

That Nerd Show

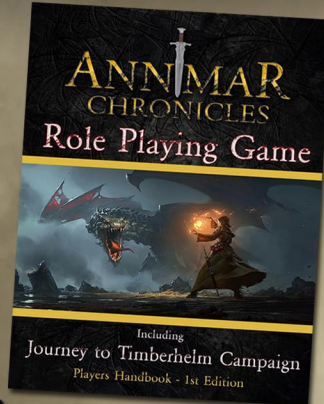
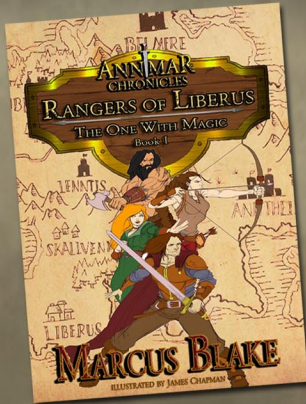
 **WEEKLY NEWS** 

October 3 / October 10, 2021

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



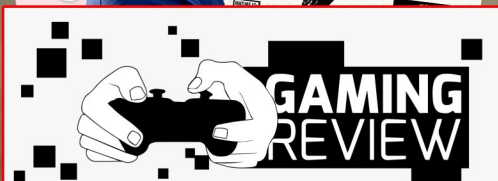
Vol. 8



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR
SQUAD LEADER

**CROSSPLAY: JUST BECAUSE WE
CAN, DOESN'T MEAN WE SHOULD!**

ANNIMAR CHRONICLES MEET THE NEXT GAME OF THRONES!



Venom 2
Malignant
Cry Macho
Everybody's Talking
About Jamie
and other reviews

**WHAT YOU SHOULD
BINGE-WATCH**



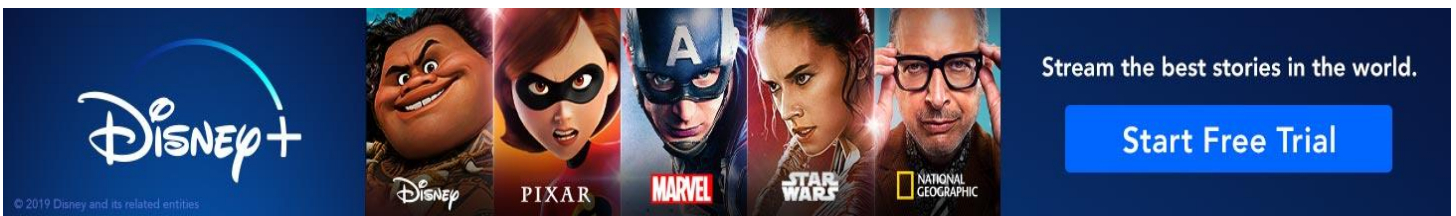


**NO
TIME
TO *007*
DIE**

ONLY IN THEATERS
OCTOBER

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Meet The Next Game of Thrones!

Introducing the next great fantasy world, the...



ANNMAR

CHRONICLES

Fantasy is more popular than ever. "Game of Thrones" and "Lord of the Rings" have made it more mainstream over the last 20 years. It's funny to think about fantasy as mainstream as we celebrate the 20th anniversary of "The Lord of the Rings" films. Those movies introduced more fans to JRR Tolkien's work and the books became more than just something nerd's read. But I think it's "Game of Thrones" that really made fantasy mainstream, because it became one of the most popular shows on TV. Fantasy is a popular genre, but fantasy is not new, it's been around for quite a while. In fact, it was one of the most popular genres in storytelling even before "The Hobbit" or "Lord of the Rings" was ever published. But now that "Game of Thrones" is done, what is the next big fantasy world we can immerse ourselves in? What will fans look for next? There's no more "Harry Potter" books or films, no more "Game of Thrones", (at least for a while), and all the "Lord of the Rings" films have been made. But there is something that will become the next "Game of Thrones" and it's called "The Annmar Chronicles".

Created in 2019, it was a fantasy project that was supposed to be released in the spring of 2020, but like many things, it was delayed because of the pandemic. However, it has finally been launched as of September 25,

2021. So, what is the "Annmar Chronicles" and how does it differ from other fantasy worlds? There are a lot of fantasy books that get published every year and with any good fantasy story there's world-building involved. But most writers start with a story and the world which it resides in takes a back seat to the story itself. The Annmar Chronicles are something different. Created by author Marcus Blake, it was born out of the idea that a fantasy world could be created and shared among fans who collaborate to tell the stories within the world, to write it's history. The first collaboration started with illustrator James Chapman, who, while helping to build the lore in the world of Annmar, also created the images for all the races and all the classes, as well as the first map. He is credited as giving the overall look of Annmar. To tell a good fantasy story, you have to build a great world and building the world comes before the story. This is something that JRR Tolkien understood and why he created such extensive appendices. What the pandemic allowed the creators to do was to reexamine the world itself, and to rebuild it over the last year, thus giving people a decent road map to all the various kingdoms and races and what it was like in the First Age of Annmar. Every great fantasy world thrives on the stories within that world. That's what makes the

world worth coming back to time and time again. It was only natural that the visionary behind the Annmar Chronicles, Marcus Blake would write the first book, setting the stage for what the world would be like and how it's history would begin in the "First Age". But the world had to be built first because to understand the story, means you also have to understand the world in which the story takes place. Throughout 2020 and most of 2021, the creator and collaborators discussed what Annmar really is and built the lore while Marcus Blake wrote the first story; *The Rangers of Liberus: The One with Magic*.

"The Annmar Chronicles" begins with a world set 100 years after the fall of the gods who created this world and has kingdoms of different races of Elves, Dwarves, Halflings, Fae or Fairies, and Humans. All of them are trying to live in peace before a single event will change the world forever and bring about war again. In some ways, the pandemic may have been a positive for the creators behind "Annmar Chronicles" because it gave them time to focus on everything that would make this an interesting fantasy world and to reassess the building blocks that would make it great. After all, it takes time to build a world and to understand where you're going within its history. Sometimes it can take a while to figure out the story you want to tell.

And now here we are, but not just with the release of this new fantasy world, but a few books to go along with it. Marcus Blake released his first fantasy novel. Book 1 of the Rangers of Liberus series. It's about a bunch of outcasts serving as law enforcement in a free town that lives outside the law of any Kingdom and the second-largest trading port in Annmar. They discover a mysterious girl with unusual abilities who is more than what she seems. It might sound a bit cliché, or like you have heard it before, but Marcus Blake perfectly exemplifies the hero's path with his characters. Characters who will help shape the history of Annmar. Once there were those who had the power of the gods and magic to help make the world what it is. Then the magic it went away, but it could return. This makes for some very interesting story dilemmas because when you deal with great power, the human condition is very much the same where some will be afraid of it, some will see it as a good thing, and some will only seek to control it for themselves so that they might have dominion over the rest of the world. These are common themes and storytelling, especially in fantasy. This is how great mythology is born, with heroic tales and themes about life that we can all relate to. The problems the characters will face and how they come together to make their world a better place is Shakespearian if will, it's the best kinds of stories because they are universal like myth. The Rangers of Liberus series will be a 4 book series and tell the tale of one of the prophesied 5 who will help bring magic back into the world, which is referred to on the beginning timeline of Annmar as the First War of Magic. The 3 other books will be out between 2022 - 2024.

One of the things that sets "The Annmar Chronicles" apart from other fantasy worlds is where it starts. It's a common thing for stories to start in the middle. "The Hobbit" and "The Lord of the Rings" starts in the Second Age of Middle Earth, so you have all this history explaining how the Rings were forged and how mankind since the First Men and when the Targaryens came into power by conquering Westeros. Annmar takes a different approach, it's history starts in what would be the equivalent of AD versus the world in BC. Yes, there is a backstory to how the world was created which sets up the main problems of Annmar in the first story that we encounter, but when we look at real history, we look at two very different time periods; the time before Christ and the time after Christ. For Annmar it is the time when the gods were still alive and then after the gods. It's a very linear approach to storytelling. Aristotle once said that true art is the imitation of reality, that we hold a mirror

up to nature. Isn't that how you tell the perfect story! Unlike other fantasy worlds where history is not that important to set up the main plot, history is very important in telling the story of Annmar. The real history of Annmar and how the world will be shaped is yet to be told and that is where collaboration with fans comes in. "Annmar in the First Age" is where you have a world that is only a hundred years removed from the fall of the gods and where no one was even alive when it happened so most don't even believe that the gods existed. Most believe that they're just stories to help explain the creation of this world that they live in. With the real history having not been told, it's a good jumping-off point as we will get to see over Three Ages how Annmar will develop and fans will help get to tell the stories through novels, comics, and a role-playing game, which we will get to later! How many fantasy worlds can say that they're going to be that collaborative with fans? When you create a huge world, there may be one overall vision, but it takes lots of people to make it work and to write the history, especially to keep it from being so convoluted. One thing that the creators of The Annmar Chronicles have done has tasked people to keep up with the lore known as Lore Masters. As Marcus Blake pointed out, "we're trying to tell a linear story through a large history that shows how characters and places are all connected to one another because when you create a large world it's too easy for the overall story to get lost and for things not to make sense anymore. We are trying to avoid that problem and that's why it takes more than one person!" However, the best way to get to know Annmar if you have not read the first book, is through its kingdoms.

The Kingdoms of Annmar

Belmere

Belmere is the northern most kingdom in Annmar. It resides in the northeast part of Annmar and has the coldest climate in Annmar. The kingdom is made up of Humans, although some Dwarves do reside in Belmere. Belmere has seven minor kingdoms made up of 7 royal houses. Belmere also has the second largest army in Annmar. The citizens of Belmere are fierce and stern, made tough by the climate they live in. It is mostly cold, but Belmere can get hot in the summer months. Belmere is made up of mountains, forests, and hard flatlands. There are parts that are very beautiful and some that are very harsh. Belmere is known for being fiercely

independent as a kingdom. Soldiers are known to be the toughest in Annmar, especially the soldiers from House Fensenn. The one thing that Belmere is truly known for is their Blacksmithing skills, especially swords.

Anntheia

Anntheia is the largest kingdom in Annmar. It is located in the Southeastern part of the world. Anntheia has multiple climates from warm and tropical in the very Southern regions to cold and winter like conditions in the northern part, close to the border it shares with Belmere. It also has a variety of Landscapes from flat grassy plains to mountain ranges. Part of the kingdom contains thick dense forests and plush meadows like the elven kingdom of Dorwinn. With Anntheia being the largest Kingdom in Annmar, it also has the largest ports for trade thus making the kingdom have the largest economy in Annmar. The kingdom is divided by eight providences with each of those Providence is being controlled by a royal house. There are eight royal houses in Anntheia. The kingdom is seen as a symbol of elegance especially it's largest cities such as the capital, Wimbornn.

Dorwinn

Dorwinn is the Elven Kingdom in Annmar. It is located in the Northwest part of the world. A land with a mixture of climates from comfortably warm to mildly cold. It is considered the most beautiful part of Annmar with its rich green meadows, beautiful waterfalls, mountains, and lush landscapes. Some say the sun shines extra bright over Dorwinn. The Elves live long lives. Some say well over hundreds of years. They are considered the most intelligent of all beings in Annmar and their knowledge is considered unparalleled to all other races. They even have some of the largest libraries in the world that would even rival the great Citadel-Monastery of Lenntis who is known as the largest record keeper in the world. Elves speak their own language (Elven language), but also speak in the common tongue.

Guirinn

Guirinn is the kingdom of Dwarves. The kingdom is located in the middle of Annmar within the Kerrodeenn mountains and borders three kingdoms, Belmere, Anntheia, and SKallvynn. The kingdom is a mixture of homes within the mountains and small

villages. Guirinn has five royal houses with one of the royal houses being the ruling House of the Kingdom. The king or queen will always come from one of the royal houses until their line is distinguished and a new royal house becomes the ruler of the Kingdom. The capital city of Guirinn is Thoridunn and each royal house has their own capital city. Dwarves can be half or two-thirds in height compared to a human being. They may be short in stature, but they are also strong and capable Warriors.

Skallvenn

Skallvenn is the kingdom of Barbarians (Example: Vikings). They are a violent and warring race that worship not only the god Anion, but many gods as well. Skallvenn has many terrains from the flatlands and forests to rivers and mountains. It resides in the Southwestern part of Annmar. Barbarians are divided in twelve clans instead of small kingdoms. They do not have castles, but each clan has a capital city and has a large building or Great Hall that is their seat of government. Skallvenn does have a King and Queen. The king is selected by signs from the gods they worship or of trial by combat if someone would challenge for the throne. The king may choose someone to fight in his place for trial by combat. The capital of Skallvenn is the town of Horvarkk. The largest building in Skallvenn is the Great Hall of Horvarkk, which serves as its seat of government.

Yorynn

Yorynn is the kingdom of Halflings and Gnomes, sometimes referred to as the kingdom of Half-Folk. Gnomes, or the forgotten folk as they were sometimes known. They are small humanoids known for their eccentric sense of humor, inquisitiveness, and engineering prowess. Halflings are clever, capable opportunists. Depending on the clan, Halflings might be reliable, hard-working citizens, or they might be thieves just waiting for the opportunity to make a big score and disappear in the dead of night. Halflings adventurers are typically looking for a way to use their skills to gain wealth or status. Gnomes are more craftsmen and love building and making things, whether its out of wood or farming. Both groups do co-exist together, but not necessarily in the same village. Yorynn does not have small kingdoms or castles. They do not have royal houses or lords. Yorynn is made up of villages with their own unique name, but the kingdom does have a capital city, called Dermwist where the elected King

of Yorynn rules. He is chosen from one of the magistrates who rule over a village.

The Emberwild

The Emberwild is the most secretive place in Annmar. It is the kingdom of the Fae or Faerún (fairies). Here there are mystical creatures that live in the thick forest known as The Foxxwood. The Emberwild is located between the kingdoms of Dorwinn and Belmere. The forest area between the kingdoms is the Emberwild. Not much is known about the Faerún, they remain mysterious on purpose. The Emberwild is a natural defense from the outside world and the Fae's villages reside deep in the forests and high up in the trees, making them hard to find. Fae can live on the ground and in the trees. In fact, there are cities in the trees, including a hidden city called The Cohnnwood reserved for Fae, Elves, Gnomes, and Halflings. The outside world rarely ventures into the Emberwild and Fae mainly keep to themselves, while being very suspicious of other kingdoms. This just leads to their mystique in Annmar

A great fantasy world wouldn't be complete without a role-playing game. So not only did the release of "Annmar Chronicles" come with the first story that will set up the history, but the creators were smart enough to also make a tabletop roleplaying game. Starting on October 18th players can dive into the world of Annmar through the tabletop roleplaying game and start telling stories. Tabletop RPGs have been one of the most popular aspects of fantasy for the past 40 years with the invention of Dungeons & Dragons, the first commercially licensed tabletop RPG back in 1974. It wasn't the first, just the most successful on a commercial level, but even that has its Origins from an early RPG game called Chainmail. It was "Dungeons & Dragons" that made tabletop role-playing games popular. Today we have many different games like that from Pathfinder to World of Warcraft and there's even a Star Trek tabletop RPG game. It seemed only right that Annmar would have it's own roleplaying game and while it definitely has similarities to Dungeons & Dragons, this RPG is based on basic fantasy rules and the D20 which is open-source material. It's generally considered the building blocks for many of the tabletop RPGs that we see today.

The creators of "The Annmar Chronicles" are without a doubt, huge fans of Dungeons & Dragons. You can certainly see their inspiration for this role-playing game from DnD, but one thing that they do is make sure

that the roleplaying game keeps in line with the overall story of Annmar and its history. Part of the downside that comes with Dungeons & Dragons after 40 years is lore can become convoluted. There's a lot of great stories within that world, but there's also a lot of things in the lore that don't make sense through all the various mediums in Dungeons & Dragons. From the beginning, Marcus Blake set out to have it all connected to one another. That the published campaigns for the roleplaying game would be lore and connect to the overall history of Annmar. Of course, players can create their own characters and stories within the established history and lore because that's what makes fantasy fun. Players can even re-play established stories to see how the outcome might be different. What if you took the story of a novel or a comic and played it out as a tabletop Fantasy game... how would the outcome be different? Would the story be better? Things like that can be explored in the roleplaying game. However, everything being connected is very important for the creators of Annmar and what sets this fantasy world apart from others.

The roleplaying game which will be released on October 18th comes with established lore in the form of a campaign. A 7-Part campaign that introduces characters who are established lore within Annmar. In fact, one of the ways it connects is through Marcus Blake's book, Rangers of Liberus, one of the characters from the book is part of the campaign. The Elf Lord Illrunn Tyriall is the main protagonist in the campaign *Journey to Timberhelm* who sets the characters on their journey to find a magical artifact. A book of established campaigns will be coming out sometime beginning next year. But it is the role-playing game that almost makes this new world complete. Yes, it's only the beginning and like every great fantasy world, you have to start somewhere. Never has there been a fantasy world created where you start out with stories and then also get to establish the history through a roleplaying game. This is all part of the collaborative process that the creator's want with fans because as Marcus Blake said, "this is a fantasy world for everybody, it shouldn't just be one person's vision, but it should be everybody's fantasy world, a Sandbox that we all get to play in and help tell the stories from within it."

