, I have not enjoyed the Marvel games except for the Spider-Man game that came out a few years ago. Gotham Knights is a game where four characters come together to protect Gotham City. You get to play as Nightwing, Batgirl, the Red Hood, and Tim Drake's Robin. The story of these four characters coming together centers on Bruce Wayne / Batman being murdered so somebody has to take up the mantle of protecting Gotham City. There's a whole comic book series coming out along with the game to tell the story. What sets this game apart from past video games is the fact that you can switch off at any time playing one of four characters. If you want to play the entire game as one character then go back and play it as another you can or you can switch off at different times throughout the story. In the past video games have forced you to play different characters at a certain point in the storyline. That's what Marvel's Avengers and Guardians of the Galaxy which have come out in the last couple of years make you do. It's not a bad thing, but it's pretty cool to be able to switch to different characters. I admit that I have mostly played this game with Nightwing and Batgirl, but getting to play the Red Hood has been very cathartic. These four characters come together to solve Batman's murder while facing off against very familiar villains.

So let's get to it, is this game worth playing. Yes, especially if you are a fan of superhero games. I will admit from the start that it's not as good as the Arkham trilogy, for many reasons. If you're an old-school nerd you don't really want to play a Batman type of game without Kevin Conroy and Mark Hamill voicing Batman and the Joker. I don't think Gotham Knights really measures up to those games, but it's still a very fun game to play, and a game built for the next generation makes it a much more favorable

game to play. It looks great, the style is fantastic, and getting to see Gotham in all its Glory at a higher frame rate than what we saw in the Arkham trilogy makes it a game that you should pick up. But we all know that it takes more than a good-looking game to make it a great game worth playing. The story is very interesting, there's no doubt about it. It's about time we had a video game that's centered on characters like Nightwing and Batgirl. After all, Nightwing is one of the most underrated



characters in the DC universe because we get to see the growth of Dick Grayson from being a sidekick to his own hero and at some point, he will take up the mantle and be Batman. The first thing I noticed about this game is the fighting in the action is a lot more smooth compared to past superhero video games. I've always felt that some of the Batman games were a little glitchy when it came to fighting and being able to catapult yourself through the city. The movement and the fighting in this game is exceptional and it does play a lot better on consoles like the PS5 and the Xbox Series X. The game handles very well. As much as I have enjoyed the story, I have found myself a lot

more just patrolling the city and beating up bad guys. And I play the game on medium. But keep in mind that like the other Batman games, this is a detective story. Step by step you're trying to solve a crime and take down the big villain. The game probably has the best version of Gotham City that we have ever gotten in a video game. That's one of the best things that has going for it, but Gotham Knights is not perfect.

I think the biggest downfall of this game and not makes it worth \$70, it's not a Batman game. You're not getting to play with Batman and his sidekicks. This story is about the rescue of Batman and Bruce Wayne. Yes, this is a bit of a spoiler and I won't go into detail. But you don't get to play as Batman and let's face it, he's the character you really want to play with. That doesn't mean Nightwing, Batgirl, the Red Hood, and Tim Drake's Robin aren't fun to play with, they're just not as fun as the main character. I did very much like the story because we don't get a lot of stories that center around the Court of Owls. Most Batman story center around his arch nemesis, the Joker so this is a bit of a departure and exploring more of the criminal underworld that isn't necessarily the typical

criminal underworld with characters who were trained by Batman. But like I said, all we really want is to play another Batman game. Is the Miles Morales Spider-Man game really better than its predecessor, no, but it can be just as fun, and I think that's what Gotham Knights really is. To me, it's playing a video game as if I were playing the Titans, just like the HBO Max show that focuses on other superheroes besides Batman. He's a minor character in this series. But despite the story, one of the biggest things the game does have going for it is the multiplayer as facts. Getting to play a superhero game as a squad where you get to pick one of the four characters and play on a team to patrol Gotham City. That's fine or a couch co-op mode where two people can play together. Superhero games aren't going anywhere. As long as there are superheroes, there will always be video games where we can play these characters, but some characters are just not as fun as others.

In the end, Gotham Knights is a fun game but not worth the full price. I see this as a game that would be great for Xbox Game Pass or the new PlayStation Now. He will never truly be as great as the Arkham trilogy and those games

have a lot of replay value. I recently went back and played them this past year. They still hold up. But I've never gotten to play a Batman game where I could play a couch co-op with a friend or my nephew. That's a great mode for fathers and sons who want to play the same game together. And this is a game that looks absolutely amazing for the next generation of consoles. It even looks better than the remastered versions of the Arkham trilogy. It also plays better so there's a lot to like about Gotham Knights, but it isn't the game of the year and it's not worth spending \$70 on it when we all just want to play is another Batman game. I do recommend it, but wait until it goes on sale or it ends up on a subscription service. It's a fun game even if you never go back to it. However, the multiplayer has a lot of potential and maybe that's where we'll get some really good DLC and find another multiplayer game that we can play with our squad because patrolling the streets of Gotham with your friends is always better than playing alone!

Final Grade: 7 /10 (Okay)



 PS5™

PlayStation®5



AVAILABLE IN STORES!

GameStop
POWER TO THE PLAYERS®

**BEST
BUY**™ 

Walmart 



TARGET®

amazon 

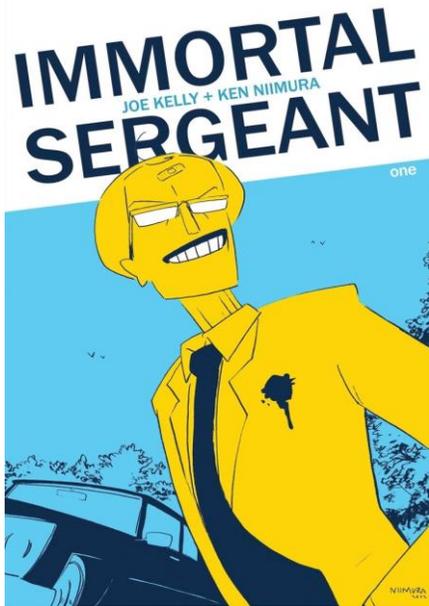


**THE TASTE WILL
ELECTRIFY YOU.**



COMIC BOOK NEWS

“IMMORTAL SERGEANT:” AWARD WINNING *I KILL GIANTS* TEAM RETURNS IN JANUARY 2023 WITH NEW SERIES



Award-winning *I Kill Giants* storytellers Joe Kelly (*Deadpool*, *Savage Spider-Man*) and Ken Niimura (Eisner Award winning *Umami*) return to yank on readers’ heartstrings with the upcoming *Immortal Sergeant!* This nine issue miniseries is set to launch in January 2023 from Image Comics.

“The story of *Immortal Sergeant* is loosely based on aspects of my life, dramatized and punched up to be much more exciting, but it was emotionally challenging to write,” said Kelly in an [exclusive on the announcement at Comic Book Resources](#). “I knew that Ken was the only person who could bring the book to life with the heart, comedy, and impact I’d hoped to convey, and he knocked it out of the park.”

On the eve of his unwelcome retirement, Jim Sargent (aka “Sarge”) a grizzled, old-school detective, catches a break on a murder case that’s haunted him for decades. Unfortunately, Sarge

must drag his anxiety-riddled adult son, Michael, along for the ride or risk losing the lead forever. Can this dysfunctional duo overcome their own hang-ups, blindspots, and secrets to catch a killer?

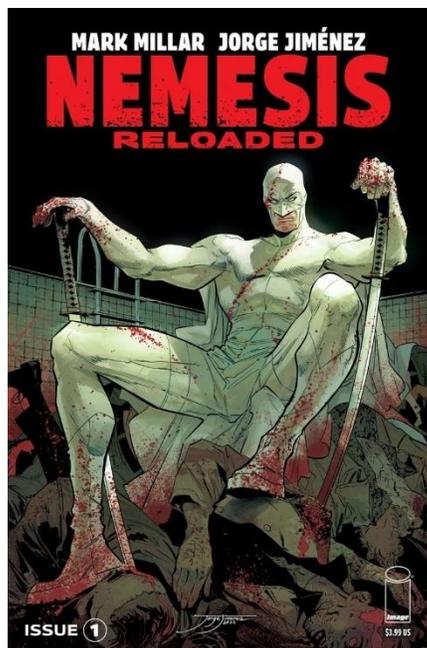
Niimura added: “It’s taken us time—a LOT of time—for Joe and I to figure out the right project to work on together again, but here we are at last! Sarge is a very complicated and nuanced character, at the root of many of Joe’s creations, from *Deadpool* to Barbara from *I Kill Giants*, and I can’t think of a better home than Image Comics for him.”

Immortal Sergeant #1 (Diamond Code NOV220027) will be available at [comic book shops](#) on Wednesday, January 18.

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



“NEMESIS: RELOADED!” MARK MILLAR & JORGE JIMÉNEZ TEAM UP FOR MOST VIOLENT NEMESIS CHAPTER YET IN SEQUEL SERIES – COMING JANUARY 2023



Bestselling creator Mark Millar (*The Magic Order*, *Kingsman: The Secret Service*) will team with Jorge Jiménez (*Batman*) for the upcoming sequel series, *Nemesis: Reloaded*. This five issue miniseries will launch in January 2023 from Image Comics and will join Millar’s growing line of popular comics owned by Netflix.

Nemesis: Reloaded is a star-studded sequel series which will usher in an all-new, blood-drenched chapter for one of

Millar’s most controversial—and popular—supervillain creations.

“*Nemesis* was just a wee four issue series I did over a decade ago with co-creator Steve McNiven and it’s probably the series I’m most asked about returning. It’s been through three studios with talent like Tony Scott and Joe and Matt Carnahan attached to write and direct and even a recent polish by the brilliant Emerald Fennell, but now we’re on the cusp of getting it back to Netflix for a whole new start and I was just really burning up to do another comic book about this character,” said Millar. “It’s one of the most fun things I’ve ever written and we bagged the brilliant, brilliant Jorge Jiménez from *Batman* to do the honours. This is probably the best art from an amazing career. The guy could not be any more hot than he is right now so I’m delighted to be partnered with him. Note: *Nemesis: Reloaded* is one of four huge titles leading into our big summer crossover featuring ALL the Millarworld characters—BIG GAME. BIG GAME will be written by me and drawn by Pepe Larraz, freshly stolen from Marvel Comics and their superstar who was drawing *X-Men*.”

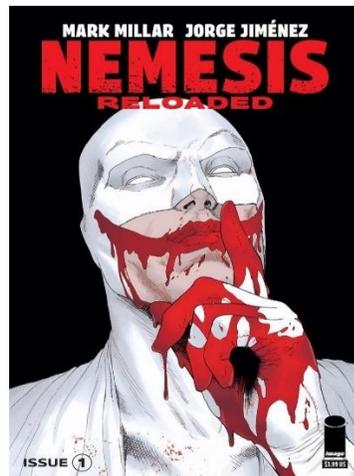
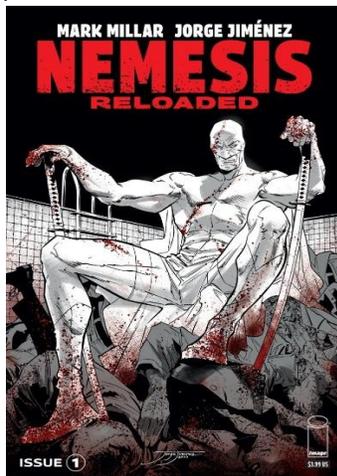
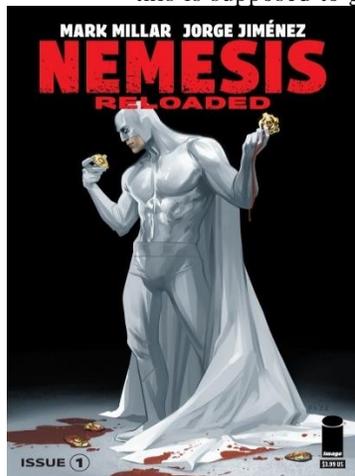
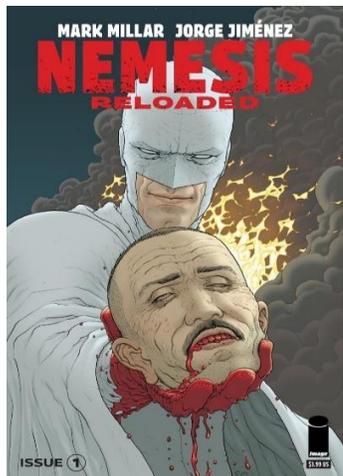
The world’s most evil comic book is back! Who is Nemesis, and why does this eccentric billionaire who dresses up in a mask and cape want to terrorize people instead of helping them? Isn’t that how this is supposed to go?

Jiménez added: “Honestly, drawing this series has been quite an adventure for me! The script is special and very dynamic, it’s written in a way that allows me to explore all the drawing styles that I have been working on in recent years. When you have it in your hands, you will understand what I mean! I knew that working with a great master like Millar would be incredible, but he has exceeded my expectations!! I promise you a ton of action! Yes, *Nemesis*, this bastard has a plan, and you can’t miss it!”

Nemesis: Reloaded #1 will be available at comic book shops on Wednesday, January 11:

- Cover A by Jorge Jiménez - Diamond Code [NOV220089](#)
- Cover B by Jorge Jiménez B&W variant - Diamond Code [NOV220090](#)
- Cover C by Steve McNiven - Diamond Code [NOV220091](#)
- Cover D by Frank Quitely - Diamond Code [NOV220092](#)
- Cover E by Fiona Staples - Diamond Code [NOV220093](#)
- Cover F blank - Diamond Code [NOV220094](#)

Nemesis: Reloaded will also be available across many digital platforms, including Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, and Google Play.



RADIANT BLACK'S MASSIVE-VERSE EXPANDS WITH YA SERIES INFERNO GIRL RED LAUNCHING IN JANUARY 2023

\$9.99 US / BOOK ONE (PART 1 OF 3) D'URSO / GROOM / MONTI / CAREY
INFERNO GIRL RED



From creators Erica D'urso (*The Mighty Valkyries*) and Mat Groom (*Self/Made, Ultraman*), the saga of the newest Image Comics superhero begins in the upcoming *Inferno Girl Red*, which originated in 2021 as a successful [Kickstarter campaign](#). Now this three issue miniseries is coming to Image and is perfect for a Young Adult/Teen audience and will join *Radiant Black*, *Rogue Sun*, *Radiant Red*, *The Dead Lucky*, *Radiant Pink*, and *C.O.W.L.* in the expanding shared Massive-Verse of superheroes this January.

A new school, new relationships, new possibilities—for any teenager, big moves are both challenging and exciting. But it's something else entirely for Cássia Costa in *Inferno Girl Red*...because an ancient cult and their army of demons has ripped her new home of Apex City out of the universe and cast it into darkness! To have any hope of saving it, Cássia must survive the worst night of her life, embrace a secret legacy, and find the courage to fight when

all seems lost—as the blazing light of hope in the dark, Inferno Girl Red! “This book is about Cássia deciding who she’s going to become, in a dark and uncertain world. And it parallels a question we’ve been asking ourselves as creators: what are superhero comics going to become?” said Groom in [an exclusive on the announcement at io9](#). “What should they become? *Inferno Girl Red* is the next stage of the Massive-Verse’s urgent, electric and heartfelt response to that.”

D'urso added further detail: “More than a superhero story, it was important to me that the environments and the emotions of the characters were real to those who will read Cassia's story. Because *IGR* mainly tells of the need to believe even in what does not seem tangible to us, whether it is the trust that someone feels for us or a simple magical bracelet fallen from the sky.” “In *Inferno Girl Red*, teamwork is essential—both in the story and amongst us creators,” said colorist Igor Monti. “Internal and external conflicts are easier to overcome if there are people we can trust to help us unlock our true power. Working on this book, I learned what Cássia does in the story—all it takes is a spark of hope to unleash that power.”

Kyle Higgins & Marcelo Costa’s breakout hit *Radiant Black* took superhero storytelling to new heights when it launched in 2021—but *Radiant Black* isn’t the only character inhabiting the growing Massive-Verse. Each character has a different story to tell, different adversaries to face... and they each occupy a very different corner of this shared superhero universe. Now’s the time to get into the Massive-Verse. Higgins added: “When Mat first pitched me *Inferno Girl Red*, long before *Radiant Black* was on stands, it was the quickest ‘Yes’ of all time. From the beginning, this was a project that I wanted

to do whatever I could to help make real—I could not be more proud of the book that Mat, Erica, Igor, Becca, For The People and Michael have built. This is a bold, striking debut from a creative team that I think a whole lot of people are going to fall in love with.”

Inferno Girl Red #1 will be available at [comic book shops](#) on Wednesday, January 25:

- Cover A by Erica D’urso & Igor Monti - Diamond Code [NOV220038](#)
- Cover B by Francesco Manna - Diamond Code [NOV220039](#)
- Cover C by Nicole Goux - Diamond Code [NOV220040](#)
- Cover D (1:10) by Nicola Scott & Annette Kwok - Diamond Code [NOV220041](#)
- Cover E (1:25) by Eleonora Carlini - Diamond Code [NOV220042](#)
- Cover F (1:50) by Marcelo Costa & Erica D’urso - Diamond Code [NOV220043](#)

Inferno Girl Red will also be available for purchase across many digital platforms, including Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, and Google Play.

Also available in the [Massive-Verse](#):

- *Radiant Black* by Kyle Higgins & Marcelo Costa
- *Rogue Sun* by Ryan Parrott & Abel
- *Radiant Red* by Cherish Chen, David Lafuente & Miquel Muerto
- *The Dead Lucky* by Melissa Flores & French Carlomagno
- *Radiant Pink* by Meghan Camarena, Melissa Flores, & Emma Kubert
- *C.O.W.L.* by Kyle Higgins, Alec Siegel & Rod Reis



'DARK RIDE' JOSHUA WILLIAMSON & ANDREI BRESSAN'S IS AN INSTANT SELLOUT AT COMIC BOOK SHOP

The First Issue of the New Amusement Park Horror Series Will Return for Second Printing



Skybound announced today that *Dark Ride* #1, the debut issue of the buzzed about new horror comic book series from the iconic *Birthingright* team of Joshua Williamson (*Batman*, *Dark Crisis*) and Andrei Bressan (*Justice League Incarnate*) has sold out at comic book shops and will return with a second printing on November 9, 2022. "We were so excited to welcome readers into Devil Land and the world of horror that Joshua and Andrei have unleashed on this theme park, and it looks like the Dante family and their beloved minions have found their fans," said series editor Amanda

LaFranco. "We're thrilled that DARK RIDE has connected with readers and are excited to show off this second printing cover featuring favorite park mascot Danny D. Evil at his most maniacal. We have so many more scares, demons, and devils coming your way!"

Featuring a brand-new second printing variant cover by Bressan and series colorist Adriano Lucas, *Dark Ride* #1 kicks off a thrilling plunge into murder, mayhem, and sinister family secrets in this all-new original series. Devil Land has been the world's premiere horror-themed amusement park for over 50 years, home to the scariest ride ever created – The Devil's Due. But when lifelong fan Owen Seasons begins his first day on the job, he will discover the true horrors happening behind the scenes, the truth about the park's reclusive creator Arthur Dante and that the job of his dreams might just be a living nightmare.

The *Dark Ride* #1 **Second Printing Variant (Diamond Code AUG228502)** will be available at [comic book shops](#) and digital platforms including Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, comiXology, and Google Play on Wednesday, November 9, 2022.

ABOUT SKYBOUND ENTERTAINMENT

Established in 2010, Skybound is a multiplatform content company that works closely with creators and their intellectual properties to create cool stuff and deliver one-of-a-kind experiences to fans. Skybound extends their stories

across platforms including comics, television, film, video games, tabletop, books, digital content, audio programming, and beyond. The company is home to critically-acclaimed global franchises including *The Walking Dead*, *Invincible*, *Superfight*, and hit new podcast series *Impact Winter*.

Led by Skybound Entertainment co-founder Robert Kirkman, Skybound Comics is an award-winning imprint of Image Comics and promotes a shared vision to collaborate with top and emerging talent across the comics industry. The Skybound publishing slate includes acclaimed series such as *The Walking Dead*, *Invincible*, *Ultramega*, *Stillwater*, *Fire Power*, and *Excellence*, while also delivering powerful licensed comics, including a partnership with LEGO Books. It is also home to Skybound Comet, a new original graphic novel imprint aimed at Young Adult and Middle Grade audiences, launching in June 2022 with *Clementine Book One*, by award-winning writer/artist Tillie Walden and set in the world of *The Walking Dead*. Skybound has seen numerous comics series adapted for the screen, including *The Walking Dead*, *Invincible*, *Super Dinosaur* and *Outcast*, with more projects in development.

For the most up to date information on Skybound, please visit the company on Twitter ([@Skybound](#)), YouTube ([Skybound](#)), Facebook ([@SkyboundEntertainment](#)), Instagram ([@skyboundent](#)), and at www.skybound.com.



“Riddler: Year One” By Paul Dano & More Planned for Batman in 2023



Riddler actor Paul Dano (*The Batman*) as co-writer for *Riddler: Year One* revealed more about his comic series at this year's NYCC, as one of the ongoing plans for Batman in 2023. DC made some explosive announcements pertaining to The Dark Knight at New York Comic Con 2022. The world of Batman will be expanding in 2023 with two new series, as well as new talent on *Detective Comics*, and the Riddler miniseries written by Paul Dano, which

starts in November 2022. As announced back in [March](#), as part of DC's popular Black Label series, *Riddler: Year One* will delve back into the world of Matt Reeves' *The Batman* film, focusing on the backstory of Edward Nashton, aka The Riddler. Fleshing out the creative team besides Dano will be co-writer Ben Abernathy – who also was the master of ceremonies for the DC panel – with art by Stevan Subic, handpicked by Dano himself. With this series, Subic makes his U.S. comics debut. The six-issue arc will follow Edward Nashton's life and reveal what led this Forensic Accountant to become the dangerous arch-criminal hellbent on avenging his terrible childhood.

Riddler: Year One and What Else?

Tim Drake's new title, *Tim Drake: Robin*, will also continue next year. After his last series concluded in 1998. Written by Meghan Fitzmartin (*Batman: Urban Legends*, *DC PRIDE*) and penciled by artist Riley Rossmo, Tim has moved out of Wayne Manor and into the Gotham Marina. The book will also continue explore Tim's relationship with Bernard, as Tim recently came out as bisexual after a lengthy relationship with Stephanie Brown aka Spoiler. As the third Boy Wonder, Tim was the first Robin to receive his own series, spinning out of the events of "Knightfall" in 1993.

The panel then focused on the new *Batman Incorporated* series, its new creative team consisting of Ed Brisson (*Deathstroke*,

Inc., *Batman & Robin Eternal*) and John Timms (*Superman: Son of Kal-El*, *Superman*). The international team of Batmen will continue to expand its roster with recent characters Ghost-Maker and Clownhunter. During the panel, Brisson expressed how much Grant Morrison's initial run on the team will continue to be an influence on the stories going forward. Batman Incorporated emerged in pre-Flashpoint DC after Bruce Wayne had revealed to the world he was the financial backer behind The Dark Knight's technology, then unveiled a formal plan to expand Batman's war on crime internationally. The book then focused on Batman recruiting different variants on his Dark Knight persona across the globe. In recent months, post-Joker War, Bruce can no longer fund the team as he is no longer a billionaire, so he has asked Ghost-Maker to take control.

As to the book that started it all for Bat-fans, current *Detective Comics* team Ram V and Rafael Albuquerque revealed their plan to take the Caped Crusader to bizarre places, as well as reveal more of the history of Gotham. They also intend to involve Two-Face, but not as the main villain of their plot. As a bonus, fans got to go home with a free copy of July's *Detective Comics* #1062.

The final announcement of the panel revealed that *Batman* artist Jorge Jimenez will be stepping away from the book in January. To that end, issues #131 to #134 will be illustrated by artist Mike Hawthorne, going forward. There are some exciting plans for Batman in 2023!

The Sentient Planets of the Marvel Universe

The Marvel Universe is filled with some incredibly powerful cosmic entities that take the form of celestial bodies, specifically planets or moons. Many of these beings are sentient and capable of making complex and interesting decisions. With the Great Machine playing a key role in *ETERNALS* (2021) and the *A.X.E.: JUDGMENT DAY* (2022) event, here's a breakdown of a few key sentient celestial bodies who live in the main Marvel Universe.

EARTH, AKA THE MACHINE
Created by [Neil Gaiman](#) and [John Romita Jr.](#), the Machine, AKA the Great Machine, debuted in *ETERNALS* (2006) #3. The Machine is a key part of *Eternals* lore, controlling – among other things – their resurrection process. It is also tied to the group's mission to correct excess deviation. The Great Machine considers itself to be Earth and, essentially, the sum of the planet's various smaller machines. There are still several major mysteries surrounding the Machine to this day.



EGO, THE LIVING PLANET

Likely the most well-known sentient world in the Marvel Universe, [Ego, the Living Planet](#) debuted in *THOR* (1966) #132 by [Stan Lee](#) and [Jack Kirby](#). Ego, a

giant planet with human facial features, has played a key role in numerous stories over the decades. Before becoming a planet, Ego was a scientist named Ergos. In an attempt to stop a catastrophic experiment by the Stranger, Ergos merged himself with the living things that the Stranger destroyed and became Ego the Living Planet.



ALTER-EGO

Alter-Ego debuted in ASTONISHING THOR (2011) #2 by Rob Rodi and Mike Choi. Created by the Stranger around the same time as Ego, Alter-Ego ended up in the possession of the Collector for a time, with the Stranger intending to one day pit the planet against Ego to see who was stronger. When they eventually fought, Ego came out on top, and Alter-Ego became a moon in his brother's orbit.



ILLA

The daughter of Ego, Illa debuted in MOON GIRL AND DEVIL DINOSAUR (2015) #19 by Brandon Montclare and Natacha Bustos. Lunella Lafayette, AKA Moon Girl, encountered Illa while investigating a distress call from deep space and found her orbiting – though unable to interact with – her father due to positioning. Lunella helped Illa work through her abandonment issues and, by the end of the arc, reconcile with Ego.



ID, THE SELFISH MOON

Created by Daniel Way and Carlo Barberi, Id, the Selfish Moon debuted in DEADPOOL (2008) #33. Id formed in Ego's shadow shortly after the creation of the universe and eventually became fixated on destroying planets so he could inhale their essences. Wade Wilson, AKA Deadpool, destroyed Id shortly after the moon's introduction.



SUPER-EGO

Created by Tom DeFalco, Super-Ego debuted in MIGHTY THOR (1966) #449. A sort of massive bio-verse, Super-Ego attempted to absorb and devour Ego, but was destroyed by the Celestials in the process.



EUPHORIA, THE WISHING WORLD

Created by Dan Slott and Mike Allred, Euphoria, the Wishing World debuted in SILVER SURFER (2014) #11. Euphoria, the Wishing World was a living planet that attempted to make its inhabitants happy all

the time. The planet, which possessed one of the Shards of Night, eventually served as the battleground for a fight between Earth's Mightiest Heroes and Nyx during AVENGERS NO ROAD HOME (2019). Unfortunately, it appears Euphoria did not survive this confrontation.



ENTEA

The daughter of Euphoria, Entea was created by Jim Zub and Lan Medina. The character debuted in BLACK PANTHER AND THE AGENTS OF WAKANDA (2019) #3 and tangled with that book's titular team. Technically speaking, Entea is more of a plantlike structure merged with a moon, functionally making her a sentient planetoid, even if the world itself isn't alive.



XORR, THE GOD JEWEL

Created by Gerry Conway and Sal Buscema, Xorr, the God Jewel debuted in THOR (1966) #214. This particular sentient celestial body came to be when a shell – which was built around Xorr to protect against a supernova – contracted and became a jewel. This jewel became sentient and, eventually, fought Thor and

his allies. Xorr shattered after it consumed a sun that went nova.



UNKNOWN LIVING PLANET

There's not a lot we know about the living planet introduced in ORIGINAL SIN (2014) #3 – even its name! However, it's one of several major threats to humanity taken down by Nick Fury during his time as the Man on the Wall. Fury killed this planet with gamma-irradiated bullets.



KLYNTAR

Klyntar, the Planet of the Symbiotes debuted in SPIDER-MAN FAMILY (2007) #1 by Sean McKeever and Terrell Bobbett. Knurl originally built the planet to serve as his throne world. Klyntar itself is part of the greater symbiote hive mind, which means he is made from that entity. In ABSOLUTE CARNAGE (2019) #5, Knurl destroyed the planet.



THE SENTIENT PLANETS OF SECRET WARPS

During INFINITY WARS (2018) event, Gamora used the Infinity Stones to fold reality in on itself, which combined many classic characters.