Now the role-playing game that's coming out is the first edition, just the basics, but the creators have promised that there will be future editions, written through collaboration with players. Like "Dungeons & Dragons", the game itself will change while maintaining its core rules, but like every character who will start out at a level one in the campaign and over time get better, so we'll the game itself

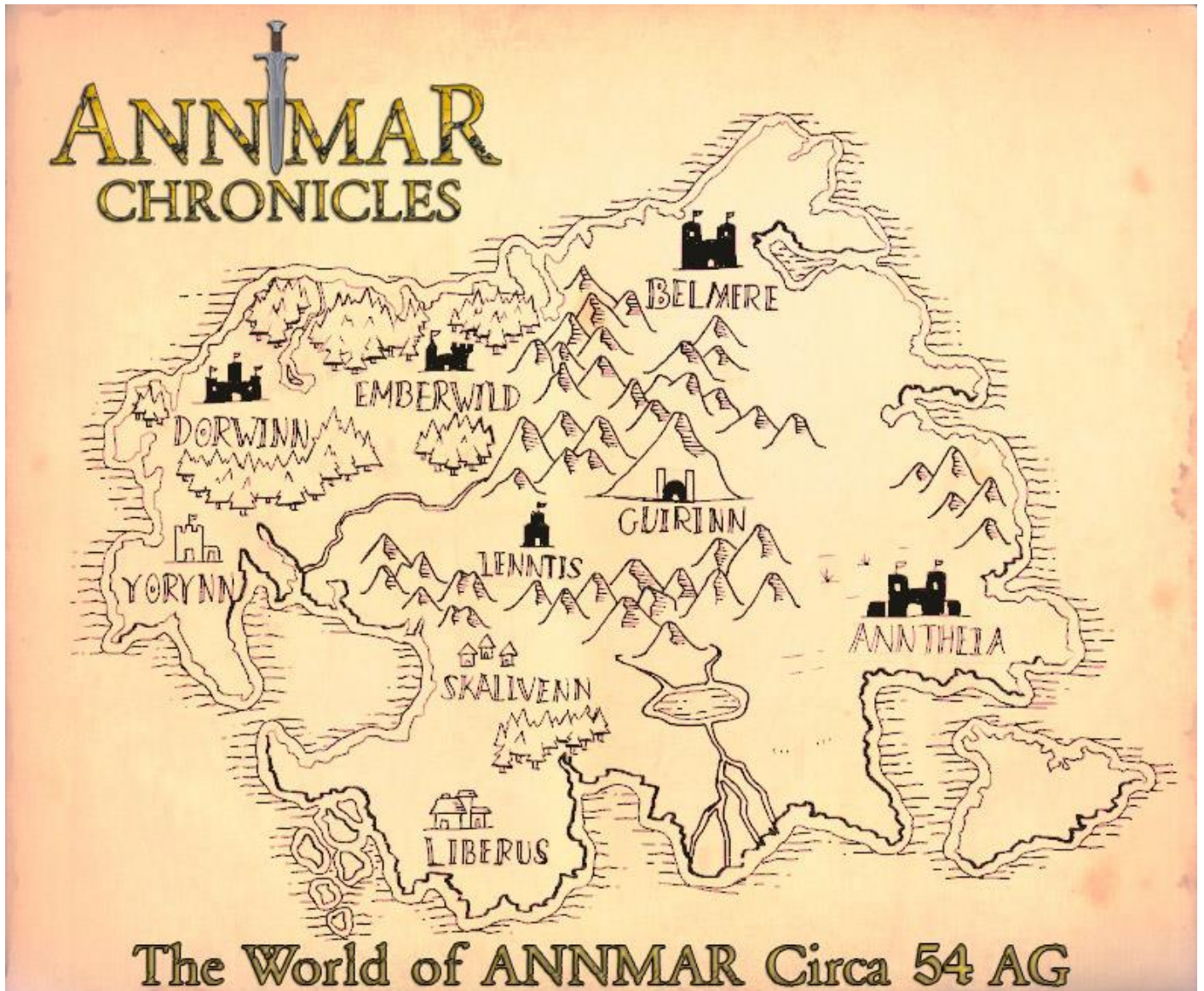
from abilities to fighting mechanics to how the overall game is played. However, what the creators have done is given us a good starting point in a new fantasy world that fans have yearned for. They're not setting out to change the popularity of other games, only to have something else or fans can start from the beginning and help build it because as fun as "Dungeons & Dragons" is, in a lot of ways it's already hit its peak so now is the perfect time for a new fantasy world that fans can dive

into and be a part of as a collaborator. One of the more interesting aspects of this role-playing game is found in the opening message to players, there's an email where fans can reach out and ask questions and offer advice on how to make the game better. That's not something you see every day with a fantasy property. Time will tell if the "Annmarchronicles" ever becomes as popular as "Dungeons & Dragons", "Pathfinder", "Game of Thrones", or "Lord of

the Rings", but one thing is for sure--it's off to a great start! And the creators are doing one of the most important things that they can do, collaborating with fans to help make it better. We start with the first book and hopefully many stories to come as the history of Annmar is told over Three Ages, but we also start with a roleplaying game that we can jump right into and I for one can't wait to start playing with my Elf Ranger.

Read more about The Annmar Chronicles at
www.annmarchronicles.com

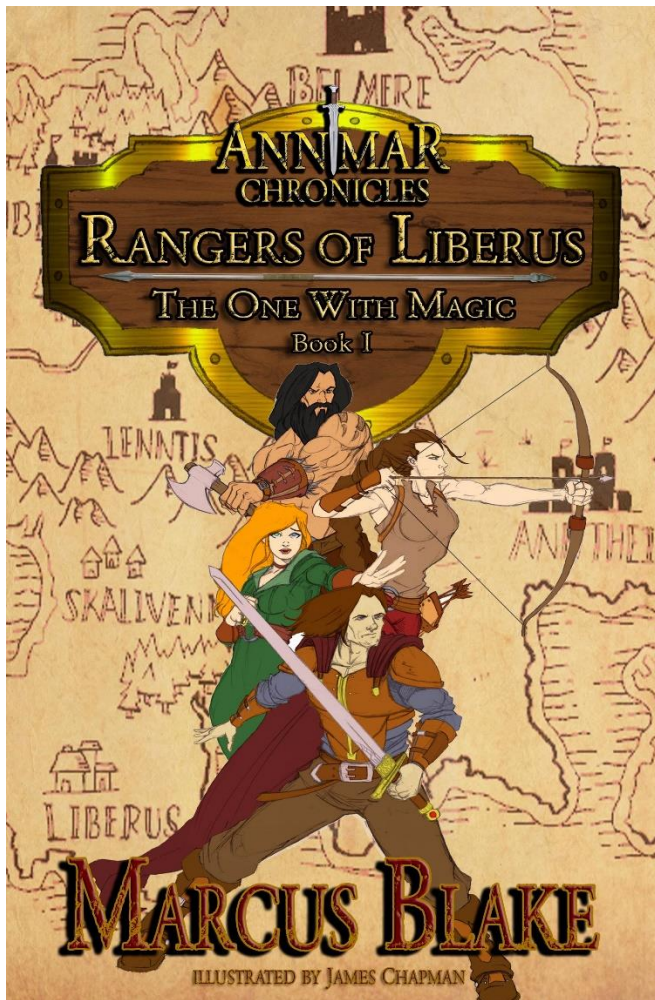
A Map of Annmar



Races of Annmar



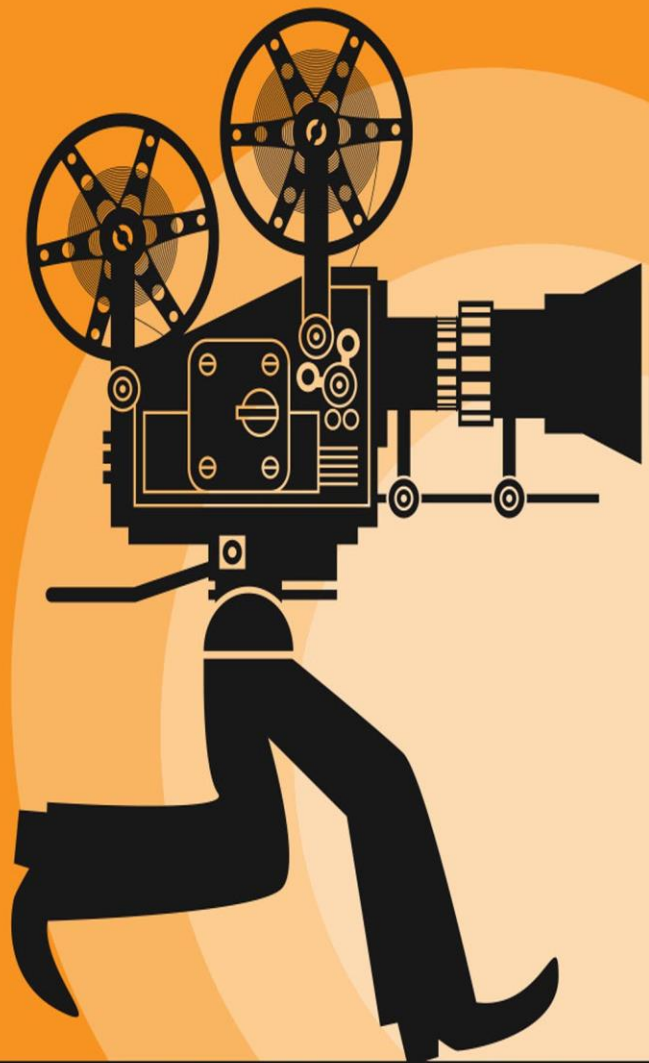
First Two Books in the Annmar Chronicles



ISBN: 978-1932996-78-4

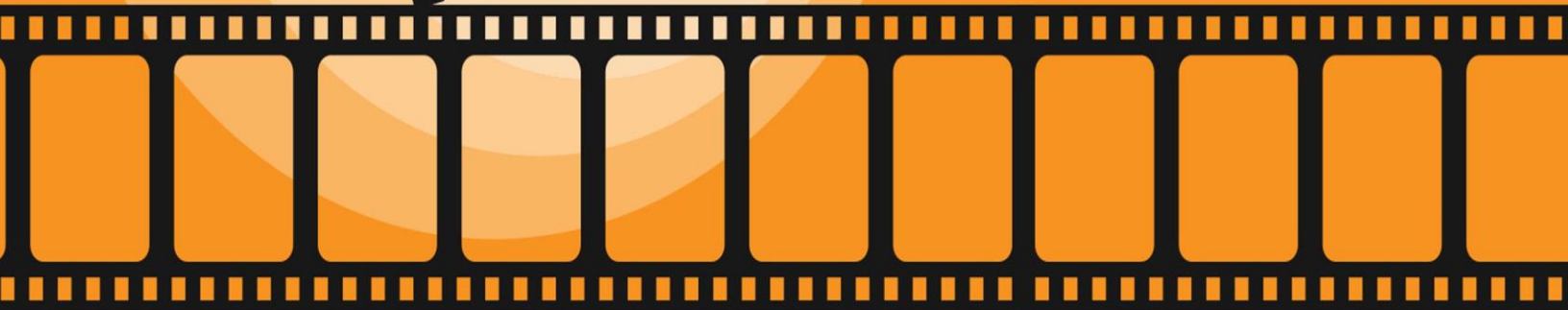


ISBN: 978-1932996-79-1



Film and

TV



What's Happening This Week...



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No Need of Cash



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Super Mario Brothers Movie Coming!

Animated Pic Sets Cast: Chris Pratt As Mario, Charlie Day As Luigi, Anya Taylor-Joy as Princess Peach and More



Illumination and Nintendo have put together a powerhouse voiceover cast for their upcoming *Super Mario Bros.* animated movie which will hit cinemas on Dec. 21, 2022; that date also being news today. Playing the fraternal, mushroom digesting plumbers and squashers of turtles are Chris Pratt as Mario and Charlie Day as Luigi. As Princess Peach, it's *Queen's Gambit* and recent Emmy nominee Anya Taylor-Joy. Playing bad guy Bowser is Jack Black, Keegan-Michael Key as Toad, Seth Rogen as Donkey Kong, Fred Armisen as Cranky Kong, Kevin Michael Richardson as Kamek, and stand-up comedian Sebastian Maniscalco as Spike. "Each voice actor was cast for their ability to capture the unique spirit of their character,"

reads this afternoon's release. The co-financed feature between Universal and Nintendo will be produced by Illumination Founder and CEO, Chris Meledandri and Representative Director and Fellow of Nintendo, Shigeru Miyamoto, and directed by Aaron Horvath and Michael Jelenic, who previously collaborated on the animated series *Teen Titans Go!* and the film *Teen Titans Go! To the Movies*. The screenplay of the film will be written by Matthew Fogel, whose credits include *The LEGO Movie 2: The Second Part* and the upcoming Illumination feature *Minions: The Rise of Gru*. Future offshore release dates will be announced "Mario and Luigi are two of the most beloved heroes in all of popular culture, and we are honored to have the unique opportunity to work so closely with Shigeru Miyamoto and the widely imaginative team at Nintendo to bring these characters to life in an animated movie, unlike any film Illumination has made to date," said Meledandri who is also an outside director of Nintendo. "We are collaborating with Chris and his experienced team to not just create a character licensed film, but a new piece of entertainment which brings Super Mario Bros. to life on the screen, and allows everyone to enjoy whether or not they know about the game. The production so far is

constructive and going very well, and both parties are learning a lot from each other. We humbly ask that fans wait just a little longer for the premiere, and we hope they look forward to seeing the unique characters from Super Mario Bros. on the big screen," said Miyamoto. *Super Mario Bros.* is a huge franchise play for Uni and Illumination. Already, there's a Super Mario Bros. land open at the Universal Japan theme park with others under construction at Universal Hollywood and Universal Orlando. The movie has been a long awaited revival for fans. There was a live action movie in 1993 starring Bob Hoskins as Mario and John Leguizamo as Luigi and Dennis Hopper as baddie King Koopa. There was also in the late 1980s *The Super Mario Bros. Super Show!* animated series which starred Captain Lou Albano as the voice of Mario and Danny Wells as the voice of Luigi. Mario Brothers was designed by Shigeru Miyamoto and Gunpei Yokoi, Nintendo's chief engineer in 1983. Super Mario Bros. the subseries, was launched in 1985. It is the best-selling video game franchise of all time, with more than 758.06 million copies of games sold, including 388.92 million for the *Super Mario* games alone. *Reported by Deadline.com*

'Vendetta': U.S. Deal For Under-The-Radar Action Pic Starring Bruce Willis, Clive Standen, Thomas Jane, Theo Rossi & Mike Tyson



Redbox Entertainment has acquired U.S. distribution rights to under-the-radar action-thriller *Vendetta*, which is starring Bruce Willis (*Die Hard*), Clive Standen (*Taken*), Thomas Jane (*The Last Son*), Theo Rossi (*Army of the Dead*), and Mike Tyson (*The Hangover*). Written and directed by Jared Cohn (*The Horde*), the recently-wrapped film is due to premiere in 2022 and is expected to have a limited theatrical run and be available day-and-date on demand.

Today we can also reveal first look images from the movie. In *Vendetta*, when his daughter is murdered, William Duncan (Standen) takes the law into his own hands, setting out on a quest for retribution. After killing the street thug responsible for her death, he finds himself in the middle of a war with the thug's brother (Rossi), father (Willis), and their gang, who are equally hell-bent on getting even. What ensues is a tense back-and-forth game of vengeance.

By the end, William comes to find that the quest for revenge never has a winner. Pic is produced by Amar Balaggan (*William*), Benjamin Rappaport (*Drone*) and Ross Mrazek (*The Swearing Jar*) of B.A.R. None Productions and Corey Large (*Cosmic Sin*) of 308 Enterprises in association with Vector Film Services, Media Capital Group, and T.N.G. Capital Corp. The deal was negotiated by Marc Danon of Redbox Entertainment and Brian O'Shea of The Exchange, which is handling sales. "We're always on the lookout for films that have engrossing storylines and casts that will bring those stories to life," said Galen Smith, CEO, Redbox. "*Vendetta* has all those elements and it will have audiences on the edge of their seats when it premieres next year."

Reported by Deadline.com

‘You Are Not My Mother’ Cast And Director On Their Spine-Tingling Film : “Elements Of Dark Horror And Folklore”



Baleful forces make their presence felt in the horror film *You Are Not My Mother*, premiering in TIFF’s Midnight Madness section. The film marks the feature directorial debut of Irish native Kate Dolan. “Growing up, I would still hear all the myths and legends and folklore,” Dolan noted as she dropped by Deadline’s TIFF Studio in Toronto. “But when it’s represented, that kind of folk horror, on screen, I would always find it was like, ‘A cabin in the woods

and you anger the scary things in the woods.’ That wasn’t my experience growing up. You still heard all the superstitions and folklore but you’re in a very urban environment but it’s still scary, so that was something I wanted to bring to the film.” Dolan wrote the screenplay, setting the action not in the woods, but in a highly populated area. In her tale, a woman with a history of mental problems goes missing, to the alarm of her sensitive young daughter Char (Hazel Doupe). When the mom, Angela (Carolyn Bracken) returns, something about her is off. “Things kind of take a more sinister turn as her behavior becomes more strange and unusual,” Dolan said. “And some supernatural elements reveal themselves.” Bracken and Doupe are winning praise for their performances in the taught horror story. Among their chief tasks as actors was to convincingly portray mother and daughter. “Kate had a chemistry test with myself and Hazel,” Bracken recalled. “You just strike lucky sometimes, or Kate saw

something in the way the two of us interacted together... In terms of personality we just get along. And I think we have similar senses of humor and I think that lent itself to our relationship and transferring that onto the screen. Doupe, 18, has been appearing on film and TV for over a decade already. The role of shy and anxious Char represented a departure for her. “It was a lot of fun to go to places that I’d never really been before,” Doupe said. “I’ve kind of played like strong, stand-alone people who take up space and aren’t afraid to. So, it was really nice to go the opposite way and follow that arc.” Doupe sums up *You Are Not My Mother* this way: “I suppose it is at large like a family drama with elements of dark horror and folklore.

Reported by Deadline.com



Saban Films To Acquire Alejandro Hidalgo’s Horror Drama ‘The Exorcism Of God’ Ahead Of Fantastic Fest Premiere



Saban Films is finalizing a deal to acquire *The Exorcism of God*, a horror drama from Alejandro Hidalgo (*The House at the End of Time*), which is set to premiere today at Fantastic Fest. The company will handle the film’s distribution in the U.S., as well as in Australia, New Zealand,

the UK, Ireland and South Africa, with XYZ Films continuing to oversee international sales in other territories. The feature, set in an isolated Mexican town, follows Father Peter Williams (Will Beinbrink), an American exorcist who becomes possessed by the Devil, subsequently committing a terrible sacrilege. 18 years later, the consequences of his sin come back to haunt him, unleashing a battle within. Hidalgo co-wrote the script with Santiago Fernández Calvete, with María Gabriela de Faría (*Deadly Class*) and Joseph Marcell (*The Sandman*) co-starring. Hidalgo and Epica Pictures, Inc.’s Joel Seidl produced the film, with producers Karim Kabche and Antonio Abdo of Kabche Film Productions serving as its financiers. “Alejandro Hidalgo is a mighty directorial force in the Latin American horror genre,” said Saban Films’ Bill

Bromiley. “We are excited to share this fascinating and frightening film of his with an American audience.” “Releasing our film in theaters and digital platforms in the US has always been a dream,” added Hidalgo. “We feel beyond excited to make it happen hand in hand with such a wonderful team as XYZ and Saban Films.” *The Exorcism of God* joins an upcoming slate at Saban Films that includes Joel David Moore’s horror thriller *Hide and Seek*, starring Jonathan Rhys Meyers, and Jared Cohn’s *Reactor* co-starring Bruce Willis and Patrick Muldoon.

Reported by Deadline.com

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Yorynn

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RUSSELL T DAVIES RETURNING TO 'DOCTOR WHO' AS SHOWRUNNER!



Russell T Davies is making a return to flagship BBC sci-fi show *Doctor Who* as showrunner, 12 years after he left the role, the BBC has announced. Davies will succeed Chris Chibnall, who previously announced he will hand over the keys to the TARDIS

next year. The show celebrates its 60th Anniversary in 2023. Davies was behind the revival of the long-running series in 2005, propelling it back into the limelight, initially with Christopher Eccleston playing the titular time-traveling 'Doctor'. Jodie Whittaker – the first female to play the Time Lord – will star in the show's 13th series, the last overseen by Chibnall, before vacating the role. That series will premiere later this year. Since he left, Davies has had credits including *Years and Years*, *A Very English Scandal* and *It's a Sin*. BBC Studios are partnering with Bad Wolf to produce *Doctor Who*.