In SECRET WARPS: IRON HAMMER ANNUAL (2019) #1, specifically, several heroes took on Doomactego, the Stranger Planet, which is itself a combination of Ego, the Stranger Planet, and Doctor Doomactus (Doctor Doom and Galactus). Doomactego, the Stranger Planet later merges with Mephichzarrko-Neg (Mephichthon, Tomorrow Man, and Sise-Neg) to create Mephzoomko-Neg. All three were created by Al Ewing and Carlos Gomez.



Don't miss the Machine's ultimate judgement in A.X.E.: JUDGMENT DAY (2022) #6, on sale **October 26!**

You can grab these comics and more digitally or at your favorite local comic book shop. Be sure to ask your local shop about their current business policies to observe social distancing or other services they may offer, including holding or creating pull lists, curbside pick-ups, special deliveries, and other options to accommodate. Find and support your local comic book shop at ComicShopLocator.com or by visiting Marvel.com/LoveComicShops.

For digital comics, all purchases in the Marvel Comics app can be read on iPhone®, iPad® and select Android™ devices! Our smart-panelling feature provides an intuitive reader experience, ideal for all types of mobile device and tablet users! Download the app on iOS and Android now!

FREE ADVERTISING
Reach Over 12,000,000 Readers



BLACK ADAM

ONLY IN THEATERS
OCTOBER 21

NEW LINE CINEMA



PG-13
PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED
SOME MATERIAL MAY BE INAPPROPRIATE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 13

Dolby Cinema EXPERIENCE IT IN IMAX

© & TM DC

WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT

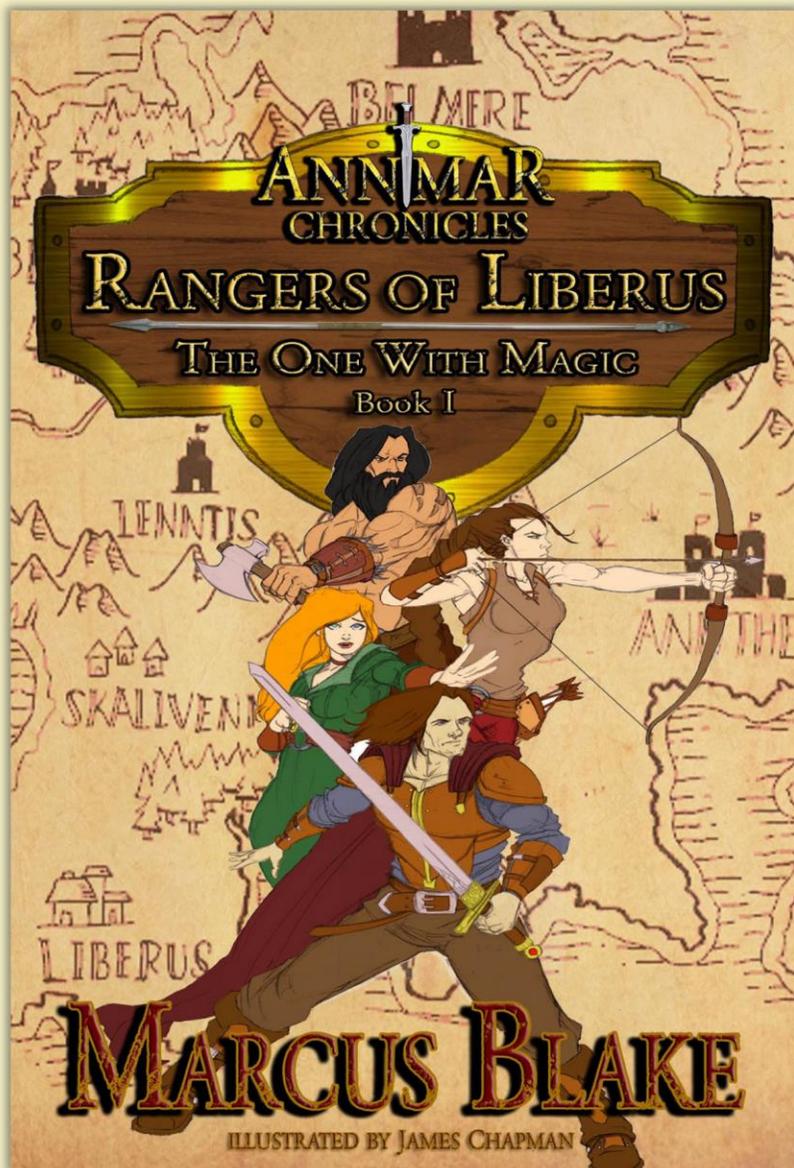
WARNER BROS.

GOTHAM KNIGHTS



IN STORES NOW!

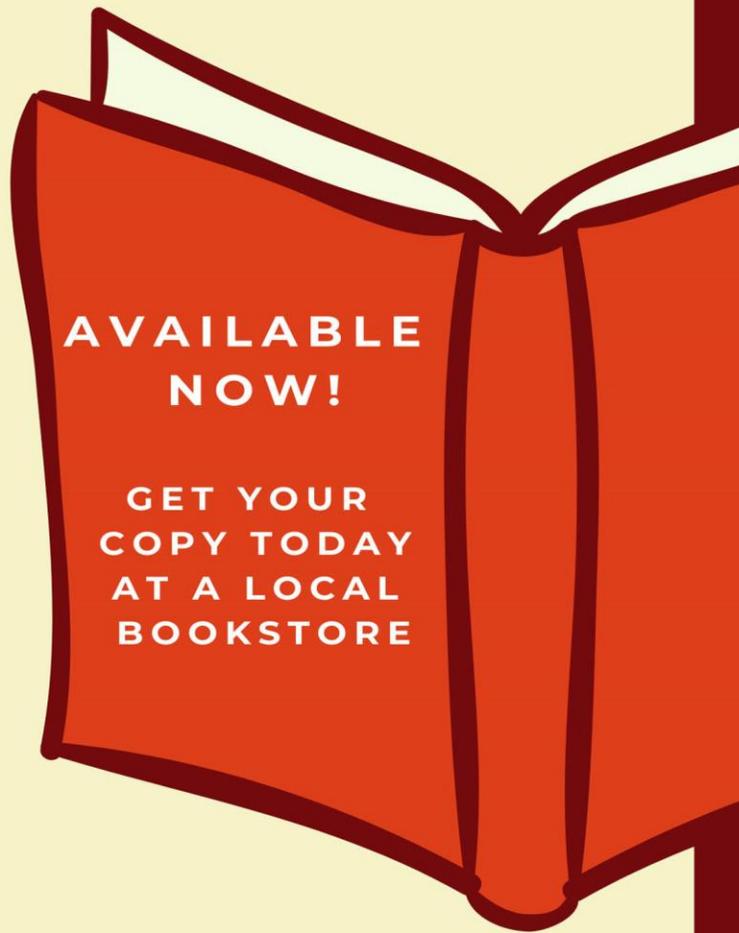
**THE NEXT GREAT FANTASY BOOK!
BY MARCUS BLAKE**



If You Like "Game of Thrones"
If You Like "Lord of the Rings"
Then check out
"The Annmar Chronicles"

Start Your Adventure in
a new Fantasy World!

Start with the
Rangers of Liberus Series!



AVAILABLE
NOW!

GET YOUR
COPY TODAY
AT A LOCAL
BOOKSTORE

WWW.ANNMARCHRONICLES.COM
WWW.MARCUSBLAKE.NET

THE 1ST BOOK IN
THE ANNMAR CHRONICLES

BARNES & NOBLE **amazon**

TARGET

BAM!
BOOKS-A-MILLION

POWELL'S
CITY of BOOKS



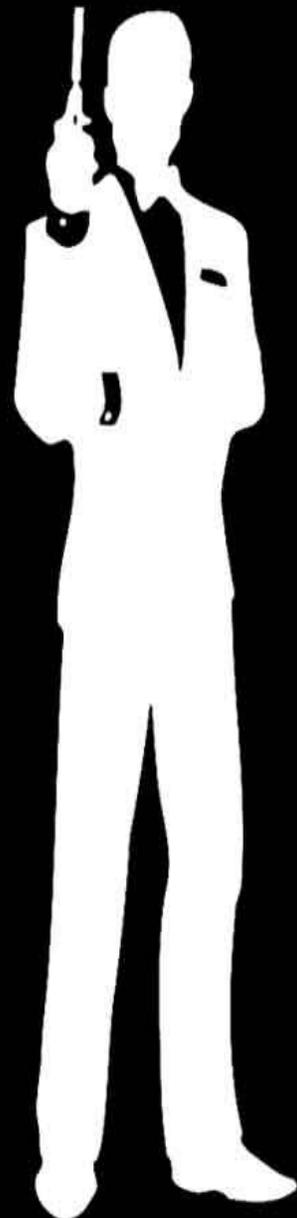
thriftbooks

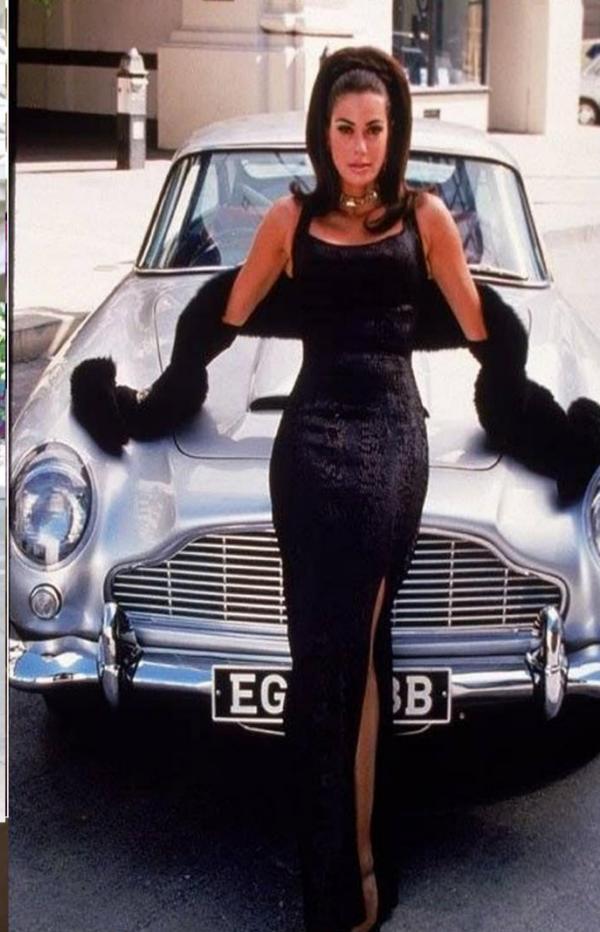
HALF PRICE **BOOKS**

ANNMAR
CHRONICLES

Cosplay

007







Cash App



No Need of Cash



SCAN
QR Code



Accepted
in Local Store





Reel Newz

THAT'S NEWS WITH A "Z" .COM

WWW.REELNEWZ.COM

Music News



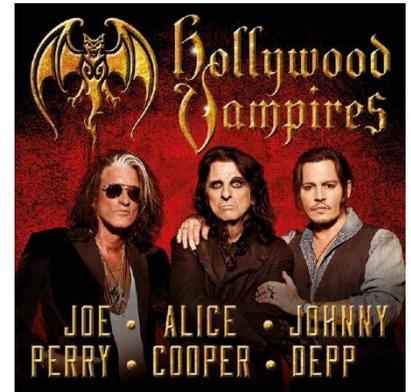
Ed Sheeran Working on Tell-All Documentary



Ed Sheeran is currently filming a documentary about his life. During a recent appearance on The Breakfast Club radio show, the Thinking Out Loud singer revealed that a camera crew has been following him on his Mathematics Tour for a documentary and he's trying to weigh up what should be included in the project.

"We are shooting a documentary at the minute around my life and there was a big conversation about what do we include," he shared. "As long as it's honest and it links in with a theme of something that's in a song - there is no point in putting something in if it's detrimental to my life. "It's a very fine line, that's why I live where I live (in Suffolk) and I don't live in Los Angeles. My life as a celebrity is switched on when it needs to be switched on... but when I go home I am a friend, a dad, a husband, a son. You can't bring celebrity baggage into a pub in Suffolk, you just have to be yourself."

Ed is married to his childhood sweetheart Cherry Seaborn and they have two daughters - Lyra, two, and Jupiter, five months. During the interview, the 31-year-old explained that his family travels around the world with him on tour. "They come with me, I have been on tour for the entire year," he said. "We have been renting houses, so we lived in Dublin for a week, Limerick for a week, Frankfurt for a week. It is fun." Ed is currently on a break from his world tour, which will resume in February 2023 in New Zealand.



The Hollywood Vampires are to tour the UK next summer. The rock supergroup - which consists of Hollywood actor Johnny Depp, Alice Cooper and Aerosmith rocker Joe Perry - are to play shows across Britain in 2023 after being forced to cancel dates in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Hollywood Vampires sees the trio, accompanied by guitarist Tommy Henriksen, play songs in tribute to the "great lost heroes of music" and perform original material from their two album releases. Discussing the new tour, Alice said: "Well, it's already been three years since the Vampires have toured because of Covid.

"Also, Johnny has his movies, Joe's in Aerosmith and I'm in Alice Cooper, so we have to look at that whole thing and see when we can all get a month or two off where we can go out and tour. And, we are going to be doing that, next summer coming up, 2023. "I can't wait to get back with the guys, I really love being in that band. My band is great and wonderful, but playing with the Vampires is an entirely different situation." The 'School's Out' rocker continued: "I don't necessarily do any theatrics at all, I'm just the lead singer, in a band, and the band just happens to be one of the best bands around! It'll be great to see Johnny and Joe and Buck and Chris and all the guys.

1,000 Business Cards

1ST STOP PRINT
Text Us: (469) 708-9954
Call Us: (888) 901-4665

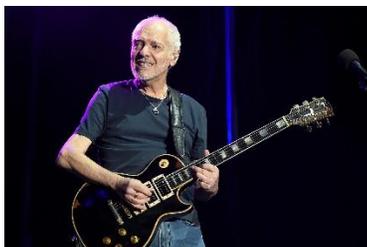
\$40

14 PT. Cardstock
2 x 3.5 Inches
Glossy or Matte Finish

The Hollywood Vampires to Tour the UK in Summer 2023

"We'll be rocking these places, especially the UK, I can't wait to get to the UK! Lock your doors, put garlic all around, because the Vampires are coming." Johnny has returned to the world of music following his high-profile court battle with ex-wife Amber Heard earlier this year. As he awaited the verdict on his US defamation case - which ultimately went in his favour - the 'Pirates of the Caribbean' actor performed shows in the UK with rock legend Jeff Beck. The pair then released a joint album, called '18', which featured a number of classic rock covers as well as two original tracks.

Peter Frampton is Recording His 19th Album



Peter Frampton is recording his 19th studio album. The 72-year-old rock star - who is best known for hits such as 'Show Me the Way, 'Baby, I Love Your Way,' 'Do You Feel Like We Do' and 'I'm in You' - released his first record 50 years ago and is now creating an album full of self-penned tracks. He said: "I'm recording brand-new material right now. No co-writers, all my own songs and I'm throwing out a lot already because every track has got to be a winner. I'm going nowhere Frampton has gone before!"

Meanwhile, the 'Money' hitmaker - who released his 18th album 'Frampton Forgets the Words' just last year - also added that becoming a teen idol in the 1960s was a "big surprise" to him and joked that his "good looks" got him into "trouble." He told Uncut magazine: "Your career has been marked by unexpected turns ever since your teens, when you were a brilliant guitar player who got shoved in front of the mic in The Herd in

1967... Yeah, becoming a teen idol was as big a surprise to me as the other guys. My guitar playing did good for me, but my looks got me into trouble - both I thank my parents for, ha! But through all the ups and downs you have to pick yourself up and move on." The British-born star now lives in Nashville and explained that his mantra was the reason behind his determination to return to the UK and Europe for a final tour but teased that the "farewell" nature of the show - which is due to conclude at the Royal Albert Hall in London on 8 November - may become "indefinite" if things go well.

He said: I don't ever give up on things. That's why I didn't give up on the farewell tour coming to the UK and Europe. It was a must for me. And if it goes well, I might be able to go to other places, too. So it's an indefinite farewell, really."

Motley Crue and Def Leppard Announce Joint UK Tour 2023



Motley Crue and Def Leppard have announced a joint UK and Ireland tour for summer 2023. The rock heavyweights - who toured North America earlier this year - have released new dates for their 'The World Tour', which will see the two legendary bands visit London, Glasgow and Sheffield later this year. Motley Crue said in a statement: "We had an incredible time playing 'The Stadium Tour' in North America this summer and we truly can't wait to take the show around the globe with 'The World Tour' in 2023.

"Crueheads in Latin America and Europe: Get ready! We're coming for you next and can't wait to finally see all of you out there again next year!" Def Leppard's Joe Elliott said: "After finally getting back on the road and having a monumental summer tour in the US and Canada this year, we're beyond thrilled to be bringing this massive stadium tour to major cities all over the world, and kicking off Europe in Sheffield where it all started for us 45 years ago.

"We're looking forward to seeing you out there, somewhere soon!" The two bands are also heading to Latin America in February and March, which will see them head to Mexico's Mexico City and Monterrey as well as Colombian capital Bogota. What's more, the pair will then travel to Lima in Peru, Chile's Santiago, before hitting three Brazilian cities, Sao Paulo, Curitiba, and Porto Alegre. Two months later, they will head to Sheffield's Bramall Lane for the first of their UK dates.

Motley Crue and Def Leppard's World Tour 2023:

- February 18 - Mexico City, Mexico - Foro Sol
- February 21 - Monterrey, Mexico - Estadio Banorte
- February 25 - Bogota, Colombia - Parque Simon Bolivar
- February 28 - Lima, Peru - Estadio Nacional
- March 03 - Santiago, Chile - Estadio Bicentenario de La Florida
- March 07 - Sao Paulo, Brazil - Allianz Parque
- March 09 - Curitiba, Brazil - Estádio Couto Pereira
- March 11 - Porto Alegre, Brazil - Arena do Grêmio
- May 22 - Sheffield, UK - Bramall Lane
- May 25 - Mönchengladbach, Germany - SparkassenPark
- May 27 - Munich, Germany - Koenigsplatz
- May 29 - Budapest, Hungary - MVM Dome
- May 31 - Krakow, Poland - Tauron Arena Kraków
- June 02 - Prague, Czech Republic - Prague Rocks *
- June 03 - Hannover, Germany - Expo Plaza
- June 07 - Solvesborg, Sweden - Sweden Rock Festival *
- June 09 - Hyvinkää, Finland - RockFest *
- June 11 - Trondheim, Norway - Trondheim Rocks *
- June 14 - Copenhagen, Denmark - Copenhell *
- June 18 - Dessel, Belgium - Graspop Metal Meeting *
- June 20 - Milan, Italy - Ippodromo SNAI San Siro
- June 23 - Lisbon, Portugal - Passeio Marítimo de Alges
- June 24 - Rivas-Vaciamadrid, Spain - Auditorio Miguel Ríos
- June 27 - Thun, Switzerland - Stockhorn Arena
- July 01 - London, UK - Wembley Stadium
- July 02 - Lytham, UK - Lytham Festival *
- July 04 - Dublin, Ireland - Marlay Park
- July 06 - Glasgow, UK - Hampden Park



20 million people already

love Spotify Premium

Now's the time to join:
3 months for only \$0.99!

[JOIN NOW](#)

Purple Ruminations

MUSINGS ABOUT "PRINCE" BY CHAD WOMACK

"Don't Worry.....I Won't Hurt U" October 1982



It seems like only yesterday for some, and a lifetime to others. President Ronald Reagan declares WAR on Drugs, and coincidentally John Delorean is arrested on cocaine charges, Stallone unleashes "First Blood" in theaters, introducing the world to the character of Rambo, the first commercially available CD player is released in Japan, and the musical "Cats" opens on Broadway. But we're not here to wax poetic about Rum-Tum-Tigger or Reaganomics, because on October 27th 1982, the extraordinary musician from Minneapolis Minnesota released his 5th album on the world with about as much flash and flair as his followers had come to expect. After establishing his unique sound and style that continued to evolve with every release, Prince followed up his successful "Controversy" album and

subsequent tour with an incredibly ambitious double album entitled "1999" that quickly silenced his detractors and naysayers by delivering what was easily his most approachable and radio friendly project to date.

"1999" was an album that most music industry talking heads and insiders a shot in hell of succeeding. In their eyes, Prince was still a quirky oddball with more talent than success. Where does THIS guy get off thinking he has the stones to release a DOUBLE album without a bona fide smash hit under his belt already. Little did they know, "1999" was going to be that success, thanks in large part to a little fledgling operation known as MTV. Prince had been making promo videos for his singles ever since "I Wanna Be Your Lover" in 1979, none of them ever saw the light of day on the newly launched cable channel since it hit the airwaves in August of 1981. Buoyed by the exposure that MTV gave the album and its respective singles, "1999" launched Prince headlong into the mainstream, landing him his first top 10 single with "Little Red Corvette" and pushing album sales in excess of 4 million copies, cementing Prince's status as a true superstar, not just in Soul/R&B but in Pop and Rock as well, ushering in a brand-new era in his career.



This is the album that most would consider MADE them a Prince fan and established the image of his iconic silhouette draped in a shimmering purple trench coat, gripping his Hohner Telecaster like a samurai sword with lavender gloved hands, with a defiant sneer on his face. He looked like an immaculately coiffed gang leader about to lead a musical revolt...or more accurately...a Revolution. The world had no idea what Prince had just unleashed, and he was poised to take all of us along for one HELL of a wild ride that would later sweep across the country on his longest running tour to date, stopping in close to 80 cities. "1999" helped establish Prince as a household name in the pop culture mainstream, and an absolute darling to critics and fans alike, eagerly anticipating his next move. If they only knew...

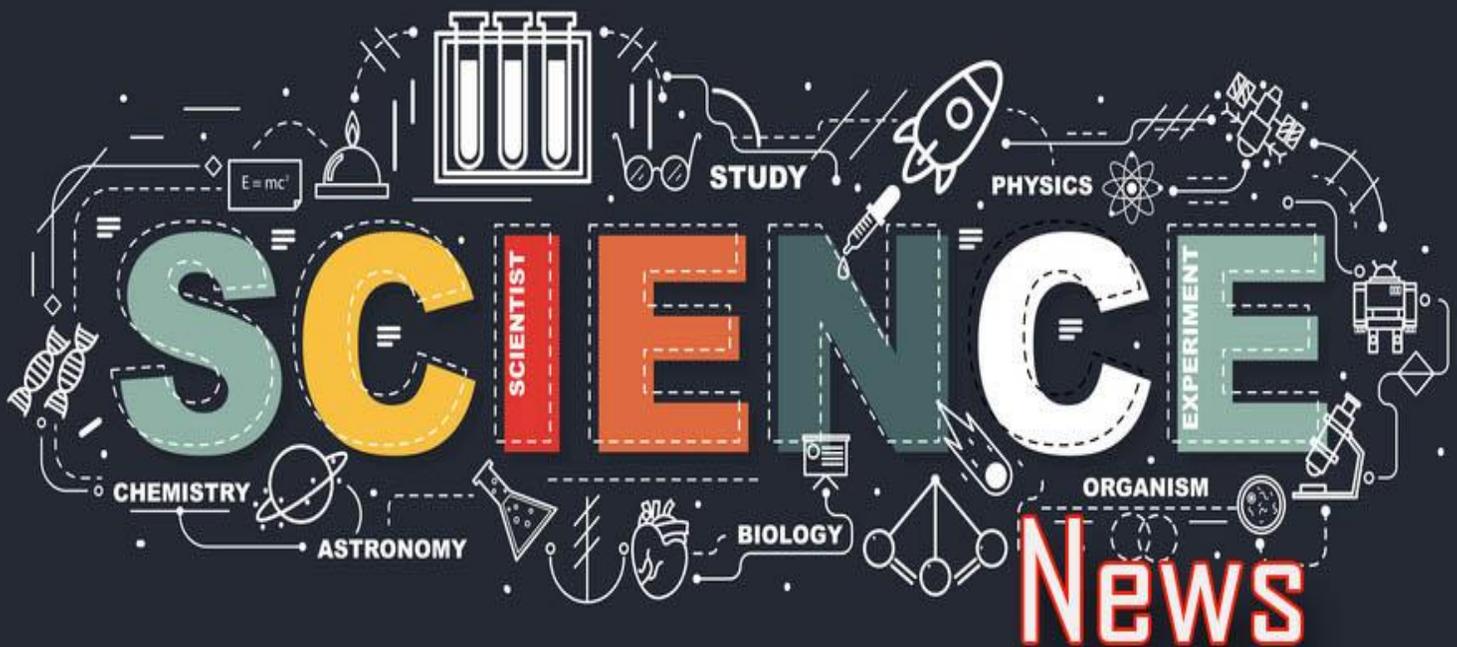
Wait....are those rain clouds on the horizon???

"I Only Want Have Some Fun"

HBO
max SM



Spotify®



Video Gaming May Be Associated with Better Cognitive Performance in Children, Study Suggests



A study of nearly 2,000 children found that those who reported playing video games for three hours per day or more performed better on cognitive skills tests involving impulse control and working memory compared to children who

had never played video games. Published today in *JAMA Network Open*, this study analyzed data from the ongoing Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) Study, which is supported by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and other entities of the National Institutes of Health. "This study adds to our growing understanding of the associations between playing video games and brain development," said NIDA Director Nora Volkow, M.D. "Numerous studies have linked video gaming to behavior and mental health problems. This study suggests that there may also be cognitive benefits associated with this popular pastime, which are worthy of further investigation."

Although a number of studies have investigated the relationship between video gaming and cognitive behavior, the neurobiological mechanisms underlying the associations are not well understood. Only a handful of neuroimaging studies have addressed this topic, and the sample sizes for those studies have been small, with fewer than 80 participants.

To address this research gap, scientists at the University of Vermont, Burlington, analyzed data obtained when children entered the ABCD Study at ages 9 and 10 years old. The research team examined survey, cognitive, and brain imaging data from nearly 2,000 participants from within the bigger study cohort. They separated these children into two groups, those who reported playing no video games at all and those who reported playing video games for three hours per day or more. This threshold was selected as it exceeds the American Academy of Pediatrics screen time guidelines, which recommend that videogaming time be limited to one to two hours per day for older children. For each group, the investigators evaluated the children's performance on two tasks that reflected their ability to control impulsive behavior and to

memorize information, as well as the children's brain activity while performing the tasks.

The researchers found that the children who reported playing video games for three or more hours per day were faster and more accurate on both cognitive tasks than those who never played. They also observed that the differences in cognitive function observed between the two groups was accompanied by differences in brain activity. Functional MRI brain imaging analyses found that children who played video games for three or more hours per day showed higher brain activity in regions of the brain associated with attention and memory than did those who never played. At the same time, those children who played at least three hours of videogames per day showed more brain activity in frontal brain regions that are associated with more cognitively demanding tasks and less brain activity in brain regions related to vision.



**1/2 Cent to 1 Cent
Per word**

Proofreading & Editing

**CALL:
888-901-4665**

TEXT: 469-708-9954



The researchers think these patterns may stem from practicing tasks related to impulse control and memory while playing videogames, which can be cognitively demanding, and that these changes may lead to improved performance on related tasks. Furthermore, the comparatively low activity in visual areas among children who reported playing video games may reflect that this area of the brain may become more efficient at visual processing as a result of repeated practice through video games.

While prior studies have reported associations between video gaming and increases in depression, violence, and aggressive behavior, this study did not find that to be the case. Though children who reported playing video games for three or more hours per day did tend to report higher mental health and behavioral issues compared to children who played no video games, the researchers found that this association was not statistically significant, meaning that the authors could not rule out whether this trend reflected a true association or chance. They note that this will be an important measure to continue to track and understand as the children mature.

Further, the researchers stress that this cross-sectional study does not allow for cause-and-effect analyses, and that it could be that children who are good at these types of cognitive tasks may choose to play video games. The authors also emphasize that their findings do not mean that children should spend unlimited time on their computers, mobile phones, or TVs, and that the outcomes likely depend largely on the specific activities children engage in. For instance, they hypothesize that the specific genre of video games, such as action-adventure, puzzle solving, sports, or shooting games, may have different effects for neurocognitive development, and this level of specificity on the type of video game played was not assessed by the study.

"While we cannot say whether playing video games regularly caused superior neurocognitive performance, it is an encouraging finding, and one that we must continue to investigate in these children as they transition into adolescence and young adulthood," said Bader Chaarani, Ph.D., assistant professor of psychiatry at the University of Vermont and the lead author on the study. "Many parents today are concerned about the effects of video games on their children's health and development, and as these games continue to proliferate among young people, it is crucial that we better understand both the positive and negative impact that such games may have."

Through the ABCD Study, researchers will be able to conduct similar analyses for the same children over time into early adulthood, to see if changes in video gaming behavior are linked to changes in cognitive skills, brain activity, behavior, and mental health. The longitudinal study design and comprehensive data set will also enable them to better account for various other factors in the children's families and environment that may influence their cognitive and behavioral

development, such as exercise, sleep quality, and other influences.