"I'm beyond excited to be back on my favourite show. But we're time-travelling too fast, there's a whole series of Jodie Whittaker's brilliant Doctor for me to enjoy, with my friend and hero Chris Chibnall at the helm – I'm still a viewer for now," commented Davies. *Reported by deadline.com*



Diego Luna Says STAR WARS: ANDOR Has Finished Shooting, And To Expect "Familiar Faces"



A smile widens on Diego Luna's face when asked about what's ahead for his *Star Wars* character Cassian Andor in the upcoming Disney+ series *Star Wars: Andor*. The cheeky grin is a combination of anticipation, excitement and a splash of secrecy regarding the 12-episode project he executive produced and stars in, set to be released in 2022.

"You'll definitely see familiar faces," Luna told Deadline about *Andor* while promoting the return of his Amazon Prime Video original series *Pan Y Circo* on October 8. "I can tell you about this project like no other because I can't spoil the ending if you've seen

[*Star Wars: Rogue One*] already. No matter what I say, I can't ruin the ending." While Luna shared a laugh about how open he is to discuss *Andor's* big-screen demise, he also avoided getting too deep into what lies ahead in the prequel series. He did reflect on the challenges of shooting through a pandemic. To be honest, it's been such a blessing to do this job and to do it under these circumstances," he said. "I had the chance to work with a team that I couldn't be more proud of and admire more. It's a hard-core moment to be out there shooting, and we were really lucky. We're done with the shooting now and getting it ready for audiences to see it." Luna is proud to represent the Latino community on a global scale as an artist, producer and human being who ignites uncomfortable-yet-necessary conversations via *Pan Y Circo*. He credits the response from fans for his success in continuing *Andor's* story in the prequel and urges viewers to continue to vote with their dollars and their voices.



"Audiences can be heard; we have to send a message," he said. "We want to see our stories out there, we want to see and feel represented. We want to connect with those characters and those stories we see in film and all platforms. We have a voice as audiences, and we have power. We have to send the right message when you buy a movie ticket or when you click on the various platforms, you're sending a message. And when you don't, you're also sending a message. So, let's be responsible because we can transform things and make sure we are represented more and represented better on screen." The Mexico-born Luna will be feted October 3 at the Platino Awards with its Award of Honor for his career achievements. *Reported by Deadline.com*

BABYLON 5

SERIES REBOOT FROM J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI IN WORKS AT THE CW



A new version of the Emmy-winning space opera television series *Babylon 5* is in the works. The CW has put in development *Babylon 5*, described as a “from-the-ground-up reboot” of the critically acclaimed 1990s series, from original series creator J. Michael Straczynski and Warner Bros. Television. Written by Straczynski, the reboot revolves around John Sheridan (played by Bruce Boxleitner in the original series), an Earthforce officer with a mysterious background, who is assigned to Babylon 5, a five-mile-long space station in neutral space, a port of call for travelers, smugglers, corporate

explorers and alien diplomats at a time of uneasy peace and the constant threat of war. His arrival triggers a destiny beyond anything he could have imagined, as an exploratory Earth company accidentally triggers a conflict with a civilization a million years ahead of us, putting Sheridan and the rest of the B5 crew in the line of fire as the last, best hope for the survival of the human race. Straczynski executive produces via his Studio JMS. Warner Bros. Television is the studio. Created by Straczynski, the original *Babylon 5* debuted in 1993 with the pilot film *The Gathering*. A future-history story covering the years 2257-2262, with each year corresponding to one season, *Babylon 5* was the first series to introduce viewers to the concept of a five-year arc, with a defined beginning, middle and end. The series launched in 1994 and ran for five seasons and 110 additional episodes. Cast included Bruce Boxleitner, Michael O’Hare, Claudia Christian, Jerry Doyle, Mira Furlan, Richard Biggs, Andrea Thompson, Bill Mumy, Jason Carter, Tracy Scoggins, Stephen Furst, Patricia Tallman, Peter Jurasik, Andreas Katsulas, Jeff

Conaway and Robert Rusler. Straczynski won over a dozen awards for his work on the series, including two Hugo Awards, the Saturn Award, the Space Frontier Foundation Award, and the Ray Bradbury Award. Following the original series, Straczynski continued to tell stories in the *Babylon 5* universe, with the TNT series *Crusade*, seven subsequent feature-length films, and a series of novels, novelizations, short stories, and comics from DC. Straczynski most recently created, wrote and show-ran (with the Wachowskis) the Netflix series *Sense8* and was nominated for a Producers Guild Award for his work on the series finale film. He also created the Showtime series *Jeremiah*. His script for the Clint Eastwood-directed feature film *Changeling*, starring Angelina Jolie, was nominated for a BAFTA for Best Original Screenplay. His other film credits include *Underworld: Awakening*, *World War Z*, *Thor* and *Ninja Assassin*. Reported by [Deadline.com](#)



Tom Welling & Brendan Fraser’s ‘Professionals’ Heads To *The CW*



The CW is continuing its interest in international series. The youth-skewing network has acquired *Professionals*, a loose remake of the Christian Slater-fronted action movie *Soldiers of Fortune* for Scandinavian SVOD service Viaplay. The series, which was first revealed by [Deadline](#) in 2019, stars *Smallville*’s Welling as Vincent Corbo, a top-tier security operative, who is paid to protect the interests of rich and powerful clients by any means necessary – legal or not. After a next-gen medical satellite explodes on launch, Corbo is hired by the

rocket’s designer – billionaire futurist Peter Swann, played by Fraser, who suspects sabotage. Complicating Corbo’s new gig is his former paramour and now Swann’s fiancée, medical visionary Dr. Grace Davila, played by *Wonder Woman*’s Elena Anaya, who is racing to help stave off a global catastrophe. As Corbo and his team of veteran security professionals investigate the rocket disaster, they expose a lethal conspiracy of Swann’s corporate rivals, corrupt government officials, and a shadowy crime syndicate – all working to destroy Swann and take control of his tech empire. Worse, Corbo must also contend with a rogue Europol agent, played by *Inglourious Basterds*’ Ken Duken, who is hellbent on busting him for past sins. The CW acquired the ten-part series from Rainmaker Content. Shot in Ireland and South Africa the series also stars Saïd Taghmaoui, Lisa Lovén Kongsli, August Wittgenstein, Stavel Marc, Tanya Van Graan and Nic Rasenti. The series was created by Jeff Most, who has

produced features including *The Crow* and *The Specialist*, and *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* and *Face/Off* producer and writer Michael Colleary, who are co-showrunners and exec producers. Loosely based on Roadside Attractions’ feature film *Soldiers of Fortune*, it is produced by Most Media, Subotica, Spier Films and Roadside Attractions in association with Jeff Most Productions, Leonine Studios, NENT Group and The Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa. Exec producers include Tristan Orpen Lynch, Michael Auret, Howard Cohen, Eric d’Arbeloff, Jennifer Berman, Maijang Mpherwane, Dipak Chiba, William Smith, Herbert Kloiber, Thomas Augsberger, Cosima von Sprei, Fredrik Ljungberg, Maxim Korostyshevsky, Daniel Wagner, Bharat Nalluri, Brendan Fraser, Tom Welling, and Elena Anaya. The producers are Katy Most, Lwazi Manzi and Aoife O’Sullivan. Reported by [Deadline](#)

Our Latest in Movie Reviews...What You Should See!

"Venom: Let There Be Carnage" Review

By Julie Jones



Venom 2 is finally out and more importantly we finally get to see Carnage! As soon as I saw the vignette at the end of Venom, I knew we were getting Carnage and part of me was excited. Who wouldn't be if you're a fan of the Venom comics? The other part of me was

pessimistic, because how good can a sequel be? I can't be the only one to feel this way. For the uninitiated just in case you never read the comics, Carnage is a red symbiote that is obtained by Woody Harrelson's character when he bites Tom Hardy's character after what doesn't even really

qualify as a botched interview. Yes, Eddie Brock is back to interviewing people and gets a chance to resurrect his career with a chance of a lifetime interview with a famous serial killer that as the killer puts it, will put him back on top. Once he discovers the powers he can wield, he decides to go after his childhood love, which sets up the main story. While this is happening, Venom and Eddie are having a fight and this makes the whole thing a bit complicated, but also very comical. While these movies are never made for the Oscars, I thought the acting could be a little better than what it was. These actors are capable of so much, but you can see them phoning it in. They just aren't invested in it. Maybe their best scenes that really show off their acting skills didn't make the final cut. Sometimes that happens and it would make sense because this film was only 90 minutes. The storyline is ok. Nothing exciting, but it wasn't horrible. And I thought the dialogue was funny, thanks to Venom. The best parts of the film are with Eddie and Venom. They definitely have the best chemistry, although the scenes with them and Michelle Williams were nice too and while it makes

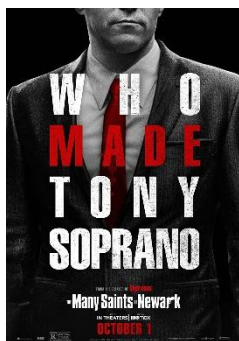
the film better than what it could have been, it doesn't make it as good as it should be, even for a sequel.

The film direction and cinematography aren't anything exceptional, but that isn't something you would expect from a sequel or this kind of movie. Mood manipulation, color palette and lighting aren't as important in films like these. You know what you're going to get with a Superhero film. But they are even less important in something that makes them impossible to discern from the rest of the film. Perhaps better editing could have fixed that, especially if the film was longer than an hour and an half. Overall, I thought it was ok. It wasn't anything to write home about. But if you saw the first one and thought it seemed interesting it isn't something you will suffer through. Venom 2 does have a lot of comedy that will keep you entertained. I wouldn't clear my schedule for it. Watch it when you're bored and someone else wants to see it, so you can blame them when you don't like it. Then make them buy you pizza to make up for it. **FINAL GRADE: 7/10 (Okay)**

"The Many Saints of Newark" Review

By Marcus Blake

For fans who always want a Sopranos movie, well, you finally got one! I don't know if we really needed a Sopranos movie, but why not. Now I freely admit that I am not a huge fan of the show and don't think it's the greatest drama ever on TV, that would be The West Wing. But I do recognize the fact that it is a good show and there was certainly a lot of history that could be explored with the characters that were introduced in the series. So why not a prequel that shows how Tony Soprano got in the family business and when all of his associates were young mob guys in New Jersey. And we have James Gandolfini's own son Michael play the younger version of Tony soprano is probably the best part of the film and brings a sense of nostalgia to the series. You can really see a lot of his father in him, but as good as he is in the role of the younger Tony Soprano, I don't know if that alone is good enough to make this film great. The only thing that I really take away from the film is it's more of a nostalgic movie for those who love the TV show, but if you compare it to other mob movies, it certainly isn't up there with Goodfellas or The Godfather. The Many Saints of Newark isn't really so much about Tony Soprano as it is about the men who influenced him, especially that of Dickie Moltisanti, the father of Christopher, who we all got to know in the show played so brilliantly by Michael Imperioli. I honestly feel like this movie is more about him than it really is about Tony Soprano, but he is the main relative who truly influenced Tony and that is very evident when watching this film. The first thing that I will say is, the performances are outstanding, there's no denying that Alessandra Nivola, who plays Dickie is brilliant and Ray Liotta, who has a dual role of not only playing Dickie's father, but also his father's twin brother Salvatore, who is serving a life sentence in prison for murdering a "made man."



be Vera flamingo who plays the younger Livia Soprano. She is damn near perfect and really makes you believe that she is the younger version of Nancy Marshawn who played Livia in the TV series. It's truly the performances that make this movie. But a very talented cast can only make a movie so good if the writing really isn't there. I feel like this movie is just a series of flashbacks edited together to make a movie, that's what it honestly feels like. The scenes in this movie could have very well have been flashbacks from Tony as he's talking to his therapist in the TV series. They didn't make me care anymore for the characters than what the TV series did and I think that's because you get to know all of these characters and their history over the course of six seasons, more than you can in the film. I'm not saying this is a bad movie, if you are a Sopranos fan then you're going to love the movie because it's nice to see the wiseguys that you've came to love when they're in their prime, but the younger Tony Soprano was more of a sidelined character that passes an out of scenes with the stronger characters in the film. Because like I said before, this is not so much about Tony's story as it is Dickie who really is the matriarch of this mob family at that time. Jon Bernthal is great as Tony's dad, he can electrify any screen, but his character is not really that important. I feel more connected to his character through how Tony described him in his therapy sessions. Now what I consider the best

It's Ray Liotta's first mobster role since Goodfellas and he shines as these two characters who personify the ultimate duality in man, one who is violent and controlling, while the other finds some sort of inner peace and can accept his own reality. But I have to say that the best performance has to

part of the film is the cinematography and taking us back to what a mob-run New Jersey look like during the 60s and 70s. The overall look with the cars and the infusion of great music really makes you feel like you're watching a Scorsese mob film. It certainly makes me feel more for this film than I probably really should, but the overall story is kind of convoluted and more or less a history lesson of how things used to be and to show us all these people who influenced Tony. It doesn't compare to the series, but you watch this movie for the great performances because everybody did a great job especially Michael Gandolfini... I mean, I can certainly see doing a younger Tony Soprano series when he was up and coming and when he and Camilla were first married and started to have kids that would lead up to where the show starts in 1999. My big take on this film is it really feels like a made-for-TV movie that you make after a Series has been so successful and you just want to bring that nostalgia back, as they did with three or four Gunsmoke movies or a Return to Mayberry movie.

It's just never going to be as good and it's more nostalgic than anything else. But I'm not telling you not to watch it, it's perfect for HBO Max and I certainly wouldn't run to the theater to see it. In fact, the best way to watch it is if you're starting to binge-watch the series again take a break and check out the movie. I hadn't watched the series in a long time and after watching the movie, I started the series over so the nostalgia factor really works, but this movie is just okay and the only reason it's better than it is, is because of the performances and the phenomenal cast. Plus, it's great having Ray Liotta back in a mobster movie. I can definitely see him being the mob patriarch now that he's older. So go ahead and check it out on HBO max if you're a fan of The Sopranos. It's the kind of movie that can make you fall in love with the series all over again, but don't waste a movie ticket unless it's a matinee and you are just super into mob movies!

FINAL GRADE: 6/10 (Adequate)

"Malignant" Review

by Alex Moore



The twists and turns of the genres. Horror is, quite possibly, cinema in its eldest form. Think about all the Black & White movies you recall the most fondly. The odds are, many of them involved monsters of some kind, right? We simply cannot escape our history with the genre. It has been with us and it lays will be, in some way or another. One

of my greatest and most memorable theatrical experiences was back in 1999, when I saw "The Sixth Sense." At the time, it was still a modest success, but soon after, it was a mega hit. Since then, the standards have changed, though many horror films still gravitate toward the '80s fad of more guts and gore, such as the "Saw" franchise. You can take your pick, but sooner later, the two styles shall meet and then you will have a new era of horror... has it happened already? I wonder... I, myself, have long been drawn to the genre, in all kinds of forms. I grew up on the Freddy films and eventually made my way to the B column every Friday night at the VHS rental stores. As I grew older, I reverted back to the Freddy era, but replaced him with Jason and so on and so on... OK, maybe I have come full circle with the likes of "The Sixth Sense" and "The Conjuring," but how and why? The answer might be in the form of the latest to grace the screen, big or small or some place in between: "Malignant." Directed by James Wan ("Mortal Kombat," "Spiral: From the Book of Saw," "The Conjuring: The Devil Made Me Do It"), it

would stand to reason why I mentioned "the two shall meet." He is heavily involved in the goriest modern franchise of the 21st century AND the most supernatural. So, think of "Malignant" as something of a hybrid of the two and be aware of the use of symbolism that tends to go hand-in-hand with horror and has for so many years. We start with a very crimson-shaded and graphic scenario within the walls of a hospital facility. It might be some time in the early 1990s. There is a figure, unseen, but volatile in nature.

He seems to go by the name "Gabriel," so keep that in mind. The details absolutely matter. Years later, a woman wrestles with the urge to have a baby, despite several miscarriages, and a seemingly unstable husband. Things become physical, quite suddenly, and this woman, Madison Lake, played by Annabelle Wallis ("The Silencing"), injures herself in the process. As she sleeps that night, a mysterious intruder scares she and her husband (and the audience). She sits with her back toward the couple and says nothing, but uses dart-like moves and deals out destruction all around her. Someone in the house does not survive the ordeal. It was around this time that I realized the story takes place in Seattle and, therefore, has a dreary look to it, which seems to really fit the narrative of the story. Maddy recovers in a hospital and talks with cops about what happened, but there is something important she is keeping from them: she saw it happen in a dream, only to wake up and discover that it had really occurred. Her sister, Sydney Lake, played by Maddie Hasson ("We Summon the Darkness") tries to lend support, but Maddy is shutting her out, as well. Madison has more secrets, apparently. At this point, I found myself thinking that Wallis reminds me of Jennifer Lawrence. I mean, like, Lawrence could have played this part. It is a compliment, albeit one that sounds like it is backhanded. It is not, I promise. So, basically, there is something lurking around that seems to have some connection to Maddy. Their actions and

thoughts seem to line up, but why and how? Is Madison dealing with some strange form of schizophrenia? Is there some underlying illness that stemmed from her injury at the beginning of the movie? Well, let me clear this up: even if you might be on to something, I can assure you that you are not. There is a lot more to this character and her background as the story unfolds and that is where things begin to get a lot more interesting. At first, I thought I was watching a basic horror flick with a few, decent jump scares and some expected atmospheric experiences, but the further along the story went, the less I cared about what I saw in the beginning and the more I was connected to what was still ahead and it did not disappoint. For a moment, I thought I was seeing a live-action version of "Beyond Two Souls." If you know the game, you will see what I mean once you watch the whole movie unfold. By the way, that game had a somewhat disturbing story to it, too, as does this one, but believe me, it is totally worth it. You will forget about how slow the story seemed to be moving along at the start and might even find yourself wanting to rewatch the whole thing to see what you may have missed the first time around. Yes, it is that kind of film. Regrettably, I do not watch as many new horror films as I would like to and I have lost my faith in the cinematic world, to some extent, but "Malignant" is a very solid movie, not just for the horror genre, but as an overall film, as well. I was thoroughly entertained by the end of the story and I could not wait to talk about it. Is it as good as the original "The Conjuring" from a decade ago? No, but is it potentially the best horror film I have seen since then? Yes, in my opinion, it is. I recommend watching it if you can deal with the gory sequences, which are almost comical, at times. Gabriel is a modern favorite of mine now, just for the record.

FINAL GRADE: 8/10 (Good)

"The Guilty" Review

by Chloe James



If it's anything that we at That Nerd Show can get excited over its *BIG* movies. Movies jam packed with action, big name celebrities, gorgeous cinematography, and special effects. After all, "go big or go home" has always been the best way to forget our worries for just a couple of hours and get lost in a story. On the other hand, what about the movies that

can be described as simple, or even "minimalist"? Are they, in contrast, too basic for all but the extreme cinephile to enjoy? Admittedly, movies like these have a lot stacked up against them. With far fewer characters, sets, and action, they have to be much more precise about what elements they do bring to the table. The acting, writing, and editing better shine, because there's nothing to distract the audience if it doesn't. *The Guilty* is the latest such example of a minimalist movie. A remake of a 2018 Dutch film by the same title, *The Guilty* was directed by Antoine Fuqua. Demoted police officer Joe Baylor (Jake Gyllenhaal) is working what he

hopes to be his last night as an emergency call dispatch. Everything seemed like a routine night until he receives a disturbing call from a kidnapped woman. Joe then scrambles to work against the clock to use every resource available to him to save her. All while never leaving the call center. When I say this movie is minimalistic, what I mean is *The Guilty* is not only a "One Night" kind of movie (that is, a film whose story takes place over the course of a day or less) but it's also a "One Setting" (a film that takes place almost entirely in the same place.) For other movies like these, think *Clerks*, or *12 Angry Men*. Unlike the mentioned examples, *The Guilty* barely even has other characters on screen besides Joe, the majority of his interactions being only heard over the phone. I realize an average film goer may be skeptical of this concept. After all, how interesting can it be to watch a guy talk over the phone for an hour and a half? Personally, I was not only extremely invested, but about the most stressed I've been in years watching a movie. I don't know if I'm being dramatic, but the last time I was this clenched after watching a film was *Gravity*, and that's mostly due to my fear of falling.

Being somewhat familiar with director Fuqua's works gave me another reason to approach this film skeptically. While he's definitely capable of making some great ones (*Training Day*, for example) he occasionally makes some big misses. Confession time: I was supposed to have given you guys a review for

Infinite, the other film he's done this year. It just..wasn't even inspiring enough for me to write about how bad it was. (If you're curious, I would have given it a 3/10, had I published it.) Ironically, *Infinite* was a very epic, large scale kind of movie, and was mostly pretty to look at. Yet it absolutely failed to hold my attention. *The Guilty* achieved everything that *Infinite* failed to do for me -- and with so much less to work with! Perhaps it could also have been partially Gyllenhaal's absolutely compelling acting. I may not talk about or appreciate enough about how good of an actor he is, but I guess I should at this point. To carry almost an entire movie by yourself is no small feat. The film also may be good because it followed the original fairly close. While I know it's practically cheating to be a good movie because you're a remake of great foreign movie, remaking something well is not always easy. I can name just as many American remakes who failed their original source material as succeed. Sometimes the best way to enjoy a good story is to strip it down to it's very basics. For those of you who need a bit of a palette cleanse between watching blockbuster movies, checking out *The Guilty* on Netflix is a definite recommendation. Not only is it proof a thriller can keep us on the edge of our seat without any action, but that the right script and actors are all it takes to make a great film.

FINAL GRADE: 9/10 (Great)

"Cry Macho" Review

by Marcus Blake



There's no denying that Clint Eastwood is a great filmmaker, not only as an actor, but also as a film director. He has done some of the most iconic roles in film history and has directed some of the greatest films, but at what point is a once-great filmmaker past their prime. After watching Cry

Macho, I can officially say that Clint Eastwood is past his prime and should retire. Now with that said I am not saying that Cry Macho is a terrible movie, but Clint Eastwood looks too old and tired to carry this movie as the star. And this movie seems like it should have been made about 30 or 40 years ago when it was first optioned and starting to be developed for a film. And the harshest thing that I can say about Cry Macho is it feels like every other Clint Eastwood movie I've ever seen instead of being a seminal film with the perfect message about redemption. In fact, Clint Eastwood already made that movie 30 years ago and it's called Unforgiven. The story is a good one, there's a lot to like about the story and the film, but I feel like the biggest tragedy is if Clint Eastwood is going to be the star, he should have been the star three decades ago when it would have been more poignant. That's not to say that Clint Eastwood hasn't surprised us over the last 15 years. Gran Torino is a fantastic film, and I very much enjoyed The Mule, but that should have been his last film. Now, Clint Eastwood reminds me of the fighter who doesn't know when to quit. At least Robert Redford knew when it was time to retire as an actor and picked the perfect project, an aging bank robber still finding a spring in his step when he robbed a bank and became the oldest bank robber in America. That was a great film for somebody like Robert Redford to go out on.

Let's talk about this film. Cry Macho is the story of a broken-down ex-rodeo star and horse trainer who is hired by a former employer to

basically kidnap his son in Mexico and bring him back to America. The story very much resonates what I would hope for with Clint Eastwood as a filmmaker because it's about a man trying to put things right at the end of his life and do one last thing great thing before he meets his maker. And that one great thing is to rescue a boy whose life is ahead of him and to save him from the degradation of a mother who doesn't really care about him while stopping him from entering a life of crime. The main character and the young boy have to escape corrupt Mexican henchmen and police officers who are trying to find them before they can get to the border. And of course, with this kind of story, you find an old man who has one last shot at love and finding some peace. Not exactly an original story, but we keep seeing this kind of story because it works every time.

The thing about Clint Eastwood is he made some really great iconic films in the late sixties and seventies especially westerns. One of the most underrated films he did was The Outlaw Josey Wales, Jesse James type character with nothing to lose and trying to bring some sense of justice the world around him while helping those less fortunate in the aftermath of the Civil War. Clint Eastwood was perfect and you can say that he's kept doing those kinds of characters through films like Heartbreak Ridge all the way up to Unforgiven, which was at a perfect time in his life and his career. Cry Macho should have been among those kinds of films. Clint Eastwood is 91 years old and not really that believable as someone who's tough enough to rescue a boy and save him from the bad guys. There are some Sweet moments in the film and some familiarity with Clint Eastwood because we've seen these performances before, but it doesn't quite feel the same since in truth he has passed his prime. What makes the film worth watching is not Clint Eastwood, but the rest of the cast, which carries the film and it's almost like Clint Eastwood is being propped up the cast. The best moments of the film are when he is offering some kind of fatherly advice to the young boy. But there's no surprise to it because again we've seen this performance before and the last time he did it, I felt like it was more heartfelt when he was giving advice about being a good husband and father to Bradley Cooper's DEA character agent who just arrested him in The Mule.

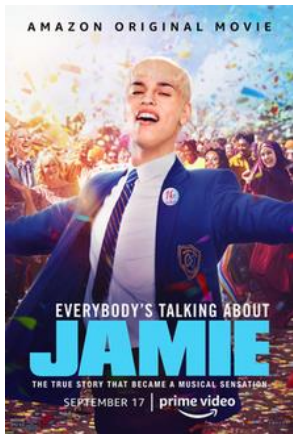
What truly works in the film is the cinematography. Also, it has a nice sense of pacing for the most part. Although, at the beginning of the third act when they're hiding out, it seems to drag out for 15 to 20 minutes longer than it should. Dwight Yoakam does a good job as the father who hires Clint Eastwood's character to get his boy and Fernanda Urrejola who plays the mother also does a fantastic job as this despicable seductress who doesn't really care about the young boy, only using him as leverage to keep the riches that she got from her ex-husband. Plus, there's a lot of great funny scenes with the rooster and other animals. I wish that I could say that the scenes of them breaking horses had more emotional weight to them, but it's not really believable seeing a 91 Year Old Clint Eastwood being able to break a horse. But the final scenes are probably the best. The only time I really felt emotion for Clint Eastwood's character is at the very end when he gets the boy to the border, and waves goodbye. Then of course his final scene when he goes back to the small Mexican town where they were hiding out and after having fixed the jukebox in a little Mexican cantina earlier in the film, has a dance with his new love interest. Both are two lost souls who happen to find each other and it makes for some great scenes. But the sad truth is none of this is enough to make this the kind of iconic Clint Eastwood movie we should get, the kind of iconic films that we have seen with Unforgiven, Million Dollar Baby, and Gran Torino. At least in those films, Clint Eastwood played an aging character that was believable and had an emotional connection to. And you knew that Clint Eastwood wasn't past his prime when he did these movies. As much as I like the story, I almost feel like Clint Eastwood should have just stayed in the director's chair and had a younger actor, who was still old enough to make the character of ex-rodeo star believable. There's plenty of older actors out there that could have done a better job in that role and would have made us feel something more for the film. Like honestly, I could have seen Tom Selleck or Harrison Ford play this role perfectly. But Clint Eastwood even though he has passed his prime as an actor, can still direct a good film and that alone makes Cry Macho worth watching!

FINAL GRADE: 6/10 (Adequate)



“Everybody’s Talking About Jamie” Review

by Marcus Blake



Everybody's Talking About Jamie, the hit musical has been turned into a movie and I have to say, the film is sensational. It's always hard turning a musical into a film. While you can always do more with a film because of the locations, you sometimes lose the

intimacy that you get by seeing a live musical. Perhaps that's true, but I feel like this film more than makes up for it with a great cast and the same fantastic music. Jonathan Butterell had the daunting task of turning his stage musical into the film and he did a fantastic job. I'm sure there's more of an intimacy with the musical, but having never seen it, I can honestly say that I still feel a connection through the film because it was filmed in Sheffield, this tiny community outside of London so from that standpoint the magic from the stage musical has been captured in my opinion. Small communities can have that effect. I'm not going to tell you that it's a perfect movie. There's always advantages and disadvantages to having a musical being turned into a film and each version can feel different while also feeling the same.

If you don't know the story of *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*, it's about a teenager who isn't just coming out as gay, everybody already knows he is. It's about him wanting to be a drag queen and get into that culture. It's one thing to come out, but to get into a culture that inflames all these stereotypes for those who are disgusted by the culture and discriminate, Jamie's journey is a lot harder than the typical teenager who's coming out as gay. You still deal with bigotry from teachers and classmates, especially when your main character wants to go to prom in drag and they won't let him.

I think it's easy to think that once a person has come out, it's automatically liberating, but compound that with getting into the drag culture, there's a whole new level of bigotry that comes with it, which can be harder on teenagers. But like all coming-of-age stories, the main character has to deal with a sometimes, tumultuous relationship with his parents. In this case, Jamie's father just can't understand why he has a gay son when all he wanted was a son that he could do things with like taking the sporting events, so of course the father wants nothing to do with the character. The heart of the story is a teenager being free to be who he wants to be with the guidance of an older gay mentor who lived with the bigotry especially during the AIDS crisis and thus shedding the disappointment of his father. I can't say if the musical or the movie is better, but I can't say that the movie is a good version of the story and if you love the music then you definitely won't be disappointed with this film. What makes the film truly work is the cast. Max Harwood is fabulous as Jamie after having interviewed him, it's not hard to see why. Check out my interview! Lauren Patel, who is starring in her first featured film is also fantastic as the best friend. But I also feel like this movie is really made because of Richard E. Grant...the older gay mentor who designs costumes. But then again isn't he great in anything he does. Sarah Lancashire shines as the mother and it's not hard to love Sharon Horgan, although I never liked to see her in a nemesis role because he's too funny. The cast is what makes this a great companion piece to the musical.

Like all films, especially musical films, it's not perfect. One of the things that I love about musicals is because you get such an intimacy watching it live, the pacing always seems perfect and you know how I love to argue about pacing in a film. There are times that I think they forgot that this is supposed to be more of a musical, but they're trying to hard to be a film. And that's fine, but sometimes breaking into song can ruin these great dramatic moments with the cast. However, it's not like every movie based off of a musical doesn't suffer from this problem. I love the music and I love the pageantry, but the pageantry is more for the musical version more than it is for the film and I think I definitely could have enjoyed this as a film

without all of that while getting the same feeling I get with the story. The film can invoke the same feeling as I would have if I were watching the musical. I know the pageantry is supposed to be all in the main characters head and how he views things, but sometimes it doesn't always work in the film. Then again well this may be a minor critique, this is a movie about a character wanting to get into drag so the pageantry is a must. All I'm saying is sometimes you can get lost in the story itself because it's a film wanting to be too much like the musical and great musicals are meant to be seen live, am I wrong! So, the pacing is a little off because of that, but in the world of film, you can still make this fantastic pageantry through song and dance that brings the story to life just like the musical.

All in all, this is a great film and it's definitely been 25 years since we've had a great film from Sheffield. The last one being *The Full Monty*. But what truly makes this film worth watching is for those who never got to see the musical live, you get to share this wonderful coming of age story about a teenager not only coming out, but getting into a culture that is full of life and promise, and shows us how we can truly be free with ourselves. There's inspiration to take from this story. Plus, when you add a fantastic cast that looks like they could have been picked right off from the stage to be in movie, a good cast can make any movie better than what it is and they're the ones that truly make this movie shine. So, if you're looking for something to watch on Amazon, if you need a good coming-of-age story even if it feels a little bit familiar, but one with gorgeous pageantry then *Everybody's Talking About Jamie* is worth watching. Also, there's no greater nemesis than a teacher that won't allow you to truly enjoy your own prom the way it should be enjoyed and I think every teenager can relate to that. Enjoy the great music, enjoy the fantastic cast, and you will not be disappointed, especially if you're looking for something to watch on Amazon this weekend! If you can't see the musical live, the film is a perfect alternative.

FINAL GRADE: 7 / 10 (Okay)

The image shows the Prime Video logo, which consists of the words 'prime video' in a white, sans-serif font on a blue background. Below the text is a white curved arrow pointing to the right, resembling a smile.

“KATE” Review

by Marcus Blake



2021 must be the year of female assassins and I am okay with that, especially in movies. Another female assassin-centric movie comes to Netflix this week starring Mary Elizabeth Winstead. The movie is called Kate. Well, it may not necessarily be

the same high-octane action movie that Gunpowder Milkshake is, Kate definitely has its moments and will keep you on the edge of your seat. The best way I can describe this movie is, it is a crossover between The Replacement Killers and Crank. If you only had one day to live after a botched assassination attempt, what would you do, especially if you could choose to rescue an innocent girl or let her die? I will first say this, Mary Elizabeth Winstead is excellent as a female assassin and action roles definitely suit her. She was really good in Gemini Man even if that movie wasn't really that good. She's even better in Kate. However, as much as you might enjoy this movie, it also feels very familiar. Yes, I feel like I've seen it before, but the action is great.

Mary Elizabeth Winstead plays a female assassin who was trained since she was little girl by her handler after she was orphaned. The story really takes off after a botched assassination attempt where she doesn't want to kill an innocent girl and then later is poisoned where she has no chance to live and now, we're off to the races. She must find who did this to her and finish the job while getting the perfect revenge or justice, however, you want to look at it. It may be a simple theme and that's okay

because I don't think you will watch this movie as if you're watching Meryl Streep in Sophie's choice. Although, as much of an action film as it is there are some emotional tones where the main character is forced to reconcile her own past and realize that her choices were taken away by her handler, the man that she thought was her friend and a father figure to her played by Woody Harrelson. Like all good assassin movies, nothing is exactly what it seems and there are some great moments with her character and the man that she is supposed to kill as she's reconciling her life, her choices, and coming to terms with her impending death. I think the film is better with these emotional elements and it makes it more than just an action film where her character is hunting down all the bad guys like she's some female version of The Punisher. The filmmakers could have very easily made this just a pure action film like she's The Punisher and you can enjoy the film just for that, but adding some depth to the characters and this emotional weight to the assassin who's trying to put things right makes it a better movie.

The action is very good and Mary Elizabeth Winstead is great in the action role, you can even say that this is the Tokyo version of atomic blonde, although I will always say that Charlize Theron is just a little bit better. But as good as the action is and all the fight scenes, there are some things that make this film less than stellar. I like Woody Harrelson, he's pretty much good at anything he does, but I feel like his character could have been played by anyone because we don't know much about his backstory. Maybe we're not meant to know because his character is not that important except as a character, someone who doesn't really care and is always looking for his next protege. He's trying to be the handler much like Gabriel Byrne was in the point of no return with Bridget Fonda, but if you remember that movie then there was an emotional weight with his character because he loved and let her slip away in the end whereas Woody Harrelson's character just doesn't seem to care. It's a wasted character. Sometimes a film with too much action takes away from the emotion that the audience is supposed to feel towards the characters. I can also say the same thing about the lover that Mary Elizabeth Winstead's character finds it ends up poisoning her. Anybody, could

have played that character because of such a minor role and yet you put a familiar face into that role played by Michiel Huisman from Game of Thrones. Again, this is a case where you could have a little bit more backstory and show what his true connection is to the people who are trying to kill the main character. I just feel like when it comes to the choices and editing, they focused too much on the action because it's an assassin film and didn't pay enough attention to the backstory of some of the characters that render them unimportant when perhaps they shouldn't be.

What really does make this film enjoyable is the strange mother like figure that Mary Elizabeth Winstead's character plays when rescuing a girl who's cast aside by her own family, someone she should have killed, but had a heart on some level so she saves the girl's life instead. The scenes with them are good. The girl is hilarious as a typical teenager who's addicted to technology and social media and wants to document how "badass" the assassin is. The begrudging attitude by Mary Elizabeth Winstead's character is comical and heartwarming, which makes you feel for both characters. And that's the thing about any film, an audience can't truly enjoy the film, unless we feel some connection to the characters. Even though this film seems very familiar, what makes it good and worth watching is Mary Elizabeth Winstead, she plays a great assassin and is fantastic in the action role. The fight scenes are incredible and gorgeously choreographed. Having an Asian City filled with lights and a darker tone makes it the perfect setting. I almost felt like I was playing Cyberpunk 2077 and my character is the assassin from the movie, which I love. Mary Elizabeth Winstead is what makes this movie work and she is a delight to watch, She adds an emotional depth to her character that makes us feel for her as she's dying even though she is technically a villain. It's easy to root for her in the end and feel sad about how it's all going to end. There's a lot of action movies that you'll quickly forget after you've seen it once, but not Kate, sure it has its problems as a film. However, it's definitely worth watching and not just once. Mary Elizabeth Winstead and the Asian cast is great and it is certainly one of the better films on Netflix.