The ABCD Study, the largest of its kind in the United States, is tracking nearly 12,000 youth as they grow into young adults. Investigators regularly measure participants' brain structure and activity using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and collect psychological, environmental, and cognitive information, as well as biological samples. The goal of the study is to understand the factors that influence brain, cognitive, and social-emotional development, to inform the development of interventions to enhance a young person's life trajectory.

The Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development Study and ABCD Study are registered service marks and trademarks, respectively, of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [Materials](#) provided by NIH/National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Less Than Five Hours' Sleep a Night Linked to Higher Risk of Multiple Diseases



Getting less than five hours of sleep in mid-to-late life could be linked to an increased risk of developing at least two chronic diseases, finds a new study led by UCL researchers. The research, published in *PLOS Medicine*, analyzed the impact of sleep duration on the health of more than 7,000 men and women at the ages of 50, 60 and 70, from the Whitehall II cohort study. Researchers examined the relationship between how long each participant slept for, mortality and whether they had been diagnosed with two or more chronic diseases (multimorbidity) -- such as

heart disease, cancer or diabetes -- over the course of 25 years.

People who reported getting five hours of sleep or less at age 50 were 20% more likely to have been diagnosed with a chronic disease and 40% more likely to be diagnosed with two or more chronic diseases over 25 years, compared to people who slept for up to seven hours. Additionally, sleeping for five hours or less at the age of 50, 60, and 70 was linked to a 30% to 40% increased risk of multimorbidity when compared with those who slept for up to seven hours. Researchers also found that sleep duration of five hours or less at age 50 was associated with 25% increased risk of mortality over the 25 years of follow-up -- which can mainly be explained by the fact that short sleep duration increases the risk of chronic disease(s) that in turn increase the risk of death. Lead author, Dr Severine Sabia (UCL Institute of Epidemiology & Health, and Inserm, Université Paris Cité) said: "Multimorbidity is on the rise in high income countries and more than half of older adults now have at least two chronic diseases. This is proving to be a major challenge for public health, as multimorbidity is associated with high healthcare service use, hospitalisations and disability.

An advertisement for retractable banners and vinyl signs. It features a yellow banner with the text "RETRACTABLE BANNER" and a red starburst with "\$120". There are also images of various signs, including one that says "1ST STOP PRINT" and another that says "MLS Goes Mobile". The ad includes contact information: "Text Us: (469) 708-9954" and "Call Us: (888) 901-4665". At the bottom, it specifies "14 OZ. Premium Vinyl 1 Sided - 78 X 33 IN. Glossy or Matte Finish".

"As people get older, their sleep habits and sleep structure change. However, it is recommended to sleep for 7 to 8 hours a night -- as sleep durations above or below this have previously been associated with individual chronic diseases. "Our findings show that short sleep duration is also associated with multimorbidity. "To ensure a better night's sleep, it is important to promote good sleep hygiene, such as making sure the bedroom is quiet, dark and a comfortable temperature before sleeping. It's also advised to remove electronic devices and avoid large meals before bedtime. Physical activity and exposure to light during the day might also promote good sleep." As part of the study, researchers also assessed whether sleeping for a long duration, of nine hours or more, affected health outcomes. There was no clear association between long sleep durations at age 50 and multimorbidity in healthy people.

However, if a participant had already been diagnosed with a chronic condition, then long sleep duration was associated with around a 35% increased risk of developing another illness.

Researchers believe this could be due to underlying health conditions impacting sleep. Jo Whitmore, senior cardiac nurse at the British Heart Foundation said: "Getting enough sleep allows your body to rest. There are a host of other ways that poor sleep could increase the risk of heart disease or stroke, including by increasing inflammation and increasing blood pressure. "This research adds to a growing body of research that highlights the importance of getting a good night's sleep." The research was funded by the National Institute on Aging, part of NIH, UK Medical Research Council, the British Heart Foundation and Wellcome.

Study limitations

Researchers used self-reported data on sleep, which is likely to be subject to reporting bias, although using data on 4,000 participants whose sleep was measured via an electronic device confirm the findings. Meanwhile, data on sleep quality was only available for those aged 60 and 70. The Whitehall II study only involves members of the civil service, who were all employed when recruited to the study and likely to be healthier than the general population.

The Most Precise Accounting Yet of Dark Energy and Dark Matter



Astrophysicists have performed a powerful new analysis that places the most precise limits yet on the composition and evolution of the universe. With this analysis, dubbed Pantheon+, cosmologists find themselves at a crossroads. Pantheon+ convincingly finds that the cosmos is composed of about two-thirds dark energy and one-third matter -- mostly in the form of dark matter -- and is expanding at an accelerating pace

over the last several billion years. However, Pantheon+ also cements a major disagreement over the pace of that expansion that has yet to be solved.

By putting prevailing modern cosmological theories, known as the Standard Model of Cosmology, on even firmer evidentiary and statistical footing, Pantheon+ further closes the door on alternative frameworks accounting for dark energy and dark matter. Both are bedrocks of the Standard Model of Cosmology but have yet to be directly detected and rank among the model's biggest mysteries. Following through on the results of Pantheon+, researchers can now pursue more precise observational tests and hone explanations for the ostensible cosmos.

"With these Pantheon+ results, we are able to put the most precise constraints on the dynamics and history of the universe to date," says Dillon Brout, an Einstein Fellow at the Center for Astrophysics | Harvard & Smithsonian. "We've combed over the data and can now say with more confidence than ever before how the universe has evolved over the eons and that the current best theories for dark energy and dark matter hold strong."

Brout is the lead author of a series of papers describing the new Pantheon+ analysis, published jointly today in a special issue of *The Astrophysical Journal*.

Pantheon+ is based on the largest dataset of its kind, comprising more than 1,500 stellar explosions called Type Ia supernovae. These bright blasts occur when white dwarf stars -- remnants of stars like our Sun -- accumulate too much mass and undergo a runaway thermonuclear reaction. Because Type Ia supernovae outshine entire galaxies, the stellar detonations can be glimpsed at distances exceeding 10 billion light years, or back through about three-quarters of the universe's total age. Given that the supernovae blaze with nearly uniform intrinsic brightnesses, scientists can use the explosions' apparent brightness, which diminishes with distance, along with redshift measurements as markers of time and space. That information, in turn, reveals how fast the universe expands during different epochs, which is then used to test theories of the fundamental components of the universe.

The breakthrough discovery in 1998 of the universe's accelerating growth was thanks to a study of Type Ia supernovae in this manner. Scientists attribute the expansion to an invisible energy, therefore monikered dark energy, inherent to the fabric of the universe itself. Subsequent decades of work have continued to compile ever-larger datasets, revealing supernovae across an even wider range of space and time, and Pantheon+ has now brought them together into the most statistically robust analysis to date.

"In many ways, this latest Pantheon+ analysis is a culmination of more than two decades' worth of diligent efforts by observers and theorists

worldwide in deciphering the essence of the cosmos," says Adam Riess, one of the winners of the 2011 Nobel Prize in Physics for the discovery of the accelerating expansion of the universe and the Bloomberg Distinguished Professor at Johns Hopkins University (JHU) and the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, Maryland. Riess is also an alum of Harvard University, holding a PhD in astrophysics.

Brout's own career in cosmology traces back to his undergraduate years at JHU, where he was taught and advised by Riess. There Brout worked with then-PhD-student and Riess-advisee Dan Scolnic, who is now an assistant professor of physics at Duke University and another co-author on the new series of papers.

Several years ago, Scolnic developed the original Pantheon analysis of approximately 1,000 supernovae.

Now, Brout and Scolnic and their new Pantheon+ team have added some 50 percent more supernovae data points in Pantheon+, coupled with improvements in analysis techniques and addressing potential sources of error, which ultimately has yielded twice the precision of the original Pantheon.

"This leap in both the dataset quality and in our understanding of the physics that underpin it would not have been possible without a stellar team of students and collaborators working diligently to improve every facet of the analysis," says Brout.

Taking the data as a whole, the new analysis holds that 66.2 percent of the universe manifests as dark energy, with the remaining 33.8 percent being a combination of dark matter and matter. To arrive at even more comprehensive understanding of the constituent components of the universe at different epochs, Brout and colleagues combined Pantheon+ with other strongly evidenced, independent and complementary measures of the large-scale structure of the universe and with measurements from the earliest light in the universe, the cosmic microwave background.



Another key Pantheon+ result relates to one of the paramount goals of modern cosmology: nailing down the current expansion rate of the universe, known as the Hubble constant. Pooling

the Pantheon+ sample with data from the SHOES (Supernova H0 for the Equation of State) collaboration, led by Riess, results in the most stringent local measurement of the current expansion rate of the universe.

Pantheon+ and SHOES together find a Hubble constant of 73.4 kilometers per second per megaparsec with only 1.3% uncertainty. Stated another way, for every megaparsec, or 3.26 million light years, the analysis estimates that in the nearby universe, space itself is expanding at more than *160,000 miles per hour*.

However, observations from an entirely different epoch of the universe's history predict a different story. Measurements of the universe's earliest light, the cosmic microwave background, when combined with the current Standard Model of Cosmology, consistently peg the Hubble constant at a rate that is significantly less than observations taken via Type Ia supernovae and other astrophysical markers. This sizable discrepancy between the two methodologies has been termed the Hubble tension.

The new Pantheon+ and SHOES datasets heighten this Hubble tension. In fact, the tension has now passed the important 5-sigma threshold (about one-in-a-million odds of arising due to random chance) that physicists use to distinguish between possible statistical flukes and something that must accordingly be understood. Reaching this new statistical level highlights the challenge for both theorists and astrophysicists to try and explain the Hubble constant discrepancy.

"We thought it would be possible to find clues to a novel solution to these problems in our dataset, but instead we're finding that our data rules out many of these options and that the profound discrepancies remain as stubborn as ever," says Brout.



The Pantheon+ results could help point to where the solution to the Hubble tension lies. "Many recent theories have begun pointing to exotic new physics in the very early universe, however such unverified theories must withstand the scientific process and the Hubble tension continues to be a major challenge," says Brout.

Overall, Pantheon+ offers scientists a comprehensive lookback through much of cosmic

history. The earliest, most distant supernovae in the dataset gleam forth from 10.7 billion light years away, meaning from when the universe was roughly a quarter of its current age. In that earlier era, dark matter and its associated gravity held the universe's expansion rate in check. Such state of affairs changed dramatically over the next several billion years as the influence of dark energy overwhelmed that of dark matter. Dark energy has since flung the contents of the cosmos ever-farther apart and at an ever-increasing rate.

"With this combined Pantheon+ dataset, we get a precise view of the universe from the time when it was dominated by dark matter to when the universe became dominated by dark energy," says Brout. "This dataset is a unique opportunity to see dark energy turn on and drive the evolution of the cosmos on the grandest scales up through present time."

Studying this changeover now with even stronger statistical evidence will hopefully lead to new insights into dark energy's enigmatic nature.

"Pantheon+ is giving us our best chance to date of constraining dark energy, its origins, and its evolution," says Brout.

The Environmental Footprint of Food



In an age of industrialized farming and complex supply chains, the true environmental pressures of our global food system are often obscure and difficult to assess. "Everyone eats food, and more and more people are paying attention to the planetary consequences of what they eat," said UC Santa Barbara marine ecologist Ben Halpern. Figuring out this impact to the planet proves to be a gargantuan task for many reasons, including the fact that around the world there are a lot of different foods produced in many different ways, with many different environmental pressures. By ranking foods on factors such as greenhouse gas emissions or water pollution, scientists have made useful headway on assessments of the environmental impacts of food by pound or kilogram. While these evaluations are helpful in guiding consumer

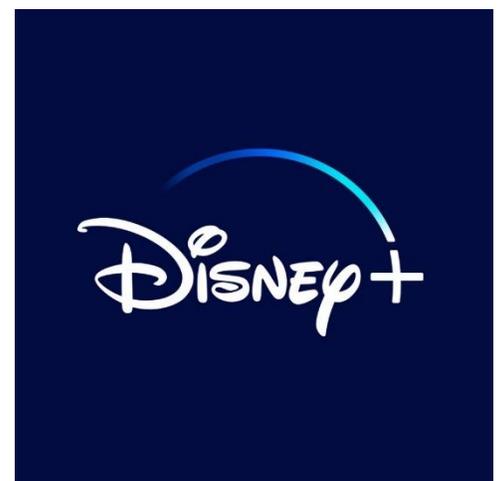
choices, Halpern explained that a more comprehensive examination of the environmental footprint -- the locations affected by the various pressures from food production and the severity of that pressure -- is needed for decisions that have to be made in a world with a booming population. "The individual choice of eight billion people adds up," he said, "and we need to know the overall impact of *total* food production -- not just per pound -- especially when setting food policy." To fill that need, Halpern and colleagues at UC Santa Barbara's National Center for Ecological Analysis & Synthesis (NCEAS) have mapped for the first time the environmental footprint of the production of all foods, both in the ocean and on land. Their research is published in the journal *Nature Sustainability*.

Lopsided pressures and hidden connections

"Did you know that almost half of all environmental pressures from food production come from just five countries?" Halpern said.

For Halpern, executive director at NCEAS and a professor at UCSB's Bren School of Environmental Science & Management, understanding the impacts of food production along with the local context of these impacts has been a longstanding interest. By taking detailed data about greenhouse gas emissions, freshwater use, habitat disturbance and nutrient pollution (e.g., fertilizer runoff) generated by 99% of total reported production of aquatic and terrestrial foods in 2017, and mapping those impacts at high resolution, the researchers were able to create a more nuanced picture of the pressures -- the inputs, processes and outputs -- of global food production.

The findings are eye-opening.



"Cumulative pressures of food production are more concentrated than previously believed, with the vast majority -- 92% of pressures from land-based food production -- concentrated on just 10% of the Earth's surface," noted Melanie Frazier, a research scientist at NCEAS and coauthor of the paper. Additionally, the space required for dairy and beef farming accounts for about a quarter of the cumulative footprint of all

food production. And those five countries accounting for almost half of all food production-related environmental pressures? India, China, the United States, Brazil and Pakistan. The study also examines the environmental efficiency of each food type, similar to the per-pound of food approach that most other studies use, but now accounting for differences among countries rather than just assuming it is the same everywhere.

"The environmental efficiency of producing a particular food type varies spatially, such that rankings of foods by efficiency differ sharply among countries, and this matters for guiding which foods we eat and from where," said Halley Froehlich, assistant professor in environmental studies at UCSB and a coauthor of the study.

Methods of production factor into the research team's assessment. For instance, thanks to technology that reduces greenhouse gases and increases yields, the United States -- the world's number one producer of soy -- is more than twice as efficient as India (the fifth largest producer) at producing the crop, making American soy the more environmentally friendly choice.

The research also uncovers connections between land and sea that get missed when looking only at one or the other, and that result in significant environmental pressures. Pigs and chicken have an ocean footprint because marine forage fish such as herrings, anchovies and sardines are used for their feed. The converse is true for mariculture farms, whose crop-based feeds extend the fish farms' environmental pressure on to land.

Assessing cumulative pressures can bring to light results that could not have been predicted by examining individual pressures alone. For instance, while raising cattle requires by far the most grazing land, the cumulative pressures of pig farming, which produces a lot of pollution and uses more water than cattle farming, are slightly greater than that of cows. Measured by cumulative pressures, the top five offenders are pig, cow, rice, wheat and oil crops. In order to feed a growing and increasingly wealthy global population while reducing environmental degradation and enhancing food security, major shifts will need to be made to current food

systems, according to the researchers. In some cases, farming might need to improve efficiency; in other cases, consumers might need to change their food choices.

"We need this comprehensive information to make more accurate decisions about what we eat," said Halpern, who modified his own food choices based on the results of this study. "I became a pescatarian years ago because of wanting to reduce the environmental footprint of what I eat," he said. "But then I thought, I'm a scientist, I should really use science to inform my decisions about what I eat. That's actually why I started this research project. And now that we have the results, I see that from an environmental perspective, chicken is actually better than some seafood. And so I've shifted my diet to start including chicken again, while eliminating some high-pressure seafoods like bottom-trawl caught cod and haddock. I am actually eating my words."

BARNES & NOBLE

BN.com

**UPCOMING
EVENTS!**

ELTON JOHN

FAREWELL

YELLOW BRICK ROAD

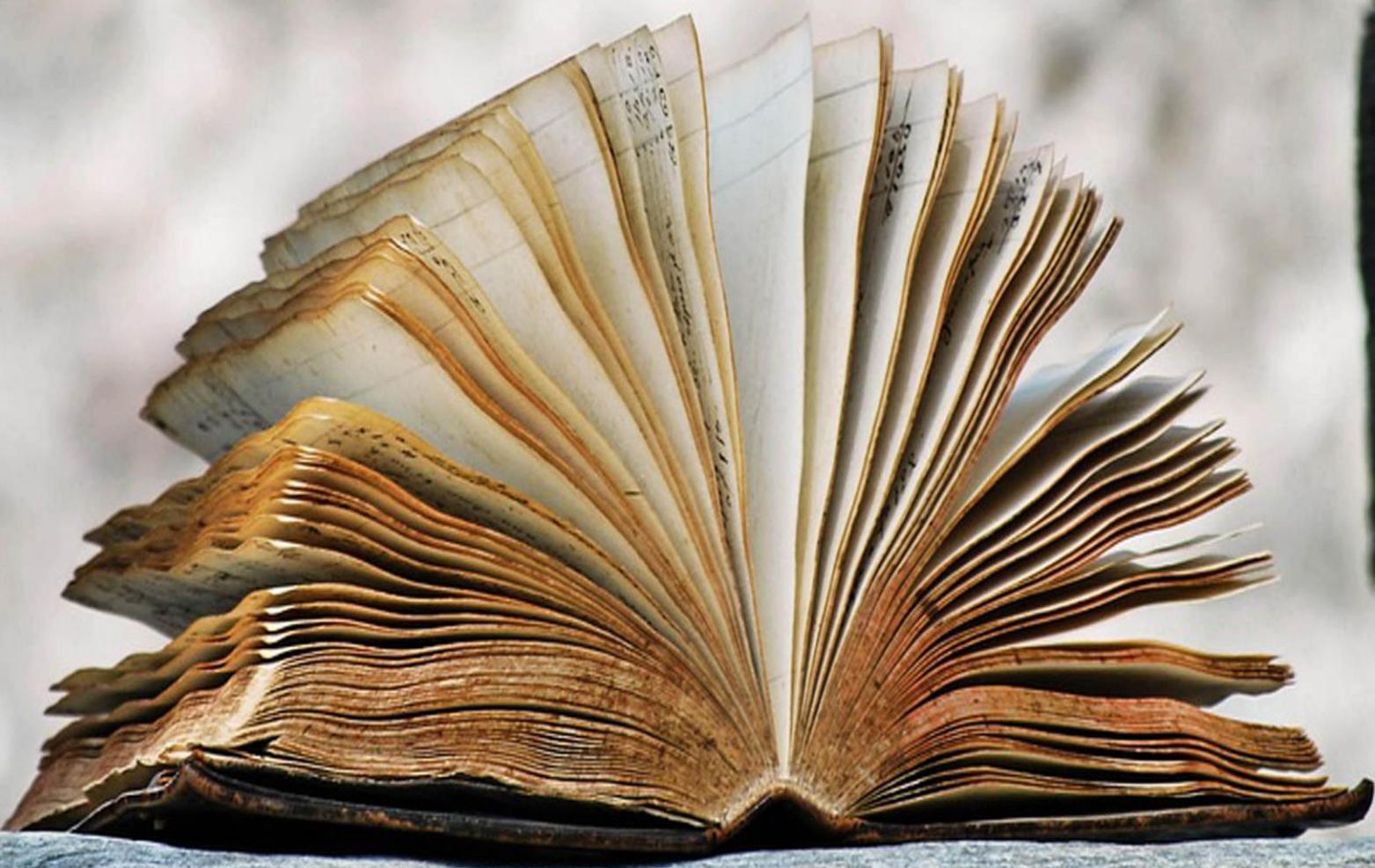
THE FINAL TOUR



TicketFaster

Buy Tickets at
<https://www.ticketfaster.com/performers/elton-john>

Storytellers





www.bushmills.com

The End of Everything

- A James Bond Story -

By Komodo 13

1

It was a bad job, James Bond reflected as he swirled his martini around in the glass. It wasn't just the nature of the assignment—Bond had been too long in this career to allow a scalp-taking mission to get under his skin. And yet, this mission didn't carry with it the charge of adrenaline—the primal instincts of fight or flight waking in anticipation of the violence surely to come—that usually accompanied a mental review of the details, specifics, and contingencies of an assignment. No, this one merely left him feeling hollow and vaguely-exhausted.

Was this burnout, Bond wondered as he let his gaze quickly sweep the bar of Les Burges hotel, noting that little had changed since the last time he'd done a visual of his surroundings. The elderly couple at the table in the southwest corner had gotten their food and was eating in silence. The three young men—bankers, no doubt, given their stylish, yet conservative suits and serious glasses—had gotten another round of drinks. A whiskey neat for the one with the thinning hair, a rum and coke for the younger one with the gold bracelet, and a Heineken for the one with the impressively-sized double Windsor knot in his navy tie. By Bond's reckoning, the one with the whiskey would be feeling the effects of the alcohol first—the bar had been stingy with the proportion of rum to coke. The two middle-aged women in the secluded table in the north corner were still nursing their cosmopolitans, but the one doing most of the talking looked more stricken now that she had a few moments earlier. Clearly, her story was growing direr. What was it she was recounting? Was it the evidence she discovered of her husband's affair? The drugs she'd found in her teenager's schoolbag? Any moment now she would reach the climax of her tale, and she would crumple into as much despair was appropriate for the circumstances, and the other women would take her turn, offering sympathy and comfort.

Burnout, Bond pondered as he checked on the rest of the patrons—a sparse lot, normal to the late-afternoon hour. No, not exactly burnout, he decided, after prodding his dissatisfaction like an order of beef that he wasn't confident had been prepared properly. More like undiluted boredom. Here he was, readying himself to take a man's life—an unarmed, unsuspecting man—and all he could feel was the cold, grey stripe of tedium.

The assignment hadn't been presented that way when he sat across from M in the familiar office, flanked on three sides by oil paintings of great Napoleonic naval battles and soundproof padding on the door behind him. "Werner Behnke," M announced, as close to giddy as allowed by the old salt's constitution. "Our man in Berne confirmed it. Set up a phony business meeting about his stock portfolio over lunch. Swiped the man's fork. Fingerprints were immaculate. They match."

The photo showed a man in a bespoke, pinstripe suit getting out of a BMW sedan. He was as innocuous as was possible—just another businessman going through the transformation brought on by middle age and a comfortable, bourgeois lifestyle. His frame, so lean, and sinewy in the black-and-white propaganda photos was now running to fat. The sharp, vaguely-lupine features, most often curled into a sneer, were now wider and with a hint of jowl. In one hand he carried a briefcase, and not his usual Kalashnikov, distressed from his various sojourns to North Africa to train or hide out. He had

become a respectable businessman and not the firebrand revolutionary who'd recited a hasty mash-up of Karl Marx and Che Guevara on a cheap audiotape just before he put bullets into the skulls of the British Ambassador to Spain and three of his Consuls.

"As you know, the last we saw of him was in Budapest, 1978. Station had good information that he was trying to meet with one of the Soviet's best document-forgers. We assumed he was securing false papers for another one of his jobs. We tried to pick up the forger, but he had KGB minders and we couldn't afford an incident

in a Warsaw Pact country. Bloody good thing we didn't, too. With a dust-up like that in memory, they might've never have decided to give us this." Bond reviewed the other document in the file, a typewritten memo in Cyrillic with the seal of the KGB stamped on it. "How'd we get this?" he asked.

"Diplomatic pouch, if you can believe it," M answered. Bond, for his part, could not imagine that, and looked over the document at the old man's face. He wasn't joking. "Was part of a demarche delivered to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Something about their dissatisfaction with the Western press's portrayal of their activities in Afghanistan. Meant to look like the wrong document was accidentally slipped in."

"Not exactly the most credible scenario," Bond opined.

"No, but our boys in Q-Branch went over it with the proverbial fine-toothed comb. Paper, seal, and typeset are all consistent with internal KGB memos. And they left us a token of good faith: microdots in three of the periods. They give details on where and when he'd be traveling to Geneva. Seems he has a woman on the side. Meets her every few weeks at Les Burges hotel on Lake Geneva."

It was firm intelligence, Bond knew, but his hackles were still up. "And why would they be giving him up? They know if he we grab him we can make him confess to their support of his activities over the years. The money, safe houses, all the times they spirited him away to some sun-blasted hellhole or other when we were closing in."

M made a dismissive gesture. "Old news, 007. Everyone's well aware of their support for these ruddy scoundrels, even without concrete evidence. No, Behnke is an olive branch."

"And to what do we owe the sudden warming of the cockles of their Stalinist hearts?"

"The American President of all things," M harrumphed. "Bit of a cowboy that one. Rattling the sabre like never before. Spinning tales of space weapons and all that. The Soviets are worried. They know he and the PM have a close relationship. They give us the man who killed our Ambassador, and they hope she'll urge some restraint on his part in the next round of summit meetings."

Bond mulled it over. "Plausible, I suppose. Still, it seems a bit out-of-character for them-just giving up one of their own."

"Nothing of the sort, 007," M said sharply, clearly not appreciating Bond's playing devil's advocate. "Behnke was a useful fool for them. A gadfly to irritate us and provide some propaganda for the masses. They never took him or his so-called wars of liberation seriously. Now, they've got a real war to contend with, and the spoiled children of wealthy Europeans who've decided to put on a beret and pick up a rifle in the name of global anarchy are hardly of much use in the mountains of the Hindu Kush."

Bond knew that the Hindu Kush wasn't in Afghanistan, but he didn't say anything. The discussion was over, and all that was left were the instructions.

"Report to Q-Branch. They'll have identity documents prepared for you. Our station in Geneva is already preparing the necessary smokescreen that'll go out after the job is done. It'll be leaked through diplomatic channels to prevent a police investigation."

"What about the girl?"

"They're taking care of her. Seems she has a few skeletons in her closet, and she's more worried about them coming to light than she is in love with him."

Bond wondered what those skeletons might be, but knew better than to ask. M would never be bothered with the indiscretions of a silly girl he doubtless considered a common harlot.

"At the hotel, then?"

"It's the only place he'll be alone long enough."

"Not going to do anything good for their Michelin ratings."

"Fortunately, we are not the bloody chamber of commerce, 007," M said, a dagger in his voice. "Of course not, sir," Bond said stiffly. "When do I leave?"

And so Bond had flown into Geneva and checked into Les Burges. Geneva Station had taken the advance initiative to book him into a more modest hotel on the other side of the Rhone river, but Bond overrode the decision. Experience told him staying the same hotel where the deed would be done would be less conspicuous, should the police not be called off quickly enough and Bond find himself having to account for himself to a police inspector. A man flying into town for an evening's business wasn't nearly as unusual as a man flying in and then heading clear across town to have a drink.

Bond checked his Rolex. Behnke's flight would have landed twenty minutes ago. Bond estimated he'd arrive and check in within the hour. He'd be traveling light—no need for a checked bag for this, a quick interlude with his mistress. He'd be able to skip baggage claim and head straight for the hotel.

It was pathetic, really, Bond mused as he prodded his boredom a bit more. This man—self-professed revolutionary, terrorist by rational standards, hero to the soft children of the post-war era, and, it should be noted, effective killer—was now just another dissatisfied husband finding relief from a midlife crisis between the legs of a woman other than his wife.

Why had he left the movement, Bond wondered? The analysts at MI5 and MI6 could provide no easy answer. Behnke wasn't one of loquacious ones-writing manifestos, fancying himself the next great scribe of the People's Movement. He only made statements after an attack, or—in the case of Ambassador Sharpe's murder—just before the trigger was pulled.

Perhaps revolutionary zeal wasn't enough to tamp down the gradual transformation of the self that comes with age, Bond thought. Or perhaps he'd realized how pointless it all was. Yes, Bond realized with grim satisfaction. *That* was the problem with this job: it was all just bloody theater performed by actors bored with the play. The people's revolutionaries still ran about and caused some mischief, but the world had fast stopped caring.

It didn't take a political scientist to know these were not revolutionary times any longer. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the increasingly confrontational rhetoric of the Americans—it had stripped away the ephemera and left only the cold truth of this world: two power blocks were facing down each other's massive nuclear arsenal.

And what did that say of Bond's profession? Of dead drops and codes? Of clandestine meetings, turning enemies into sources, and the pinpoint elimination of targets? The truth was: Bond was on the playbill with Behnke's fellow revolutionaries, and at some point the play had been stripped of its artifice. Now they were just hitting their marks on an empty stage, while the audience listened to the orchestra and watched the lights and pulleys and sandbags.