FINAL GRADE: 7/10 (Okay)





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GAMING NEWS



Aragami 2 Now Available on PS5, Xbox Series X/S, PS4, Xbox One, and PC



Players lead the Kurotsuba Clan against the encroaching Akatsuchi Empire in this highly anticipated sequel that sees Lince Works' stealth franchise evolve into a faster and more intense stealth action-adventure. Lince Works is proud to launch its stealth-action adventure, *Aragami 2*, on PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, Xbox One, Xbox Series S/X, Xbox Game Pass, and Steam. To celebrate, the developers have released a new trailer that perfectly showcases the distinct art style, cinematic drama, and exciting gameplay that players will not want to miss. *Aragami*

2 channels the spirit of classic ninja experiences like the *Tenchu* series, but injects it with modern flair in a beautifully crafted world. Lince Works' independent debut in 2016, the first *Aragami*, sold over 700,000 as players eagerly dove into the cinematic, stealth adventure. Almost 5 years later, the developers return to the shadows and enhance the core stealth experience of *Aragami* with new skills and upgraded movement that combine to really make players feel like mobile ninja. *Aragami 2* also features a brand-new, built-from-the-ground-up combat system inspired by the best action games around and a full campaign that can be played entirely solo or cooperatively with friends.

Aragami 2 Features:

- Play with your own playstyle (ghost, spirit, demon)

- A full campaign that can be completed solo or with up to 2 other players in co-op
- Challenging stealth-focused missions scattered through different locations
- A wide variety of abilities, shadow powers, and special equipment
- Agile character movement that will make you feel like a ninja
- Open environments to explore and choose your own path
- Weapon and armor customization

Aragami 2 is available digitally on [Steam](#) (\$34.99 / €34.99 / £29.99), PlayStation Store (\$39.99 / €39.99 / £34.99), and Xbox Store (\$39.99 / €39.99 / £34.99). Physical versions of *Aragami 2* for PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, and Xbox One/Series X (\$39.99 / €39.99 / £34.99) are available now in Europe and release September 21, 2021, in North America.



Sherlock Holmes Chapter One Release Date Announced



Sherlock. Friend. I Wasn't Sure You'd Release - 16 November 2021 Extensive gameplay deep-dive released alongside preorders with details on price and additional content. 16 September 2021 - Kyiv, Ukraine + Dublin, Ireland

Frogwares have announced the release date for *Sherlock Holmes Chapter One* with a new trailer. A young Holmes finds himself infiltrating the more descendant and lavish

circles of Cordona's society. And as always, it's not just tea and biscuits these elite seem to overindulge on. The devs have also published an extensive narrated gameplay deep dive video that can be found at [thatnerdshow.com](#). Get a taste of the opening quest and a deeper look at certain features of the game - such as the Mind Palace, the Holmes family mansion, how combat plays out, and also the various difficulty options that let you tweak or even turn off certain elements such as combat entirely. With the release date now set, *Sherlock Holmes Chapter One* is now available to pre-order on Steam, GOG, Epic, PlayStation 5 and Xbox Series X|S. The team previously announced a partial old gen delay and will have more information about PlayStation 4 and Xbox One release dates at a later date. All preorders will receive the Victorian Starter Pack which includes a special quest titled "The Lead Zeppelin", a unique Consulting Detective and The

Victorian Vampire in-game outfits, 500 Manghirs (the currency of Cordona Island) which players use for various cosmetic customization as well as a free digital copy of *Sherlock Holmes Crimes and Punishments* on the same platform they ordered Chapter One on. A Deluxe Edition has also been revealed. It includes the base game + season pass that includes new quests: Saints & Sinners (Available day 1), a questline linked to Mycroft Holmes, a questline which pitches Sherlock against a mysterious shadow figure only known as M and more to be announced later. The base game will be priced at: \$44.99. The Deluxe Edition will be priced at: \$59.99. All season pass content will also be available to purchase separately. *Sherlock Holmes Chapter One* will be released on PC (Steam, Epic, GOG), PS5, Xbox Series X/S and later for PS4 and Xbox One.

BLOODHUNT: SHARKMOB'S DEBUT TITLE ANNOUNCED FOR THE PLAYSTATION® 5 (PS5™) SYSTEM



Swedish game developer Sharkmob is excited to announce that Bloodhunt, its brand-new title set in the *Vampire: The Masquerade* universe, has been announced for PS5 to be released later this year. This free-to-play, stylish take on Battle Royale has been designed to empower players with the essence of the supernatural. Bloodhunt presents unique vertical gameplay with traversal that takes you from the back-alleys to the rooftops of Prague. Successfully navigating the city, feeding to grow stronger and preserving the Masquerade are key components to the game which can be played solo or in group matched teams of three with up to 45 players. "We're very proud to be announcing that our first game will be coming to PS5 this year! We've been developing the PS5 version alongside

the PC version and it's been great working with Sony on this." said Fredrik Rundqvist, CEO of Sharkmob. Currently available in Early Access on PC, players can join the Bloodhunt by signing up on the official website at Bloodhunt.com PS5 players can wishlist the game through the official PS5 store page. **About Bloodhunt**

A third person free-to-play Battle Royale experience set in the *Vampire: The Masquerade* universe, developed in close collaboration with the World of Darkness brand team. For the first time ever, experience the thrill of vampires at war as sects clash across the city of Prague, triggered by the arrival of strike-teams from the Second Inquisition. Use your supernatural powers, weapons and wit to eradicate your enemies and deal with the hunters - all while striving to maintain the Masquerade.

Features:

- Join the Bloodhunt using supernatural powers and traverse anywhere to battle other players and AI controlled enemies to be the last vampire standing.
- Show off your vampire fantasy by customizable characters - play as a personalised vampire of your own creation. Choose your Clan allegiance to define your playstyle then let your personality shine through as you create your most unique expressive looks for friends and rivals to remember.
- Restore the Masquerade - Set in the beautiful Old Town of Prague, rendered with the highest graphical fidelity, Bloodhunt offers reasons to keep fighting with story progression using Acts updates throughout seasons.
- No "pay-to-win" mechanics - created with a player focused mentality.
- Supporting 12 languages - English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Russian, Polish, Portuguese (Brazilian), Spanish (Latin American), Chinese, Korean and Japanese.
- Spatial Audio support allows players to be fully immersed in the thrill of the hunt: listen for threats before seeing them using the latest 3D Audio technology.

XBOX GAME PASS MEMBERS: **MARVEL'S AVENGERS** IS AVAILABLE!



We just launched our biggest expansion to date for *Marvel's Avengers - Black Panther: War for Wakanda*. We've loved seeing your reactions to the new campaign, and today we're excited to announce that we're making the complete *Marvel's Avengers* experience, including all previously released free content, available with Xbox Game Pass for PC, Console, and Cloud on September 30. Yep - you read that right. Every player with an Xbox Game Pass membership can experience the full game and all our post-launch Heroes and missions. This includes four story campaigns that showcase one or more Hero's unique abilities, as well as our Avengers Initiative - our evolving online multiplayer world that lets you and three friends play as any Hero in our roster and embark on global adventures. Xbox Game Pass members will also have immediate access to our new *War for Wakanda* expansion, featuring our new playable Hero, Black Panther, and hours of new multiplayer and story content. In *War for Wakanda*, King T'Challa faces his greatest challenge yet when Ulysses Klaue infiltrates Wakanda to steal its precious Vibranium. T'Challa won't be able to defeat his enemy alone; he'll need to team up with

the Avengers and confront his distrust of outsiders if he hopes to protect his kingdom. Beyond this expansion, *Marvel's Avengers* is an evolving game with ongoing updates that add new playable Heroes, missions, villains, campaigns, and events - and Xbox Game Pass members will get to experience all of it! If you're gaming on Xbox Series X|S, you'll get to play the optimized version of *Marvel's Avengers* to take advantage of faster load times and higher frame rates resulting in a smoother gameplay experience. *Marvel's Avengers* also supports Smart Delivery, giving you the best version of the game automatically delivered to your console, regardless of generation, with no extra steps required from you. We just launched our biggest expansion to date for *Marvel's Avengers - Black Panther: War for Wakanda*.

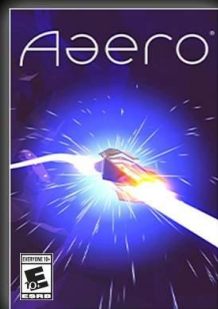
We've loved seeing your reactions to the new campaign, and today we're excited to announce that we're making the complete *Marvel's Avengers* experience, including all previously released free content, available with Xbox Game Pass for PC, Console, and Cloud on September 30. Yep - you read that right. Every player with an Xbox Game Pass membership can experience the full game and all our post-launch Heroes and missions. This includes four story campaigns that showcase one or more Hero's unique abilities, as well as our Avengers Initiative - our evolving online multiplayer world that lets you and three friends play as any Hero in our roster and embark on global adventures. Xbox Game Pass members will also have immediate access to our new *War for Wakanda* expansion, featuring our new playable Hero, Black Panther, and hours of new multiplayer

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XBOX: New Games with Gold for October 2021

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The October Games with Gold lineup is here! On Xbox One and Xbox Series X|S, fly to the beat of the rhythm in *Aæro* and fight the power using parkour in *Hover*. And for our lineup [via Backward Compatibility](#), take down Dracula with your favorite heroes in *Castlevania: Harmony of Despair*, and relive the survivor-horror classic *Resident Evil Code: Veronica X*. Xbox Live Gold members will have exclusive access to these games for a limited time as part of [Games with Gold](#). So will [Xbox Game Pass Ultimate](#) members, who receive all the fantastic benefits of Gold plus access to over 100 high-quality games with Xbox Game Pass.

- *Aæro* (\$14.99 ERP): Available October 1 to 31
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- *Castlevania: Harmony of Despair* (\$14.99 ERP): Available October 1 to 15
- *Resident Evil Code: Veronica X* (\$19.99 ERP): Available October 16 to 31

Aæro

Speed through stunning environments, tracing ribbons of light and fighting epic boss battles, all to an incredibly licensed soundtrack. Featuring music from Noisia, Flux Pavilion, Katy B, The Prototypes, Neosignal, and more, feel the groove and release the energy that lives in the music.

Hover

In a futuristic 3D open world, join a group of young rebels, the Gamers, and fight against oppressing laws while performing incredible tricks and combos. Equipped with high-tech gear allowing for amazing jumps and speed, help the citizenry, and find a way to reach the Orbital Station.

Castlevania: Harmony of Despair

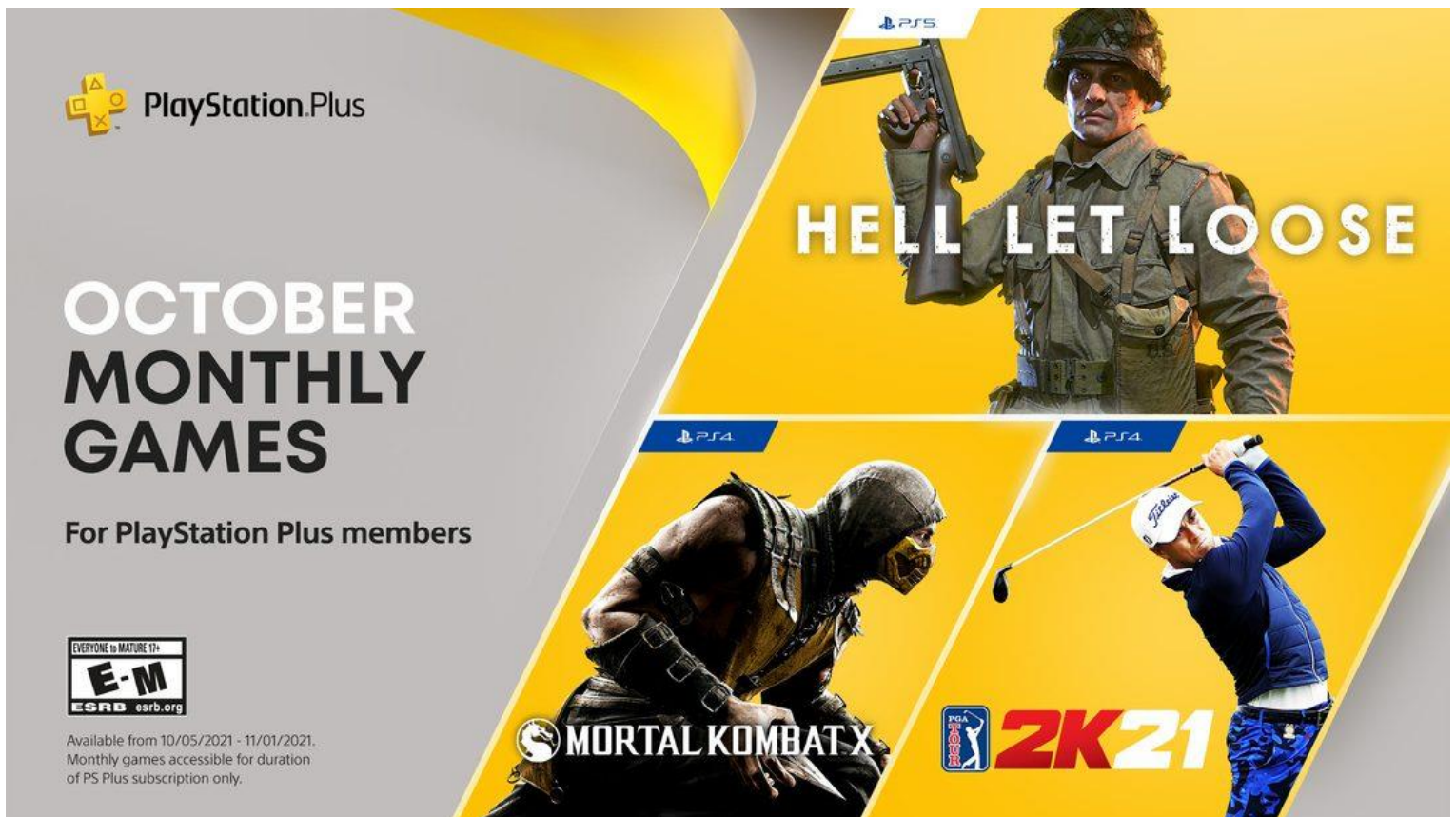
Step into the shadows of the hell house to vanquish your old-nemesis, Dracula. With 6-player co-op, select your fan favorite vampire hunters from across the entire series to return Dracula to his eternal slumber.

Resident Evil Code: Veronica X

Set three months after the destruction of Raccoon City, help Claire Redfield travel to Europe to search for her missing brother, Chris. Infiltrate the Paris laboratory of the Umbrella Corporation and survive the zombie horde that awaits.

Read more about our Games with Gold program here and stay tuned to Xbox Wire for all the latest news on Xbox. Like we said before, if you're an Xbox Game Pass Ultimate member, you get all the benefits of Xbox Live Gold, over 100 high-quality games you can play on console, PC, and Android devices with cloud gaming (Beta, where available), and access to EA Play at no extra cost. New games are added all the time, so you're never without something new to try when you're looking to find your next favorite game. If you're new, or if you're an existing Xbox Live Gold and Xbox Game Pass for Console member, join or upgrade today for just \$1.

PLAYSTATION PLUS GAMES FOR OCTOBER: *HELL LET LOOSE, PGA TOUR 2K21, MORTAL KOMBAT X*



With next month's PlayStation Plus lineup, you can arm yourself with WWII-era weaponry, golf club, or fist and do battle on war-torn frontlines, lush greens or otherworldly realms. PS5 multiplayer shooter Hell Let Loose, golf sim PGA Tour 2K21 and one-on-one fighter Mortal Kombat X join the PlayStation Plus lineup on Tuesday, October 5 and will be available until Monday, November 1.

Hell Let Loose | PS5

This WWII-inspired multiplayer title splices epic 100-player battles with a unique resource-based RTS-inspired meta-game, where Commanders direct the flow of battle and co-ordinate powerful in-game abilities that influence the team's march to victory. Team up and tackle enemy combatants online* in

50v50 skirmishes across a dynamically shifting frontline, choose one of 14 playable roles within infantry, recon, and armour unit types, each equipped with authentic weapons, vehicles, and equipment.

PGA Tour 2K21 | PS4

Prove you've got what it takes to become FedExCup Champion. Take on PGA Tour Pros across stunning, real-life courses during your very own career and earn rewards and gear, then play against your friends or the world's best players in local and online* matches. Create your own player and customize your equipment, then build your own clubhouse, designing and running full seasons and tournaments customized to your rules and requirements.

Mortal Kombat X | PS4

Netherrealm Studios' bone-crunching beat 'em up fuses cinematic presentation with an all-new gameplay experience. For the first time in the series' history, every character in its robust roster has a selection of different fighting styles to pick from, offering an expanded range of strategies to take into battle, as well as combat against.

Last chance to download September's PlayStation Plus games September's games lineup is making way for October's new arrivals, so you've until Monday, October 4 to add Predator: Hunting Grounds, Overcooked: All You Can Eat!, and Hitman 2 to your game library.