Fate didn't allow him to dwell on this depressing line of thought for much longer, though. Behnke arrived ten minutes later. He looked worse than he had in the black-and-white surveillance photo. His hair was mussed and thinning, and his shoulders had a slight slouch to them. He carried a briefcase and small duffel, thrown casually over his shoulder. But he smiled mischievously at the hotel clerk—clearly they knew him—and they bantered lightly as he took his key.

The revolutionary is now a ladykiller, Bond thought caustically. *What a convenient lateral move*. Bond polished off his drink leisurely enough and then settled his tab and left the bar. Luck was with him, for he had one of the hotel's tiny elevators to himself. He took the opportunity to draw his gun and screw in the silencer. His beloved Walther PPK had been replaced, and he was still getting used to its successor, the Walther P5c—a compact version of the P5. It was bigger and wider than the PPK, but still smaller than the average service pistol. With the additional size came more firepower—eight rounds of 9mm ammunition against the PPK's seven of .32 caliber. Q-Branch had modified it slightly—adding luminous dots to the sights and tightening the rather spongy initial double-action trigger pull (which raised the firing pin into striking position), but the trigger break still wasn't as crisp as the PPK. Bond had to be careful not drop his shots. Silencer attached, he slid the gun back into his waistband holster, where it could still be concealed beneath his suit coat.

The elevator rattled to a stop, and Bond made his way to Behnke's room. 332. Always the same one, a suite with a breathtaking view of the Isle de Rousseau and the magnificent fountains that flanked it. It was a good view for drowsy, post-coital torpor, and Bond had no doubts that Behnke and his mistress had spent a goodly amount of time doing just that.

Q-Branch had skeleton keys for most of the five-star hotels in Europe, and Bond used a copy of that key now. It fit the lock stiffly—it must have been recently cut—and Bond furtively watched the hallway until the lock gave and he slipped inside. To his immense relief, he heard the shower running.

Bond had banked on Behnke wanting to freshen up before his mistress arrived, but even if he hadn't, the odds were good he would be in the bedroom unpacking his small duffel rather than lounging in the main suite. It meant Bond didn't have to go in shooting, but could instead shape the situation to his liking. He drew the P5c and held it in a two-handed grip at the high-ready. Behnke may have swapped a life as an international terrorist for one of blissful domesticity, but Bond couldn't take the chance that those old instincts wouldn't kick in once he saw the gun. Bond knew that he certainly would, were the situation reversed.

The shower turned off, and after a few moments of Behnke moving about in the bathroom, he emerged wearing a white hotel robe, drying his hair with a towel. He got a surprising three steps before he noticed Bond in the doorway. His body jerked as if hit by an electrical current, and for a moment all he could do was blink as the blood drained from his face.

"Sit," Bond commanded, jerking his head to a low, padded chair in the corner of the room. Hands shaking, Behnke complied. His mouth moved like that of a cow chewing its cud. Bond recognized the gesture; the man was working up the ability to speak again. Bond cut him off. "The walls are thick and no one will hear you in the hallway."

"You are English?" Behnke's voice was barely louder than a whisper. Bond nodded slightly. "For the Ambassador?" "Does it matter?"

"I always thought that was too far. Even after the deed was done. I thought that we had given you a reason to hunt us now. Everyone else thought we had finally done it—finally struck a direct blow against the governments of Europe, finally given them a reason to fear us. But I knew different. We declared a war we couldn't win."

"Didn't stop you from trying, though."

Behnke was breathing fast now. Any minute he'd begin to hyperventilate, Bond knew. "That was when I made plans to get away from it. I couldn't keep doing it. It wasn't what I had intended or tried to create."

"You saw the handwriting on the wall," Bond accused. "You ran."

"I left it behind," Behnke said, looking at the wall like a guilty schoolboy. "Maybe a braver man would have turned himself in. I thought about it. But time got away. I had a job, suddenly. A family."

"You ran," Bond corrected, "and hid. You never intended to answer for what you did. You've still been collecting money from the Russians—that shadow account you've always maintained—and funneling it to your comrades hiding out in Africa."

Now Behnke looked panicked, eyes darting as the fight-or-flight instinct grew. Bond guessed he had only a few more moments before the situation became untenable.

"The Russians sold you out. You're not important to them anymore. And you're only as important to us as this. So you see, I'm not interested in your spun tales of guilt and redemption."

Behnke opened his mouth to protest—or perhaps call for help—Bond would never know, for he shot him once through the heart. Behnke's body shuddered as a crimson stain began to spread against the immaculate white of the robe. Bond put the second shot through his head. Then he decocked the pistol, unscrewed the silencer, and stowed them both beneath his coat.

On his way out, he closed the bedroom door and, after listening through the suite's door and using the peephole to assure himself the hallway was empty, he left, wiping down the knob on the way out with his handkerchief, and hanging out the DO NOT DISTURB sign. Then he rang for the elevator and rode up two floors to his own suite.

3

Bond called Geneva Station and gave them the agreed-upon code indicating the job had been completed successfully (it was masked as some confusion over an order of chocolates for an imaginary wife, indicating to Bond that the boys at Station hadn't put a lot of work into this particular element of the plan—he hoped they'd been more diligent with the cover story).

Now all that was left was to while away the hours until he checked out tomorrow morning. He toyed with the idea of going back to the bar and letting some alcohol tamp down the adrenaline still rushing through his system. Ultimately, he decided against it. Drinking too soon after a mission carried with it a raft of hazards. The adrenaline could make him drink too much, become too sociable, and while the thought of spending the evening with a Swiss lovely was an enticing one, it wouldn't do much for his efforts to be anonymous. No, this evening must one spent alone.

Instead, he showered the smell of gunpowder off himself and spent a moment beneath a stinging, cold spray contemplating the bloody job. Well, it was done. However, he felt about it, he'd done right by M and Her Majesty's government. They'd closed the chapter on Behnke and Ambassador Sharpe and every one the man his movement had murdered. The Russians would have a slightly-less aggressive summit meeting. Maybe he'd helped, however incrementally, the road to world peace, Bond thought sarcastically.

He saw the envelope when he came out of the bathroom, still drying his hair. He'd missed it before—it was a white envelope on white sheets, not something that stood out if you weren't looking for it. At first, he thought it might be a copy of his receipt, but the hotel surely wouldn't have entered his room surreptitiously to drop off that, or any other bit of communication for that matter. Had it been in here when he checked in? He couldn't remember. Bond hadn't seen fit to sweep for listening devices, so his inventory of the room had been cursory at best. Could someone have dropped it off while he was at the bar or in Behnke's suite?

It didn't matter, Bond thought furiously, angry at himself for not being more alert. He snatched up the envelope and opened it, careful to take by a corner, lest it be needed for fingerprints later. It wasn't sealed, and Bond easily untucked the flap and withdrew the folded piece of stationary.

He read the short message—only a few sentences—and then reread it. His pulse was throbbing in his neck. He forced himself to sit down and think clearly through the rising excitement, weighing the options available to him. Eventually, he ordered a light dinner and ate it in spite of his lack of appetite. Shortly after midnight, he dressed in a warm pair of woolen slacks and Chucka boots with a dark, cashmere turtleneck. He replaced the two rounds in his Walther from a small supply he kept in a secret compartment in his suitcase and fixed the holster to his belt, then clipped two spare magazines to his belt on the opposite side of his waist.

Bond pulled on his suit coat and slipped the note into its inside pocket. Then he shrugged into a heavy topcoat to protect against the Switzerland winter and left the suite. He left the hotel through a fire door in the stairwell that was not connected to an alarm. Geneva glittered beneath a cold, gunmetal sky like a cloudy gem-only hallway caught by a jeweler's lamp. Bond huddled into himself against the cold and set out into the night.

4

The nightclub was strategically located in the middle of a quiet street on a slightly-disreputable block, flanked on both sides by restaurants and cafes that had closed up for the night. The exterior was brick, painted a gaudy purple with the club's name written in looping, vivid yellow letters. Bond imagined at first that it was the sort of place where teenagers went to listen to New Wave music, take drugs and generally annoy their parents. As he got closer, though, and noticed the relative sophistication of the surrounding eateries, he amended his opinion

some. This was a place young professionals went to listen to New Wave music, take expensive drugs, and pretend they were still teenagers.

There were three cars parked on the block—a Mercedes and a Volvo at the north end, and what looked to be an old BMW at the south. They were all weathered by snow and salt and in poor position for overwatch. No, if anyone was watching him now they were in one of the darkened buildings. They wouldn't stay there, though.

Bond gave the club's door an exploratory pull and found that it opened easily. He unbuttoned his topcoat and then his suit coat and hooked his thumb over his belt to draw faster. Inside, the club was dim, but not dark. It was, essentially one long room with about two dozen tables set out for the front two thirds—now with their chairs set atop them—and the last third an immense dance floor that stretched beneath an impressive lighting setup to a small stage that accommodate a four or five- person band. At either edge of the dance floor were two booths, scalloped into the wall for privacy. One of them was lit by a candle.

Adrenaline was rattling his nervous system like a power grid struck by lightning, but he forced his gait to be slow and deliberate as he passed between the silent tables, still as gun turrets on an empty warship. He slipped out of his topcoat as rounded the last of them and could at last see into the candle-lit booth. His breath caught in his chest, but he forced himself to be calm. She spoke, even before he could take her all in.

"You came."

Bond allowed himself silence until he slid into the booth across from her. "Did you expect me not to?" Anya Amasova smiled. "Of course not. Not you. Someone else perhaps would have rang London immediately, but not you."

She was still beautiful—almost unbearably so in the candlelight—even as the last half decade showed on her face. She had faint lines around her mouth as she smiled, and the corners of her eyes were lightly flashed with delicate creases that might have been applied by a painter's tiniest watercolor brush.

"You're as lovely as ever, Anya. It's downright cheeky of you, so casually demolishing the Western stereotype of Russian women as Panzer tanks in babushkas. If the Ministry of Information wanted a quick victory they could simply drop leaflets with your picture on it in West Berlin. Defectors to the East would be recorded."

She laughed a genuine laugh, from deep in her throat, and covered her face self-consciously. "And you're the same, James. Still the irrepressibly suave English gentleman, able to sweep a woman off her feet without even any effort."

Bond grinned at that and looked away for a moment. "Well, it's nice to know we've both held up well in the intervening years."

"But you want to know why we're here."

"Obviously I'm intrigued," Bond said and placed the note on the table between them. "I can honestly say this is the last thing I expected to find in my room tonight. Or ever, for that matter."

"You must have known we would meet again, James. There aren't many of us in this business. It's what you would call an exclusive club. Sooner or later, we were bound to cross paths."

"Unless one of us ended up dead in the meantime," Bond replied dryly. He suddenly wanted a drink.

Surprisingly, she laughed again. "If we could survive Karl Stromberg, James, whatever did we have to worry about?"

He smiled. "That business was all rather rococo, wasn't it? You know, I quite miss the type of enemy who has an undersea base. It's imaginative. Colorful."

"Oh, good God, James, we nearly drown in that car of yours."

Yes, Q-Branch outdid themselves on that one. They never continued that project. Cutbacks, you know."

"I think that the accountants will be the death of us, more than any bullet. In the Soviet Union, it's all satellites and computer systems now. Human intelligence is terribly antiquated in the eyes of our government."

Bond shifted in his seat. "I wish I could say it was different in the West, but I'm afraid it's not. Though, we don't have an invasion to underwrite."

Anya held up a palm, "I don't even want to talk about that. The Great Soviet war machine mobilized against a country of no significance whatsoever." She sighed and shook her head.

"Well, now that we're in agreement over the relative follies of our government, I think it's time you've told me why you sent this," he gestured at the note. "The second sentence was rather arresting." That was the sentence that read, *You are in greater danger than you realize.*

Anya leaned forward, propping her elbows on the table, so that the soft oval of her face was embraced by the candlelight, like a lover's palm cupping her chin. As Bond had done years ago. "For the past fifteen months, I was assigned to the group in the KGB that was monitoring Behnke. It was a collateral duty, usually no more than reviewing periodic status reports."

"Ensuring the funds were paid out."

"Yes, and also noting any changes in his lifestyle or activity. When the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to abandon him to your government, I was not exactly surprised. I had already suspected we were holding on to him to use for trade with the West someday. But when my superiors did not bring me in on the planning for his termination, I was very surprised.

"I was briefed on the details after the plan was made, but not given any official dossier. This was highly unusual. My superiors told me it was because Behnke was a minor concern, and they did not want to distract me from other duties."

"That's convenient."

"Very much so," Anya agreed. "I managed to obtain a copy of the official dossier—I told a colleague that I needed it for reference in my final report on Behnke. That's when I discovered this." She reached beside her on the seat, and Bond felt an instinctive flash of warning. Of course, if she'd wanted to kill him or incapacitate him, she could have done so any number of times already, but Bond still got nervous when people reached for things outside his line of sight.

She produced a small sheaf of papers, which she slid across the table. Bond fanned them out before him like a deck of cards. Several were in Cyrillic, but two were in English and bore the seal of MI6. Bond withdrew them from the deck and laid them out in front of them. He read them in chronological order:

"It's not the optimal course of action, however given the gravity of the circumstances it is agreed that this is the only one worth pursuing. We have received assurances through clandestine channels that the Soviet government will honor its promise and scale back military assets in the aforementioned Eastern European regions to the levels agreed upon. This is not the diplomacy we seek, but it is the diplomacy we have available to us."

Bond felt a chill. He suspected he knew the facts lurking between the lines. He looked over the second document, a reply to the first.

"Ministers, I most strenuously object to this decision. Agent 007 has been an invaluable resource, who has executed his duties to Her Majesty's government with nothing but the utmost valor and professionalism—indeed, it is a testament to his effectiveness in the field that the KGB has selected him among the operatives for termination. I understand the cold equations that must be made in the prosecution of this damnable Cold War, and I have never had any qualms sending men to almost certain death. I shall do so again, as a loyal servant of Her Majesty's government, however I would like it noted that I carry out my responsibilities in this matter only over my deepest objections."

Beneath the text was M's signature.

"We were never trading Behnke for favorable diplomatic overtures, James. He was just a ruse. You were the trade." Anya's blue eyes caught the light and shone almost red. Bond said nothing, only looked at the documents.

"All those missions...all the danger you've faced, all the injuries you've sustained...all the enemies you've protected your country from. Now, your own government sacrifices you like a chess piece. A pawn."

"And you're here to...what? Warn me? Spirit me away to a dacha somewhere on the Baltic Sea?"

"We have a safe house nearby. I have documents for you, and a plane ticket to Southeast Asia. Your people won't search for you there. If they do, it won't be the first place they look."

Bond sat back and crossed his arms. "You're doing this—betraying your own people—because we spent some time in a leaky submarine built on the frame of a Lotus Esprit Turbo?"

"No," she answered softly. "Because you came back for me. When Stromberg had me. You came back before the Americans could destroy the base and kill me. I can't leave you behind, either."

"Touching."

Anya leaned forward and placed her hand on his wrist. "I know this is must be difficult for you. I know that you don't want to believe it, but that is the signature of your superior. He didn't take part in this, but he wouldn't stand against it either. He's letting them send you to your death."

"That's very good," Bond said. "The memos. They're quite good. You captured M's voice quite well in the parts that you invented."

"This isn't a forgery, James," Anya said quietly.

"What this is," Bond replied tightly, "is a copy of memo M sent several years ago protesting the closure of several of our support stations in West Berlin. Then you dropped in his glowing appraisal of my work. And this," he tapped the first document, "is pure fiction." He leaned forward. "Behnke was never about currying favor with the Americans he was the first stage in a plan to get me here, where you could convince me to defect or some such nonsense."

The barest hint of a smile tugged at Anya's lips. "I didn't think it would work. I told them it wouldn't. But the KGB didn't trust our ability to kidnap you from under the noses of your assets here. They wanted a charade."

"Such as it is."

"Yes."

Bond settled back in his seat, and pondered the game that unfolded—and collapsed—before him. It seemed at once childish and deeply cynical. "Anya," he asked, "aren't you getting a bit tired of it?"

"Of what, James?"

"This silliness. These lies and plans and the like. We've been doing this for so long, and what have gotten ourselves? Not an inch of ground. Now this. What if you'd succeeded? What difference would it have made? Thirty-five years of a Cold War. The elimination of one spy isn't even a footnote in that story."

"I suppose it depends upon the spy, James," Anya replied, tilting her head coquettishly.

"That's sweet of you to say." Bond slid the papers back across the table to her. "How many are there?"

"Two in front. One in the back."

"You came light."

"We couldn't run the risk of being detected in the additional surveillance of Behnke." "And the signal? In case everything went haywire?"

Anya held up a gold cigarette lighter.

"Well," he said, sliding out of the booth. "Best not keep them waiting, then."

5

Naturally, the officers at Geneva Station were simply gobsmacked by what Bond recounted, but as they scrambled and bickered among themselves as to what to do next, Bond used their disorganization to leverage a call to M.

"I might have suspected something like this," he grumbled from what Bond assumed was his handsomely-appointed home office, where he kept the scrambled phone line. "That business with summit seemed a bit too dodgy for my tastes. My fault for listening to the politicians, Double-oh Seven. I'm just glad you didn't come to any harm."

"No sir. Though the KGB has a bit of a mess to clean up."

"And it's theirs to clean up. Serves them bloody well right for attempting an operation like this. Kidnapping one of our men from a Western city? A damnable outrage. At least they'll think twice before trying something this harebrained again."

Bond knew that they wouldn't. Anya had given him enough time to draw his P5c before she activated the signal. The KGB torpedoes had been waiting with guns drawn, but even in the dead of night, they'd have to be concealed. The extra moments gave Bond time to take up position amid the stacked tables, so that when they burst into the room, sweeping their sightlines with their Makarov pistols, Bond

could kick one of those tables over and send the stacked chairs tumbling into them. The first one staggered back, lifting his left arm protectively, while the second spun and tried to draw a bead. But Bond wasn't stationary; he fired the first shot as he sidled to the right—a headshot to the second gunman. He continued moving as he brought the luminous dots of his gunsights into the mass of the first gunman's chest. He fired off two shots, quickly with the single-action trigger pull, keeping his wrists tensed against the recoil for a faster shot. The man stumbled backward into another table and fell in a mass of flailing limbs and chairs.

Bond swung back to the first target, but he was still. Bond kicked the man's gun across the room anyway. When he turned, he saw Anya leaning casually in the booth, as if watching a musical act she wasn't particularly engaged by. "You're still as effective ever, James."

"And the one in the back, he's covering the door? Orders to shoot anyone who comes through?" "Of course. He has a Skorpion machine pistol. I'm afraid you'll never make it out that way."

Bond didn't answer, just walked to the rear of the club through the short corridor that led to the restrooms and, beyond that, the rear exit, screwing the silencer into his P5c as he did. When he reached the door, he noted with no small amount of satisfaction that it was a metal fire door, with a lever-knob. The metal seemed formidable enough and was safely fire-resistant, but Bond knew from experience that the door was mostly hollow with only two millimeters-thick layers of metal forming it. Bond assessed the exit way imagined that it led to a short alcove cut into the back alley. That meant the third man couldn't be anywhere but directly behind the door. Bond exchanged his magazine for a fresh one, and then unleashed all nine rounds through the door in a rough X-pattern. The 9mm hollow-point bullets tore jagged holes in the metal the size of marbles. Bond reloaded and flattened against a wall, then threw the door open with his left hand as he covered the doorway with his gun. A gust of frigid air hit him, bringing swirls of snow with it.

The third gunman had unwisely set up right in the line of fire and was now a broken mass slumped on the litter-strewn ground near the mouth of the alleyway.

Bond crossed back through the club. "I'm sorry to say you'll have a bit of work to do tonight, Anya," he told her. She only smiled and stood; her hand extended as if she was bidding him farewell from a dinner party. He took it, and imagined a dozen other ways he would have preferred this reunion to have ended.

"I'm sorry, James. I wish we could have met again away from this. The guns and the lies and the secrets."

"One day, perhaps."

"Yes, perhaps." She leaned in and kissed him, something soft, but still provocative. A promise more than an overture. Bond cupped her cheek, found the color of her eyes—even in the dim light—then set out, past the bodies littering the floor, into the freezing, dark night.

But he didn't tell M all of that. Just the basics.

"What's next for me, then, sir? The station is getting a bit frantic. I think they want me out of here as quickly as possible."

"Yes, well, Five naturally wants you to come in and be debriefed. Worried about you considering the girl's offer and all that. Of course, I told them if you'd for a moment considered their offer the KGB wouldn't have three dead operatives to clean up. Bloody fools, the lot of them."

"Understood. I'll be on the earliest flight to London."

"Afraid not, James. Something's come up that I'd like you to handle. We're telexing the details to Geneva Station now. Use your same cover, but buy some warm-weather clothes. Depart in the afternoon."

"Depart for where, sir?" "Tripoli."

Seven hours later, Bond was balancing his drink as the TWA 747 banked and took up a southeasterly course. The details were in a manila file in his briefcase, but he had already memorized them, and there was no reason to risk a security breach by poring over them during the flight. He'd memorized the name and photo of his contact—an old ally of the British who'd stood with them against the Germans in North Africa during World War Two. Now he had a line on a terrorist who'd downed an airliner or two years ago, or was being given sanctuary by Colonel Quadaffi's government.

Bond had felt an immense sense of relief since he woke up this morning. He looked forward to the job, looked forward to experiencing a new country, a new city for the first time. He liked the idea of slipping away from the tiresome Cold War, if just for a moment.

The plane hit turbulence, completed its arc, and Bond heard the engines whine as it surged forward into the new.

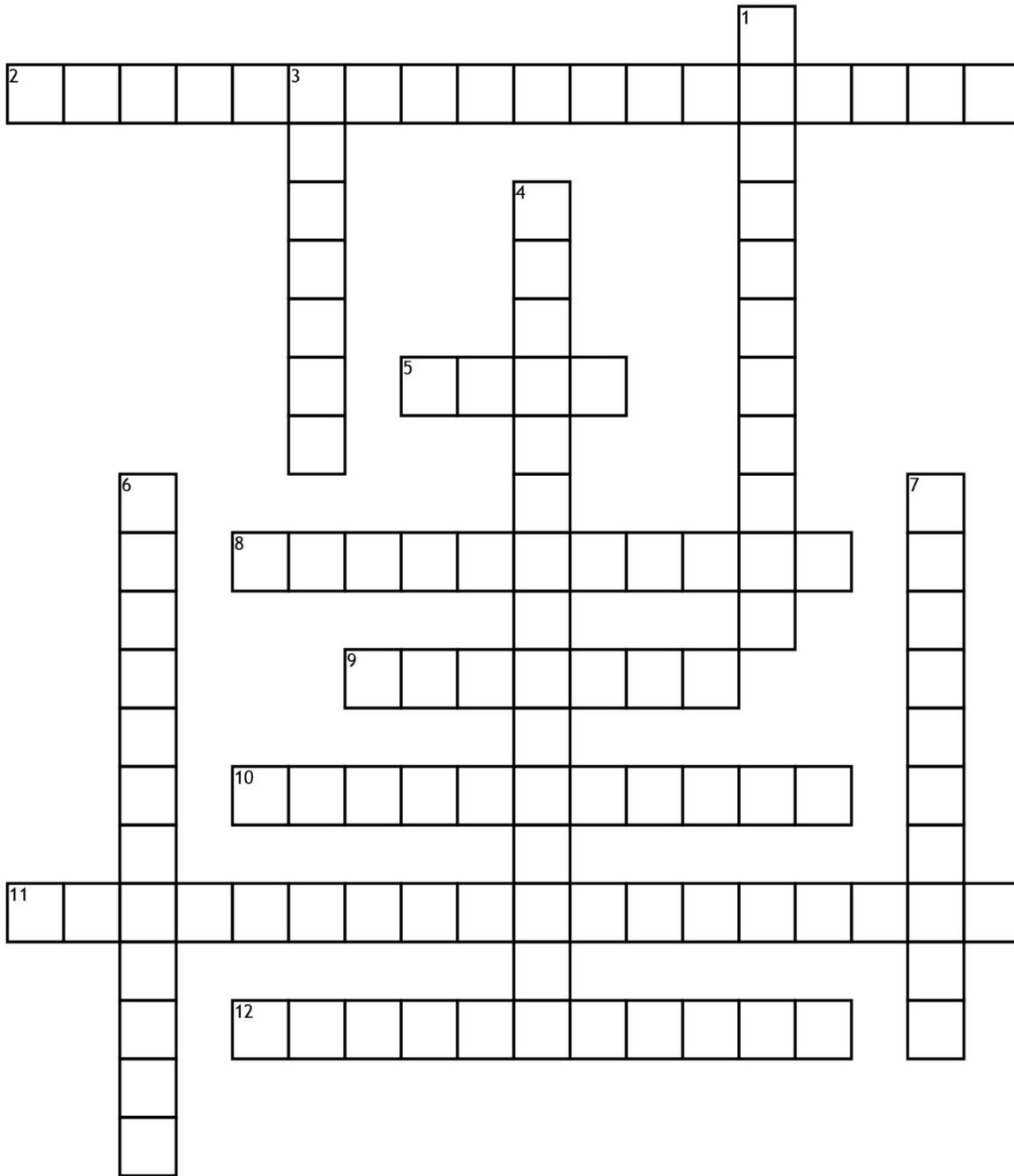
The End



WORD

games

JAMES BOND CROSSWORD



Across

- 2. Last James Bond film to star Sean Connery
- 5. First Eon James Bond film
- 8. James Bond's Car
- 9. This James Bond film was released in 2012
- 10. Second James Bond actor

11. Second Eon James Bond film

12. New James Bond film name

Down

- 1. Current James Bond actor
- 3. SPecial Executive for Counter-intelligence, Terrorism, Revenge, Extortion

4. Quantum of...

6. First James Bond film to star Daniel Craig

7. First James Bond actor



— VENTURE —

IS THE SIMPLE WAY TO EARN MORE MILES

EARN UNLIMITED DOUBLE MILES
ON **EVERY PURCHASE, EVERYWHERE.**



FREE



ADVERTISING

REACH 12,000,000 CUSTOMERS

Buy 1 Ad, Get 5 Ads FREE



Starting at \$20 a Month

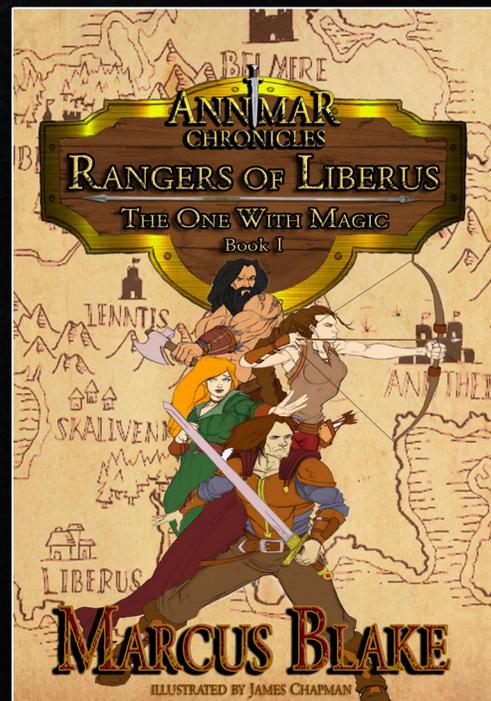
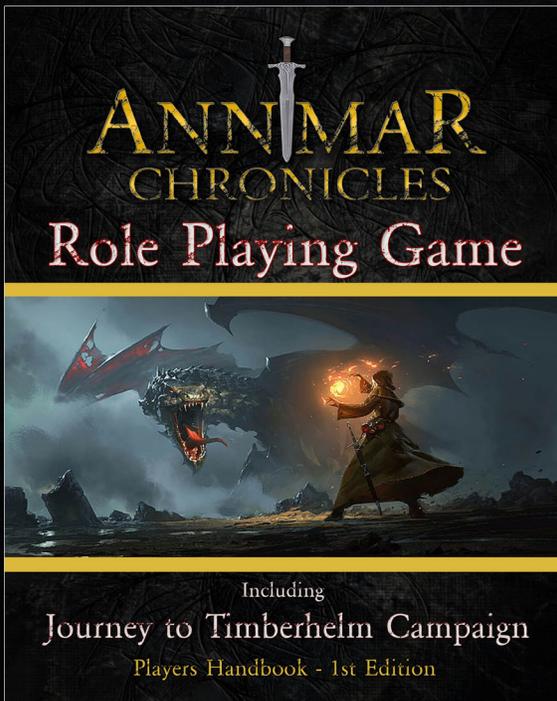
Scan Code, Text, or Call to Claim FREE Ads

469-708-9954

ANNIMAR CHRONICLES

FOR FANS OF "GAME OF THRONES" AND "LORD OF THE RINGS,"
IT'S THE NEXT GREAT WORLD OF FANTASY!

- NEW BOOKS -



WWW.ANNMARCHRONICLES.COM



U.S. \$12.99 CAN. \$15.99
U.K. £10.99 EUR €10.99