OCTOBER 2021 GAME RELEASES

PRODUCT	COMPANY	FORMAT	RELEASE DATE
Effie	Inverge Studios	NS	01/10/2021
Final Gear	Komoe Technology	An, iOS	01/10/2021
INDUSTRIA	Headup	PC	01/10/2021
Legion TD 2	Auto Attack Games	PC	01/10/2021
Lydia	Platonic Partnership	PS4	01/10/2021
NFL Clash	Nifty Games	An	01/10/2021
Phoenix Point	Prime Matter	PS4, XO	01/10/2021
Prose & Codes	Hero Game Co	PC	01/10/2021
Train Station Renovation	Live Motion Games	PS4, PS5	01/10/2021
Hell Let Loose	Team17	PS5, XSX	05/10/2021
Jett: The Far Shore	Superbrothers	PC, PS4, PS5	05/10/2021
Rainbow Billy: The Curse of the Leviathan	Skybound Games	NS, PC, PS4, XO	05/10/2021
Succubus	Madmind Studios	PC	05/10/2021
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Mania	ATLUS	NS, PC, PS4, PS5, TBC, XO, XSX	05/10/2021
Sky Warriors	Wildlife Studios	An, iOS	06/10/2021
Age of Darkness: Final Stand	PlaySide Studios	PC	07/10/2021 (Early access)
Age of Darkness: Final Stand	Team17	PC	07/10/2021 (Early access)
Blade of Darkness	SNEG Ltd.	PC	07/10/2021
Creepy Tale 2	Creepy Brothers	NS	07/10/2021
Drum Box	Sanuk Games	NS	07/10/2021
Far Cry 6	Ubisoft	PC, PS4, PS5, Stad, XO, XSX	07/10/2021
Loco Dojo Unleashed	Make Real	Quest	07/10/2021
Song in the Smoke	17-BIT	Oculus Rift, PSVR, Quest	07/10/2021

PRODUCT	COMPANY	FORMAT	RELEASE DATE
The Lightbringer	Zordix	NS, PC	07/10/2021
Halloween Trouble 3	Ironcode Gaming	iOS, Lin, Mac, PC	08/10/2021
Metroid Dread	Nintendo	NS	08/10/2021
Tetris Effect: Connected	Monstars	NS	08/10/2021
Seduction	Gamera Game	PC	09/10/2021
Shelter Manager	Hamsters Gaming		09/10/2021 (Early access)
Back 4 Blood	Warner Bros.	PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	12/10/2021
Back 4 Blood	Warner Bros.	PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	12/10/2021
Disco Elysium - The Final Cut	ZA/UM	XO, XSX	12/10/2021
Disco Elysium - The Final Cut	ZA/UM	NS	12/10/2021
Monster Crown	Soedesco	NS, PC, PS4, XO	12/10/2021
Ori: The Collection	Moon Studios	NS	12/10/2021
Catty & Batty: The Spirit Guide	Philipp Lehner	NS, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	13/10/2021
Escape Simulator	Pine Studio	Lin, Mac, PC	13/10/2021
Lumione	Perfect World	NS, PC	13/10/2021
Despot's Game	tinyBuildGAMES	PC	14/10/2021 (Early access)
DUNGEON ENCOUNTERS	Square Enix		14/10/2021
Dungeon Encounters	Square Enix	NS, PC	14/10/2021
Eye of the Temple	Sanctum Dreams	PC	14/10/2021
Growing Up	Vile Monarch	PC	14/10/2021
Henchman Story	Top Hat Studios	NS, PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	14/10/2021
Nira	Baseline Games	NS, PC	14/10/2021
Rescue HQ - The Tycoon	Aerosoft	PS4, XO	14/10/2021
Silicon City	Polycorne Studio	PC	14/10/2021 (Early access)
Tactical Combat Department	Render System Games	PC	14/10/2021
The Alien Cube	Alessandro Guzzo	PC	14/10/2021

PRODUCT	COMPANY	FORMAT	RELEASE DATE
The Jackbox Party Pack 8	Jackbox Games	NS, PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	14/10/2021
The Riftbreaker	EXOR Studios	PC, PS4, XO	14/10/2021
Demon Slayer -Kimetsu no Yaiba- The Hinokami Chronicles	SEGA	PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	15/10/2021
Mira's Brush	Angel Star Studios	PC	15/10/2021
NHL 22	EA	PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	15/10/2021
Settlement Survival	Gleamer Studio	PC	15/10/2021 (Early access)
The Good Life	White Owls	NS, PC, PS4, XO	15/10/2021
Against the Storm	Eremite Games	PC	18/10/2021 (Early access)
A Plague Tale: Innocence	Focus Home Interactive	PS5, XSX	19/10/2021
DelphyQ	Dusk Wave Arts LLC	PC	19/10/2021 (Early access)
Dying Light	Techland	NS, PC, PS4, XO	19/10/2021
Lyonesse	Rabbit Hole Games	PC	19/10/2021
War Mongrels	Destructive Creations	PC	19/10/2021
Youtubers Life 2	Raiser Games	NS, PC, PS4, XO	19/10/2021
B.A.T.S.	The Media Indie Exchange (The MIX)	NS, PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	20/10/2021
Gloomhaven	Asmodee Digital	PC	20/10/2021
Gravewood High	HeroCraft	PC	20/10/2021 (Early access)
JARS	Daedalic	NS, PC	20/10/2021
PowerBeatsVR	Five Mind Creations	Quest	20/10/2021
Sheepo	Top Hat Studios	NS, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	20/10/2021
They Always Run	Alawar	PC	20/10/2021
Townscaper	Raw Fury Games	An, iOS	20/10/2021
VIRO MOVE	Fit Reality	HTC Vive, Oculus Rift	20/10/2021
Aquarium Designer	Games Operators	PC	21/10/2021

PRODUCT	COMPANY	FORMAT	RELEASE DATE
Aquascaping	Games Operators	PC	21/10/2021
Disciples: Liberation	Kalypso Media	PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	21/10/2021
Echo Generation	Cococucumber	PC, XO, XSX	21/10/2021
Evertried	Lunic Games	Mac, NS, PC, PS4, XO	21/10/2021
Firework	Gamera Game	PC	21/10/2021
Rise of Humanity	Cybernetic Walrus	PC	21/10/2021
Sands of Aura	Chashu Entertainment	PC	21/10/2021 (Early access)
The Captain	Sysiac Games	PC	21/10/2021
Toy Soldiers HD	Accelerate Games	NS, PC, PS4, XO	21/10/2021
Battlefield 2042	EA	PC, PS4, XO	22/10/2021
Hell Invades Heaven	Menajev	PC	22/10/2021
The Dark Pictures Anthology: House of Ashes	Bandai Namco	PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	22/10/2021
The Forgotten City	Modern Storyteller	NS	23/10/2021
Endless Dungeon	Funple Works	iOS	25/10/2021
Workshop Simulator	INTERMARUM	PC	25/10/2021
Marvel's Guardians of the Galaxy	Square Enix	NS, PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	26/10/2021
Moonglow Bay	Coatsink Software	PC, XO, XSX	26/10/2021
The Smurfs - Mission Vileaf	Microids	NS, PC, PS4, XO	26/10/2021
The Unliving	Team17	PC	26/10/2021 (Early access)
Pumpkin Jack	Headup	PS5, XSX	27/10/2021
Age of Empires IV	Microsoft	PC	28/10/2021
Bassmaster Fishing 2022	Dovetail Games	NS, PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	28/10/2021
Excavator Simulator	Uni Games Studio	PC	28/10/2021
FATAL FRAME: Maiden of Black Water	KOEI TECMO	NS, PC, PS4, PS5, XO, XSX	28/10/2021
Forgive Me Father	1C	PC	28/10/2021

PRODUCT	COMPANY	FORMAT	RELEASE DATE
Lovecraft's Untold Stories 2	1C		28/10/2021
Plan B from Outer Space: A Bavarian Odyssey	Assemble Entertainment	An, iOS, PC	28/10/2021
Riders Republic	Ubisoft	PC, PS4, PS5, Stad, XO, XSX	28/10/2021
Saint Kotar	Soedesco	PC	28/10/2021
Saint Kotar: The Yellow Mask	Red Martyr Entertainment	PC	28/10/2021
Super Robot Wars 30	Bandai Namco	PC	28/10/2021
Undernauts: Labyrinth of Yomi	Aksys	NS, PC, PS4, XO	28/10/2021
Voice of Cards: The Isle Dragon Roars	Square Enix	NS	28/10/2021
Dollhouse	Soedesco	NS	29/10/2021
Mario Party Superstars	Nintendo	NS	29/10/2021
The Caligula Effect 2	NIS America	NS, PS4	29/10/2021
Beyond a Steel Sky	Revolution Software	NS, PS4, XO	30/10/2021

XBOX GAME PASS

EA Play

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FARCRY 6



10-7-2021

Your Place To Talk!



DISCORD



GHOST OF TSUSHIMA: DIRECTOR'S CUT

Review by K. Scott Cooper



Peaceful moments of an island scared by countless conflicts and strife, delicate musical moments that tame the hearts of scared animals, to a deep struggle of self and finding new meanings of strength. Which makes you ask why the fuck this wasn't part of the game to begin with? Just as they teach with the way of the Samurai, I'm not pulling my strikes with this review Gamers and I have got a lot to say in this review!

We all know and how much I loved this game and praised it in previous reviews, articles, and podcasts, which makes you wonder why im being critical of Ghost of Tsushima: Director's Cut (GoT)? The answer is very simple Gamers, this version of the story should have been a part of the story from the beginning, and overall, the release itself should have focused on that being the goal, rather than it just being something on its own in the realm of the story line. The story takes place after your final duel with Lord Shimura, where Jin gets word that villagers in a nearby coastal village are falling ill to some sort of "scared medicine" given by a new Mongol tribe under the command of the Ankhsar "The Eagle" Khatun, who is a strong High Shaman like figure among her people. The goal of The Eagle and her tribe is to claim victory were Khotun Khan failed by using the before mentioned "scared medicine" to convert the people of Iki Island by helping them face their fears, which aids in her brainwashing those she deems worthy of being one of her Shaman(a new enemy introduced into the game that makes all other enemies very strong and very aggressive.)

or sending you to the loony been, which ever happens first.

After a very predictable cut scene marking your arrival on Iki Island through the sinking of ship and Jin fearing his new horse has meet a tearful end, Surprise Mfer! that isn't the case, but I'm getting ahead of myself. I'm not going to give you the blow by blow because if you haven't plaid it yet you are either very busy or dead or whatever, in closing Jin gets himself captured and gets to join the crazy train brought to him by The Eagle's magic fun time juice that forces Jin to relive the death of his Father during a previous campaign on Iki Island. In short, the story offers a look at Jin's further character development into his changing way of life and finding himself in a world driven by honor and passed deeds. Now as much as this expansion to the story line of Jin and his journey does a beautiful job at helping Jin find closer, while also answering a lot of those open questions never addressed in the original release of the game. This is where the big hanging but comes into the swing of it, but why wasn't this incorporated as part of the original release?

So huge spoiler alert coming here folks, Jin's father Kazumasa Sakai, is a massive asshole, with a capital A. Something not to be expected by the previous hints given to Jin and the player throughout the game, where as we learn Kazumasa was a brutal butcher on the battlefield and cold as a father. Which when compared to the upbringing Jin received by Lord Shimura it would have made the struggle and the final duel Jin faces at the end much more clear to the player, as well as highlighted Jin's eagerness to help those around him in the games underlying story of family is what you make it. It can also be argued that allies Jin makes of the raiders of Iki, could have also played a greater role in the story line of the main game itself as additional allies to help in the greater cause and also additional reasons for the later demand for Jin's death by the Shogun as a threat to power. It gives the player a greater understanding of what has been lost and what has been gained in the end, the expansion also hints at a personal rivalry between The Eagle and Khotun Khan. Which could have been incorporated into the game as means for Jin to destabilize the invasion through playing both sides off on each other through the use of poisons and using "scared medicine" against the mongol tribes, which in turn could have better explained the need for

Raiders, Thieves, and Bandits to become established with the struggling remains of the Samurai. This would make Yuna character much more strongly relevant to the storyline as well as the continued friendship with Kenji, Fune, and Tenzo much more understanding to the grand scheme of things, which would have made the story a touch more real and believable to how it can appear that one man did so much on his own.

Iki teased at greater relationship that Jin had with his mother and gentler more artful teaching she wanted for her son, which in itself also a massive disservice to the greater story line. Leaving the player and the character with wounds never healed and questions never answered in this emotional play of the story does lend more to the need Jin faces with being accepted by those around him, and again should have been added into the main story line. Making those moments of reflection and peace, through the Haiku, restoring shrines, and honor fox spirits that much more relevant to the player as why Jin needs those moments in his life.

Now casting aside all the coulda, shoulda, woulda for the Iki Island expansion and just going to brass tacks, Sucker Punch really dropped the ball and thanks for giving the fans absolutely the opposite of what you said we where going to get. This release by no means falls under the heading of a "Directors Cut" as there is absolutely no change to the overall story line and the editing of the game stays exactly the same. So thanks for the bullshit tagline, please just be honest and call it DLC next time. All in all I give the original release 9 as I did before and treating Director's Cut as it was intended, a 6. yes there was some fun in the expansion, but this was just a hype storm generated by PlayStation Studios for what should help make up for the money lost over the PS5 and a big feeling of "OK, now what?"

In closing Gamers, this makes me worried for the future of this wonderful story line and the future of storytelling that will come out of the future for Sucker Punch. Only time will tell and much like the added ability for Jin to charge Mongols with his horse for all the sense that made, I'm struggling to see the sense in the need for this release.

Stay classy Gamers and remember to stay safe out there....

DID FIFA ACTUALLY GET WORSE THIS YEAR!

FIFA 22 REVIEW BY MARCUS BLAKE



Another year, another version of the FIFA video game. FIFA 22 is out and I'm just going to get right to it, it's a disappointment! I will not be buying this version and will continue my career in FIFA 21...you probably should too! This is yet another video game that leads to

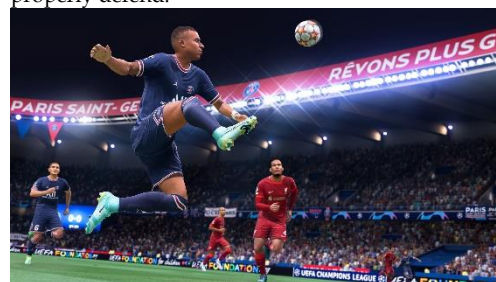
our overall argument of why sports Games should not be bought at retail prices every year when they haven't made enough improvements to warrant full price. What if EA gives us a version that is not as good as the year before, well that's exactly what they did with FIFA 22. Now of course we can use the excuse that they made this game during the pandemic so they didn't have time to make that many improvements. That's fine, I'll accept that excuse, but you shouldn't make me pay full price either. The simple truth is FIFA 22 is just not that good and if you're going to end up playing it, wait till it's free on EA Play! My first impression of FIFA 22 is it is a huge grind and that makes sense considering EA is trying to make this year's version the most realistic soccer game in the world. But this is a video game, do you really want to put that much grind into it on every level. If you're one of the players that does want to do this, that's what the hard mode is for! Here's why it's not good.

First, I will say that it still FIFA and there's always going to be things you like about FIFA from getting to play a new season to being able to play any team in any League throughout the world. It is the largest sports game out there and you can put more hours in playing FIFA than any other sports game. All of that is still there, of course all of that was in last year's version, Give me something new. Let's start with Career Mode. If you're like me and you play the career mode, it's always something to look forward to, but I can honestly say that this year's career mode sucks. I like many other FIFA players create my own character and put them on my favorite team, usually he's the center striker. I've always played Marcus Blake as the center striker on Liverpool and that created player has been able to be on every format of FIFA including importing him into Career Mode. Not this year, they want you to take a rookie who's not very good with a rating of about 65 and make him better. Well, that's nice for the hardcore FIFA players who want to do that, but that kind of created player is not going to get much playing time. The only reason to have your created player in career mode so that you get to have a great career and play in most games and maybe break some records. Now EA has never quite gotten around to allowing you to transfer your career from one

version of the game into the new version so you can continue your career, but this year they really make you grind it out as a rookie. The problem is what if you are a Ronaldo type rookie who is already better than most of the players on the squad, should the rating of that player be 65, you hardly get any playing time... No, because if you have a soccer phenom on your squad, you're going to play them a lot, that already makes career mode unrealistic. Career mode is meant for the player you create no matter how good he is to be able to jump Right in and be a superstar, and not have to grind it out as the low man on the squad. This is a video game; it doesn't have to be that realistic. Sports games are meant for escapism

Now if you do create a player, you are allowed to change the roster and have them play and any other tournament mode or champions League and that's cool, but it's like older versions of FIFA where you just have to play out your season by being in multiple tournaments. I'd like to think we've gotten beyond that and made the game better. We did with FIFA 20 and FIFA 21. But the biggest problem is in EA trying to make this game so realistic and not have to rely on fancy mechanics, all they've done is make the game "buggy" to where you can't really play. Here's what I mean. Players don't really have that much acceleration when you're holding down the right trigger button whether you're on PlayStation or Xbox. It seems to be all the same speed. The point of having acceleration is to be able to move the ball down the pitch hopefully to get past the other team's defenders so you can score. Even if you are able to do that, they don't even want you to be able to score from 20 ft out anymore, you have to be close in and somehow miraculously time a crossover to be able to beat the goalie. The one thing that FIFA 22 has done is improve the performances of the goalie, this is a catch 22 because while your goalie may save you a lot from being scored upon since the defenders play like shit in this game, that also means you won't be able to score as much as you used to. This was EA's reaction to FIFA 21 being goal happy where it seemed very easy to score. Well, again, it's a video game and that's generally what players want to do. You don't want to play a 15 minute soccer game where you're constantly having to grind it out just to end up in a nil, nil tie. The biggest problem with this year's version and trying to make it realistic is they've gone the complete opposite with how soccer is really played. The biggest fault that I find in this game is defense. I've complained about defense in the past, but they've actually made it worse. Not only is the delay between pressing the command on your controller and the actual play of the player longer than it used to be, the defenders can never quite get into position to actually tackle and then if you try to use a sliding tackle where every time you will get a penalty called on you. It's frustrating It's like the mechanics of being able to tackle on defense went away and the best thing you can hope for is miraculously being in the right position to intercept the ball. You can never switch your players in time

to properly defend the opposing team and then it feels like you're constantly giving up too much space which would allow them to score. I lost in the champions league tournament for the first time in the quarterfinals because I couldn't tackle, I couldn't get my defenders in the right position or switch to the proper players and the opposing team was always getting past them. I've never experienced that in past versions a FIFA, not even when I played it on the Xbox 360 or PlayStation 3 where the mechanics were not as good as they are today. And don't even get me started how the game developers don't even truly understand the game of soccer because players are constantly out of position. It's always been this way, but at least in past versions you were able to switch players in time to be able to properly defend.



After putting in about 15 or so hours playing this year's FIFA, I can honestly say that it's just not as good as past years. I'm sure the bugs can be cleaned up with patches and I would be curious to see what the gameplay would be in about a month, but right now this game is not worth buying at full price and they haven't done enough improvements to make me want to run out and buy it. I'm happy with FIFA 21. Now the one thing that this year's version does have going for it is it looks phenomenal on the PlayStation 5 and the Xbox Series X, this is the first version truly made for the new consoles and the presentation factor is phenomenal. It looks like you're watching a real-life game. But the truth is it feels like they sacrificed gameplay to improve the presentation aspects of FIFA and that is something you should never do. Gameplay is everything! I feel like they've made FIFA 22 for that slim percent of FIFA players who want the grind, but that's not the majority of people who play FIFA. It's nice that you're catering to the hardcore players, but it's a niche group and you can easily just make a special mode for them within the game. It's the equivalent of playing Madden on the All-Madden level. Have something like that for the hardcore FIFA players and leave the rest of the game alone for those of us that just want to escape with the game and not have to grind it out. You shouldn't have to work that hard in a sports game. I mean, f@#k grinding it out, we play sports games because we're not playing real life Sports and having to work that hard... That's the whole point in playing a sports game and EA has clearly forgot that with FIFA!

Final Grade 6 / 10 (Adequate)

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR SQUAD LEADER!

CROSS PLAY: JUST BECAUSE WE CAN, DOESN'T MEAN THAT WE SHOULD...

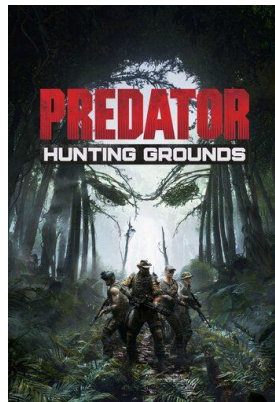
"A SQUAD LEADER AFTER SCHOOL SPECIAL."

By K. Scott Cooper



loyalties or budgets. Toot toot look out for the massive But coming through!!

no one has really found cure-all, if you get my meaning.



What is the Haps, Cats! Its time again for your Favorite TNS service announcement form me your Fav that you crave, now "fuckin" misbehave. Coming to you with the spirit of one of my all-time favorite characters Three-Dog and the gumption of Gwyneth Paltrow trying to sell jade eggs, about an ever growing and demanded topic of Cross Play gaming, what we want it to be, and what it really currently is.

1. The Glorious Dream- well I would say more of horrific nightmare as your house cat sharpens its claws in the back of your skull. So Cross play has been the hot desired item since console and pc gaming began to bud, but we haven't had the real ability as community to pull it off in a real proper attempt until the last 10 years or so. Cross play in itself gives Gamers the ability to play with others across different systems in what ever shape that may take, but for most titles it is one platform of console to PC(Grounded, Predator: Hunting Grounds for example.) and rarely seen everyone to everyone (Call of Duty: Modern Warfare or anything there after.). yes it is a great idea that in it's purest form is an epic idea that would allow everyone to play with their friends no matter

2. What you see and what happens are subject to change and the other guy's PC- so before the chest beating starts and people start using the known tag line of "PC Master Race."(for the record if you say this line around Jewish people, expect whole heartedly to have your Anus stomped to pudding.) yes, we know PC can do more than a console, happy for you and I still don't care. But when it comes to Cross play, you wont win if you don't have a PC. Consoles just cant beat point and click tactics or the processing speeds computers can pull off, so we are left with one of two choices turn it off/just stop playing or suffer for it. With no real fixes or uniform ways for companies to make it fair for both sides without limiting PC functions or over charging console players, it doesn't seem like there is much hope on the horizon for this to improve, until someone out there makes an end all be all way of establishing a Cross play game that can be a frame work moving forward. Because lets face it we are in the Wild West day of this style of gaming and

3. I wanna like you, but it's me thing... I promise.- we as Gamers would love to see Cross play become the dream of balanced fair play for all to enjoy and that isn't going to happen anytime soon. So here is some advice on the matter, only do it if you can control the party! Playing with your friends that you know and have logged countless hours with is the way for Cross play, playing with Randoms in competition style games is asking for an early onset stroke caused by stress because you are going to feel cheated as PC players walk all over you unchecked. So do your research and find those games that can support the game-play your squad rolls to. For my crew it is Predator: Hunting Grounds, Secret Neighbor, or World War Z and set yourself up a private match to enjoy the stress free game-play.

Always remember never to take Cross play from strangers Gamers, no matter how many puppies they say is in their van. Stay Classy, Stay Crazy, and Stay Safe! Until next time, don't forget. "Dead Check or Get Squad Wrecked!"

The

N E R D

Opinion

A Newbie to Netflix: Seinfeld, How Great is That!

By Alex Moore

(AKA "Art Vandelay... he's an Importer-Exporter")



Has it really been so long? It has been over 23 years, to be exact, since my first sitcom love graced the small screen with a new episode. NBC was the king of Thursday evening television in those days and 'Seinfeld' was at the heart of it, whether you care

to admit to it or not. Today, I sit here, enjoying a mid-morning snack as I reminisce. Oy, "These pretzels are making me thirsty!" No problem, I will just slug some water for now...

At the time, it was an enjoyable experience to watch the newest episodes of 'Seinfeld' because my mother enjoyed the show, as well, and so it gave us some real, quality time together. This is something you cannot replace. However, in hindsight, my affection for the series has never truly waned. You might say it is like remembering the first time you encountered your junior high/high school crush, but then, years later, you see her again and low and behold she is still stunning to look at. "Is there a pinkish hue?" Yes, it is still there and I am still charmed by it, but moving on... Have you ever had a real-life experience and wondered if it could work as a story or a show or a film? Yes, of course you have! We all have, but what made 'Seinfeld' so interesting was its ability to make you recall moments from the show in your own, daily life, which you could relate to. Like, once, when I was around 10 or 11 years old, I was sitting at a Mexican restaurant with some staff and classmates from school. I believe it was related to band class. My closest friend, at the time, witnessed me scarfing down some chips and salsa. I took, not one, but two dips with a single chip and he (mildly) chastised me for double-dipping. As I look back, I realize, "That's like putting your whole mouth right in the dip!" He was correct and I learned my lesson very well from that situation.

So, why Netflix and why now? 'Seinfeld' enjoyed a home at Hulu for. A brief period of time before it was removed from there, after all. What does Netflix have that Hulu has not? Well, you could probably ask the same thing about 'Cobra Kai,' which pivoted from

YouTube, over the Netflix, after two successful seasons there. What makes one streaming service more popular than the others? In this case, at least one reason is merely because Netflix has been established longer than any of the other competitors. Beyond that, it has managed to keep its customers happy enough to stick around for an extended period of time. If you were to ask 100 people which streaming services they have/prefer, you will likely get a few, varying responses, but at the top, the most consistent inclusion will be Netflix, without a doubt... As I type, my eyes are blurring and burning just a bit. I think I just did not get enough sleep last night, but if I need glasses, I will be sure to get ones that do not "pinch the nose," but if I like a pair, I had better check with the store clerk that they are not "ladies' frames." Excuse me as I digress. For once, I might have a legitimate excuse.



I was just remembering the small joys of life; things that seem to come organically. 'Seinfeld' is a prime example of that, which is another reason it is so relatable, even today. Last night, I was attending a high school football game, which happened to be homecoming night for one team, in particular. As they announced the winners, I was taken aback just a little bit by the name of the homecoming king: Peter Hung. I thought, "cruel parents," but I also wondered if he might have been having a little bit of fun with the captive audience around him, so to speak. Surely not. How does this happen? What if he changed it to something else due to the impact. Well, it cannot be as bad as sharing the same name as an infamous serial killer and being stuck with: "Remy Rifkin? Should I get a beret?!" Yes, I know. It is better not to force things, but I am trying to use plenty of lubrication, so it should be fine, should it not?

The point that I am really trying to make with all of this is that 'Seinfeld' is a special enough show, for all these years gone by, that it ought to be considered universal, even by those who are not fans of it. I would wager (something) that even the most hardened anti-Seinfeld people could give you at least one example of a specific episode on that series that they like. Plus, there is the association of 'Curb Your Enthusiasm (CYE)'. I know some who enjoy that show who were not fans of 'Seinfeld,' yet they are unmistakably linked. It is sort of like Larry David in his portrayal of George Steinbrenner: "She's a heartbreaker, love taker! Shoemaker, won't you clean my shoes for free? Ooh-ooh! Very catchy tune." No? OK, Let us move on...

One thing that might run some people off from 'Seinfeld' is the unavoidable fact that this was (and IS) a 1990s sitcom. Yes, the series took some big risks for its time, but some of the material has become outdated. I wonder if there will be any disclaimers or edits made to usher the show into the 21st century. Of course, the only example of 'Seinfeld' on this side of the millennium is from Season 8. In the words of postal employee Newman, "Well, I guess I can handle a little of Jerry, if it gets me a lot of Elaine." Too bad he never got his wish, or did he? For those of us who are dedicated fans, the laughs never fade and the time never passes. We remember where we were for the greatest moments, even if they were not particularly positive, including the dreaded finale. "You are very, very bad (slowly wagging finger in disgust)." So, not even 'Seinfeld' could avoid getting overly sentimental, but at least it only happened once. Yes, there was something of a bonus episode of the show in a more recent season of 'CYE,' but does that really soften the blow from all those years ago or is the memory, simply put, too strong? Ask yourself this: do the two seasons of Michael Jordan playing for the Washington Wizards ruin your lasting image of MJ holding his arm out as if it were a dramatic mic drop or a classical-era painter when he sealed his sixth (and final) NBA championship with the Chicago Bulls just a few seasons prior? That would be a rhetorical question, I DO believe. How about we get a true bonus episode of 'Seinfeld,' even if it is only teased as such, like the commercial ads for the series coming to Netflix?

I'd suck it down like an ice cold Pepsi Zero!

HAVE YOU BEEN WATCHING MANIFEST ON NETFLIX, WHY NOT?

MANIFEST

Season 3 Review

By Allison Costa

MANIFEST



I personally felt that the first 2 seasons of "Manifest" were excellent. I was incredibly bummed to see it cancelled, and then equally delighted that Netflix picked

it up for a 3rd season! While I do feel that the show has a certain "shelf-life"--there is only so much you can do with this concept, but it will be very interesting to see how the series is wrapped up. Season 3 was very fast-paced with a lot of action and a lot of huge reveals. Zeke's callings appear to be gone since surviving his "death date",

but now he has increased empathic abilities that seem to continue to help with following the callings anyway. But as much as I like Zeke, I still wish that Mikayla was back with Jared--he has been such a rock through all of this craziness. During Season 3 we also see Sanvi's character go through quite a bit of growth--she lost her ability to have callings after self-treatment, and in the Major's accidental death. It finally comes out that she is responsible for the Major's death and she is able to start making peace and moving forward.

This season also reveals new connections between actual pieces of the plane and its mythic or religious origins. We see new main characters introduced and other background characters take more of a lead role. All in all I felt it was a good season but was disappointed by the characters the writers chose to kill

off. I am not sure the purpose behind killing these characters off but I feel so far it does nothing to move the story plot along and is mainly just tragic for tragedy's sake.

The season finale ended on a major cliffhanger as one of the main characters is killed and Cal reappears at the age he would have been had the plane never disappeared. Again I don't know where they are going with this storyline--but "Manifest" continues to remind me of "Lost" and the many unusual and unexplained happenings within that show. I felt that the series "Lost" ended quite poorly and hope that the writers for "Manifest" have something better planned that is cheesy and trite. Definitely give it a watch though if you continue to like suspense and the unexplained! If I have to give it a grade...it's an **8**





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COMIC BOOK NEWS



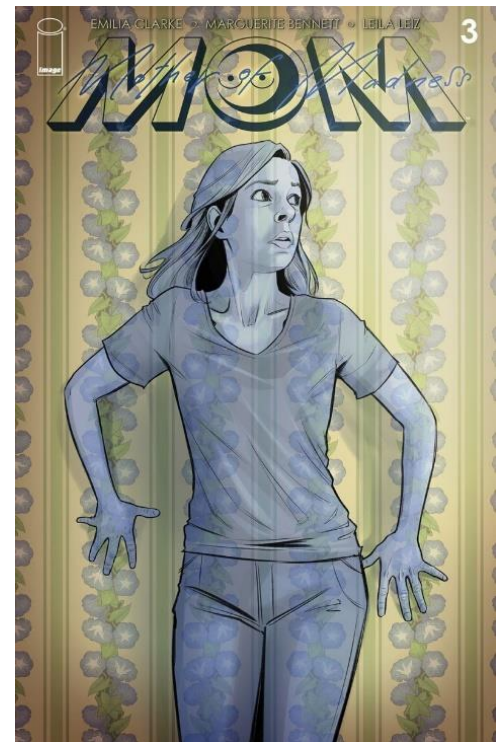
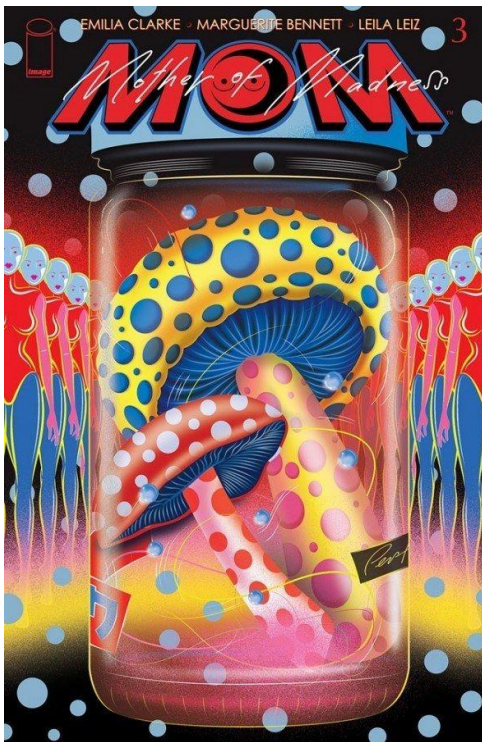
EYE-POPPING JO RATCLIFFE, EMI LENOX & CAITLIN YARSKY COVERS FOR M.O.M.: MOTHER OF MADNESS #3 REVEALED



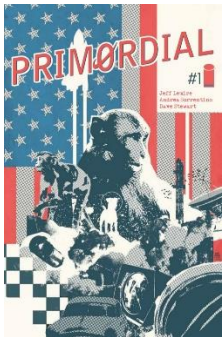
Image Comics is pleased to reveal a trio of highly collectible covers for the forthcoming *M.O.M.: Mother of Madness*

#3 by multiple Emmy award nominated actress Emilia Clarke (*Game of Thrones*, *Star Wars*), GLAAD Media Award nominated Marguerite Bennett (*Josie and the Pussycats*, *Angela*), and Leila Leiz (*Horde*). This #3 issue will conclude the miniseries with variant covers showcasing artwork by Jo Ratcliffe, Emi Lenox, and Caitlin Yarsky. "I am so proud of all the incredible artists who have joined me in creating *M.O.M.*," said Clarke. "Their individual visions have

elevated *M.O.M.* to the next level! What wondrous women!" In *M.O.M.: Mother of Madness #3*, Maya's son was kidnapped by the treacherous traffickers, and now it's up to her and her misfit mob of BFFs – if she can escape her enemies and her past! Who's gonna clean up this mess?! *M.O.M.: Mother of Madness #3* will be available at [comic book shops](#) on Wednesday, October 27:



PRIMORDIAL SALES SKYROCKET, IMAGE SHUTTLES DEBUT ISSUE BACK TO PRINT



to keep up with customer demand. "We are incredibly flattered and excited about

Superstars Jeff Lemire and Andrea Sorrentino's new series – *Primordial* – launched with a shower of enthusiasm across the industry and sold out completely at the distributor level. The issue is being rushed back to print in order

the reaction to *Primordial!* Andrea and I put our hearts into this one and we can honestly say that the story gets better and better as our little space animals get further from home," said Lemire. "Thanks for coming along the journey with us!" *Primordial* reveals to readers that In 1957, the USSR launched the dog, Laika, into Earth's orbit. Two years later, the USA responded with two monkeys, Able and Baker. These animals never returned. But, unbeknownst to everyone, they did not die in orbit...they were taken. And now they are coming home.

This six issue miniseries is the most recent collaboration from the creative team who brought readers the Eisner Award winning, critically lauded *Gideon Falls*. *Primordial* #1, second printing (Diamond Code [AUG218388](#)) will be available at [comic book shops](#) on Wednesday, October 20. *Primordial* will also be available for purchase across many digital platforms, including Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, and Google Play.

THE SCORCHED UNITES TODD MCFARLANE'S FIRST-EVER SUPERHERO TEAM, EXPANDS THE **SPAWN UNIVERSE** WITH NEW & ICONIC CHARACTERS



The Year of Spawn continues with Todd McFarlane's newest book, *The Scorched* #1. This new book comes hot off the heels of three record-breaking books, *Spawn's*

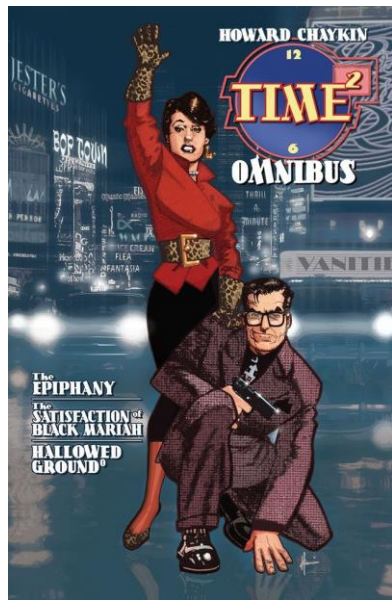
Universe #1, *King Spawn* #1 and *Gunslinger Spawn* #1, which were the biggest selling Image Comics books in the 21st century. *The Scorched* #1 is the first all-new issue of McFarlane's Superhero team book.

After 30 years of the regular monthly *Spawn* book, *The Scorched* gathers the best of the characters for three decades and puts them together into one title. McFarlane has also

recruited some of the top talent in the industry for this inaugural launch. The initial characters in *The Scorched* #1 first issue will include: Reaper, Spawn, Redeemer, Gunslinger, Medieval Spawn, She-Spawn, and many more waiting in the wings. McFarlane again enlisted some top creative talent to contribute to *The Scorched* including writer Sean Lewis and artists Stephen Segovia and Paulo Sequeria. Featuring cover art by Frank Quitely, Greg Capullo, Don Aguillo, fellow Image founder Mark Silvestri, Brett Booth, and McFarlane. Booth's cover of *The Scorched* #1 interconnects with *King Spawn* #1 and *Gunslinger Spawn* #1 to form one epic work of art. "The *Scorched* will allow myself and the creative team to bring in a rotating cast of heroes and villains and to have fun creating new characters and storylines," said McFarlane, *Spawn* creator and President at Image Comics. *The Scorched* #1 will have a 1:250 copy incentive cover which McFarlane will hand-sign and create a

unique sequential number for each issue (based on the Final Order Cutoff total). Each signed *The Scorched* #1 1:250 includes a CGC Certificate of Authenticity that retailers can send in and redeem through CGC to have their books graded. This is the **only time** McFarlane will sign *The Scorched* #1 1:250 copy incentive cover. Additionally, *The Scorched* #1 will have a 1:50 copy incentive variant cover by Capullo. For every 250 copies of *The Scorched* #1 issues ordered, retailers will become eligible to order five incentive covers of *The Scorched* #1 by Capullo and one *The Scorched* #1 McFarlane incentive cover. Join the battle with *The Scorched* #1 extravaganza as an epic tale of heaven, hell, and earth all begin to collide! *The Scorched* #1 will be available at comic book shops (48 pages, full color, rated: Teen+, \$5.99, premium 10 pt cover stock) and on digital platforms, including Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, and Google Play on Wednesday, December 15:

HOWARD CHAYKIN'S **TIME²** CELEBRATES 35TH ANNIVERSARY WITH LONG AWAITED CONCLUSION IN UPCOMING OMNIBUS HARDCOVER EDITION



Graphically experimental, narratively daring, and visually explosive, Howard Chaykin's *Time²* was a work ahead of its time² – and remains so today. In February 2022 – just in time² to celebrate the project's 35th anniversary – fans will be treated to the long-awaited conclusion – finally! – in a special omnibus hardcover edition from Image Comics. In addition to remastered versions of the project's debut in the *American Flagg! Special* and its long-out-of-print first two volumes, "The Epiphany" and "The Satisfaction of Black Mariah," the *Time² Omnibus* completes the trilogy with the new 48-page volume "Hallowed Ground," plus many never-before-seen extras. "Time² remains among my most personal works in my

fifty plus years in comics, and I couldn't be more grateful to see it back in print, with this final volume, before I take the midnight subway to its final destination," said Chaykin. *Time² omnibus* hardcover edition (ISBN: 978-1-5343-2110-6, [Diamond Code OCT210066](#)) will be available on Wednesday, February 16 and in bookstores on Tuesday, February 22. It can be pre-ordered at your local [comic book shop](#) or [independent bookstore](#) or via Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books-a-Million, and Indigo. *Time² omnibus* will also be available for purchase across many digital platforms, including Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, and Google Play.

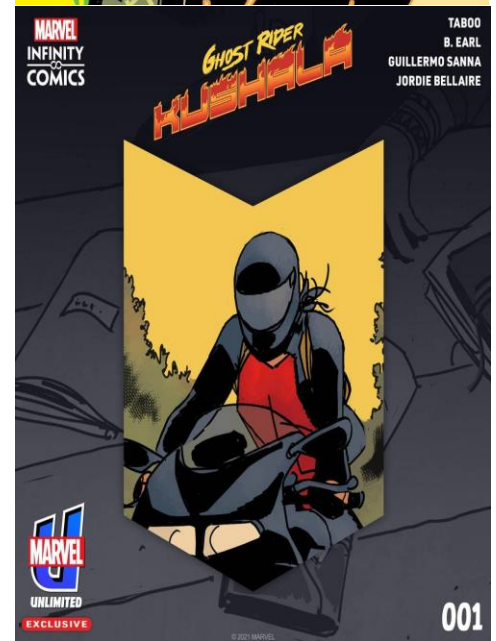
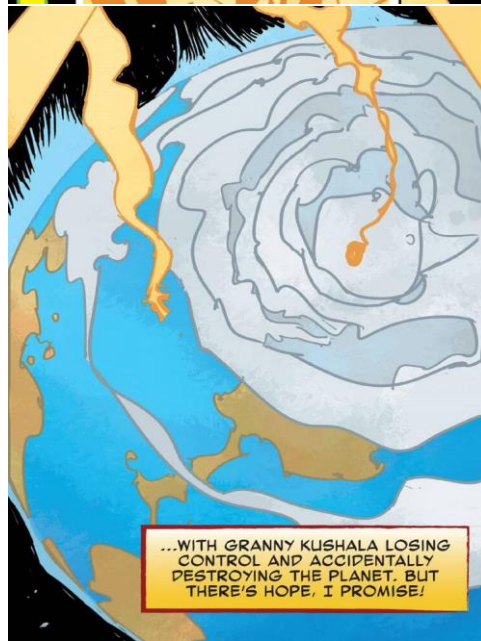
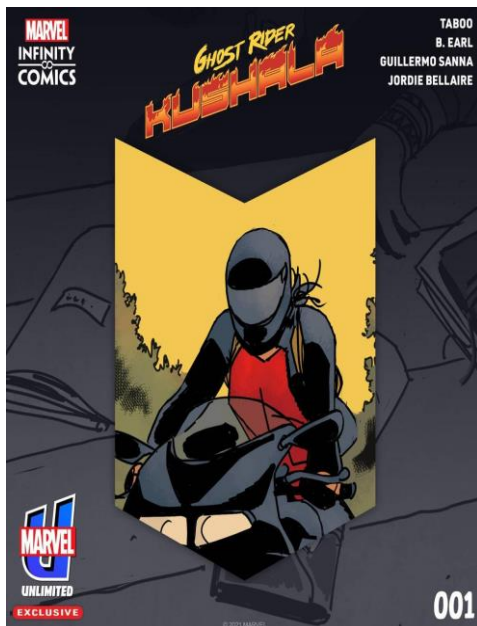
KUSHALA'S STORY CONTINUES IN A NEW INFINITY COMICS SERIES

Your first look at *'Ghost Rider: Kushala' #1*, hitting *Marvel Unlimited October 7!*

She's the Sorcerer Supreme of the 1800s and a Ghost Rider-turned-Spirit Rider—the only one who's managed to tame her Spirit of Vengeance. But when someone comes after Kushala and her ancestral line, including direct descendant Olivia Obtera, all hell breaks loose. Taboo (of the Black Eyed Peas) and writer B. Earl join with artist Guillermo Sanna for a wild ride through the past, present, and future of the Marvel Universe—and tell the story

of the one extraordinary family who must fight to save it all! On **Thursday, October 7**, Marvel Unlimited brings **GHOST RIDER: KUSHALA #1** to fans in the exclusive Infinity Comics format! The series is a continuation of **SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE: SPIRIT RIDER (2021) #1**, which will also be available on *Marvel Unlimited* on Monday, October 4 as a special bonus release. **GHOST RIDER: KUSHALA** is co-written by Taboo, a

founding member of the Black Eyed Peas, and B. Earl, and includes an impressive creative team including artists Guillermo Sanna and Vanesa del Rey and colorist Jordie Bellaire. New issues of the **8-part series** will be available on the **Marvel Unlimited app every Thursday**, the latest series in the *Infinity Comics* lineup. Get your first look at issue #1's vertically-scrolling story below, and read the first issue October 7!





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David Bowie's lost album "Toy" to be released!



The late music legend's collection of re-records and renditions of his early songs was originally planned to be released after 1999 LP

'Hours...', however, a disagreement with his former label Virgin got in the way of fans hearing the gems. The album ended up being leaked online in 2011, but now it's been announced that 'Toy' will be a part of the upcoming 'Era Five' box set. The fifth in the series, 'Brilliant Adventure (1992 - 2001)', is due for release shortly. To kick things off, fans can hear a radio edit of 'You've Got A Habit Of

Leaving', which the 'Starman' hitmaker recorded in 1965 and released as a single under the name Davy Jones, with his band at the time, The Lower Third. A tweet on the official David Bowie account read: "Depending where you are on the planet, if it's 29th September you might be streaming the radio edit of 'You've Got A Habit Of Leaving' from the forthcoming 'Toy' album, via your favourite streaming service. "More details regarding that and the rest of the Era Five box, later today." The 'Toy' news comes after it was announced that the 'Space Oddity' hitmaker's estate landed a historical deal with Warner Music Group, which means the major label now owns the rights to the iconic singer's entire back catalogue, bar the 'Rebel Rebel' rocker's pre-1968 recordings and a slew of other tracks. Warner already owned the rights to Bowie's music released between 1968 and 1999, following its acquisition of the Parlophone Label Group in 2013. Bowie's Sony released records 'Heathen', 'Reality', 'The Next Day' and

'Blackstar' will have a home at Warner from 2023. Max Lousada, CEO of Recorded Music at Warner Music Group, said in a statement: "It's an incredible honour to have been chosen as the stewards of one of the most important and dynamic bodies of creative work in modern culture. "The impact of Bowie's repeated reinvention and endless experimentation continues to resonate around the world - through the genres he transformed, the timeless songs and sounds he invented, and the immeasurable influence he's had on music, art, and fashion. "We're excited that our expanded partnership with the Bowie estate will help us deliver innovative, career-spanning projects and attract new generations to his extraordinary musical universe." Bowie died following a private battle with cancer in 2016, aged 69, two days after the release of his final album ('Blackstar'). *Reported by Music-News.com*

TOOL to embark on 2022 tour of Europe!



TOOL are set to return to Europe for a tour in 2022. Maynard James Keenan and co will

hit the road in April and May next year for their first run since the release of their acclaimed 2019 LP, 'Fear Inoculum', and since the COVID-19 pandemic. The jaunt kicks off on April 23 in Copenhagen, and includes a stop at London's The O2 arena on May 9, before concluding in Budapest on May 24. Drummer Danny Carey said in a press release: "It is with great pleasure I get to announce our return to the road. "These

past 18 months have been trying to say the least but from great trials come great lessons and great rewards. We are genuinely looking forward to sharing them with you." Tickets go on sale on Friday, October 1 at 10am local time, with the UK and Irish dates on sale at 9am local time. TOOL Army members can purchase pre-sale tickets on September 28 at 10am local time for 24 hours. The tour news comes after frontman Maynard, 57, revealed he had "ugly" COVID-19 for the second time in November, and was hospitalised on December 1, after it "kind of" progressed into pneumonia. Sharing his symptoms earlier this year, he said it was: "Ugly, ugly. Couldn't breathe." He continued: "I could barely put two words together without going into a coughing fit that, you know? It ended up kind of also progressing into pneumonia. So, if I stayed in the hospital, they said, 'Okay, we can

keep you here, but you're fighting 12 other people for a bed and a ventilator we don't have, so what do you want to do?' I'm like, 'Well, I need to breathe and I need to sleep.' So, you're just treating symptoms at that point. There's nothing you can do other than treat the symptom, so for a real cough medicine, not the c*** over-the-counter and then like an inhaler, and some antibiotics to fight the pneumonia and strap the f*** in." The 'Third Eye' star first had coronavirus in October. He said at the time: "I'm still dealing with the residual effects. But it was ugly. I survived it, but it wasn't pretty. So I definitely had to deal with that." Maynard previously implored everyone to take the pandemic "seriously" and wear face masks and social distance in order to help flatten the spread of the virus. *Reported by Music-News.com*

Lewis Capaldi and Lionel Richie to headline 2022 Isle of Wight Festival



Lewis Capaldi, Lionel Richie, Kasabian, Pete Tong & the Heritage Orchestra presents Ibiza Classics conducted by Jules Buckley and

Muse will headline 2022's cinch presents the Isle of Wight Festival. The annual music extravaganza will return to Seaclose Park in Newport, Isle of Wight between June 16 and June 19, with huge names once again heading to

the island. The Scottish superstar and 'All Night Long' hitmaker will close out the main stage on the Friday night. Kasabian and Pete Tong and co will head up Saturday evening, while Muse will bring the festival to a close on Sunday. Along with the headliner announcement, the following acts have also been confirmed to be performing across the four days: Nile Rodgers & CHIC, Blossoms, Rudimental, Tom Grennan, Sigrid, Craig David Presents TS5, The Vaccines, Paul Heaton & Jacqui Abbott, Shaggy, Happy Mondays, Mavis Staples, UB40 ft Ali Campbell & Astro, The Proclaimers and The Coral. Many more names will be confirmed in due course. Festival promoter John Giddings, said: "We couldn't have asked for a better return to the island this year: we had sunshine all weekend

and some fantastic performances. We're already looking ahead to next year and the artists announced today can't wait to come and entertain us over 16th - 19th June 2022." This summer's festival saw Liam Gallagher, Snow Patrol, David Guetta and Duran Duran rock headline slots. The 2020 edition of the music event was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Tickets for the cinch presents the Isle of Wight Festival 2022 go on sale this Thursday (30th September) at 8am www.isleofwightfestival.com/tickets. If you're a Barclaycard customer, until 8am on Thursday 30th September you can get 10% off every presale ticket you buy through Barclaycard Entertainment in their exclusive presale



“Modern Day Mozart?”

By Chad Womack



When you view Prince’s career through the eyes of a dedicated lifelong fan...it’s hard not to look at it through a pair of violet-tinted glasses. But even the most

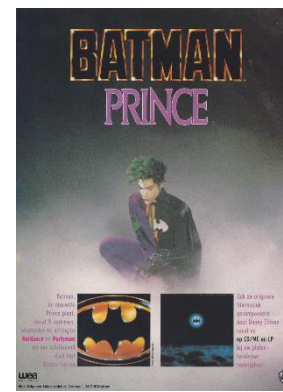
die-hard supporter knows that the object of their respect and adulation has their lean years as well as their fat years. In Prince’s case, the decade of the 80s brought him a level of success and critical acclaim that most artists are lucky to get with just 1 album. Somehow this tiny little powerhouse from Middle America with a high falsetto started the Reagan era with his shock and awe campaign, sporting an open trench coat, bikini underwear and leg warmers on the cover of “Dirty Mind” then bookending it by assembling the soundtrack album of the biggest blockbuster hit of 1989 “Batman.” Not content to simply churn out hit after hit just for himself, but for his own side projects such as Sheila E. and The Time as well as several of his contemporaries like Chaka Khan and Sheena Easton, while also simultaneously setting trends in not just music but fashion and almost every form of artistic self-expression. Kicking off the decade with a sound that was still reminiscent of his 1979 eponymous 2nd album, but even raunchier lyrics and thematic elements, “Dirty Mind” planted a flag that this “shy” 21-year-old was an absolute force of nature that everybody was going to have to stand up and take notice of. By the time he followed it up with “Controversy” the following year, he had

continued to refine his sound to a much darker serious tone, as well as altering his sense of fashion, ushering in the era of high collars and militaristic attire. All the while, wrecking house after house with a live show that continued to spellbind and titillate. JEEZ.... what PLANET was this guy FROM??? Wherever it is, the atmosphere must be composed of perpetually purple clouds as the opening lines from the title track of “1999” triumphantly proclaimed, as the era of Prince and the Revolution kicked off in earnest, crossing over to an even larger audience thanks to massive radio hits like “Little Red Corvette” and the new phenomenon of MTV. Having mastered the art of the visual medium relatively quickly, a major motion picture was an obvious next step, ushering in the mammoth event that was “Purple Rain” as Prince conquered the box office, record sales, and massive critical acclaim.

Time to take a break and bask in the warm glow of success.... right? WRONG!!!

While touring and amassing one industry award after another, he revamped his sound AGAIN and created the effervescent and whimsical “Around the World in a Day” as he began welcoming more collaboration with his band in the studio, adding a more avant-garde sound and approach, layering more orchestral elements that bridged the gap 4 the next album “Parade” that served as the soundtrack 4 his next film “Under the Cherry Moon.” The box office failure of that film would lead to increased fractures within his inner circle, resulting in the eventual implosion of The Revolution. However, as one door closes, another one opens, causing a wellspring of creative energy 2 erupt from an already fertile mind, resulting in the album that would eventually become “Sign “O” the

Times,” his most critically acclaimed work to date, featuring a musical tapestry more varied and complex than most musicians offer up in an entire career, rivalling the very best of artists like James Brown, John Coltrane and Miles Davis. Following quickly on the heels the massive tour supporting his magnum opus, he created and then quickly cancelled the infamous “Black Album” that became one of the most bootlegged albums in history and offered the beautifully quirky “LoveSexy” album as an apology for doing so. Then just when we thought he had nothing left in his tank he continues his study in duality he began on the previous album between Camille and Spooky Electric by infusing it into the “Batman” album as a character study/conflict between the title character and not just his alter ego Bruce Wayne but his archrival The Joker as well.... resulting in one of his most commercially successful albums in his catalog.



To say that Prince was an overachiever would be an incredible understatement. Regardless of whether you was picking up what he was putting down or not, his productivity and creative output r unquestionable. So as the article began with a question.... Modern Day Mozart? Judging by the 1st full decade of his career alone, I’d say that question has been answered. Not an opinion.... but an undeniable fact!

Modern Day Mozart!!

COSPLAY

THIS WEEK'S
FEATURED
COSPLAYERS



Armani Art Cosplay

Gamora
"Guardians of the Galaxy"

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ArmaniArt



About Armani Art



Princess Bean
Disenchantment

Armani Art has been a part of the North Texas cosplay scene for 6 years, with a particular love of event and group cosplays. Armani Art started as an actress, painter, and crafter whose hobbies eventually led her into cosplaying many of her own favorite characters in comics, movies, and a few of her own original creations. She found cosplay to be the perfect hobby that encompasses so many of her favorite things, and gave her a hands-on creative outlet beyond working as a graphic and web designer. Armani Art can always be found at events or conventions cosplaying alongside others.

Follow Armani Art at [Instagram.com/armaniart](https://www.instagram.com/armaniart)

- Interview -

How did you get into cosplay?

I had been attending conventions with friends since high school and had always wanted to cosplay, but could never manage the courage to do so. However, every Halloween my mother and I would go all-out with crafting elaborate costumes for parties, and it was always a lot of fun. In 2015 I decided I really wanted to dress up as Gamora from Guardians of the Galaxy for a Halloween party with coworkers -body paint and all, no colored spandex because I'm a crazy person, and all of the amazed reactions and praise I received bolstered up my courage to finally cosplay at a convention.

Who is your favorite character to cosplay and why?

I have a love hate relationship with my Gamora cosplay. She really is my favorite! But boy is all that body paint all day at conventions a hassle. Also, full leather in Texas as I'm sure most cosplayers can attest to. So, I'd say my favorite cosplay characters actually tend to be ones that aren't screen-accurate. They are twists on characters or original ideas that I can craft and create whatever I'm comfortable with.

What tips do you have on making a costume?

Start with manageable goals and something small. You don't want to burn out or discourage yourself by trying to reach for something crazy. You can easily build up from there! I've found that by starting with cosplays that reflected my strong-suits and things I was already good at really helped. If you're good at art, something with unique body paint or hand painted items will really shine! If you like acting, a character with a big personality will make you memorable. But there are always online tutorials and things to help you branch out. Cosplay can often be difficult but rewarding! So don't be too hard on yourself, and start small.

What is your favorite memory of being a cosplayer?

Dancing with friends at a Guardians of the Galaxy premiere at Alamo Drafthouse in the lobby while the Vol. 1 & 2 soundtracks played is definitely one of my favorite memories! But I have also really enjoyed the crafty pool parties I've done with friends. The unique ideas people come up with for swimsuit cosplay versions has always been fun.

What advice do you have for fans getting into cosplay?

If you see that someone has done a version of a cosplay you love, reach out to them and see what tips/ideas they might have to help you along with yours! The cosplay community is one that comes together and bonds over the characters we all love and enjoy. So make a few friends and chat about your favorite characters together and you'll find that other cosplayers can be a wealth of knowledge and support.

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

I actually have a love of Domino's Luck. I think it's the best and most useful superpower. How I wish I had that luck while trying to get somewhere on time, or maybe even the luck to have the villain not snap correctly.



R O X A S
STUDIO

Virgo

WE LOVE SCIENCE



Have we detected dark energy? Scientists say it's a possibility!



Dark energy, the mysterious force that causes the universe to accelerate, may have been responsible for unexpected

results from the XENON1T experiment, deep below Italy's Apennine Mountains. A new study, led by researchers at the University of Cambridge and reported in the journal *Physical Review D*, suggests that some unexplained results from the XENON1T experiment in Italy may have been caused by dark energy, and not the dark matter the experiment was designed to detect. They constructed a physical model to help explain the results, which may have originated from dark energy particles produced in a region of the Sun with strong magnetic fields, although future experiments will be required to confirm this explanation. The researchers say their study could be an important step toward the direct detection of dark energy. Everything our eyes can see in the skies and in our everyday world -- from tiny moons to massive galaxies, from ants to blue whales -- makes up less than five percent of the universe. The rest is dark. About 27% is dark matter -- the invisible force holding galaxies and the cosmic web together -- while 68% is dark energy, which causes the universe to expand at an accelerated rate. "Despite both components being invisible, we know a lot more about dark matter, since its existence was suggested as early as the 1920s, while dark energy wasn't discovered until 1998," said Dr Sunny Vagnozzi from Cambridge's Kavli Institute for Cosmology, the paper's first author. "Large-scale experiments like XENON1T have been designed to directly detect dark matter,

by searching for signs of dark matter 'hitting' ordinary matter, but dark energy is even more elusive." To detect dark energy, scientists generally look for gravitational interactions: the way gravity pulls objects around. And on the largest scales, the gravitational effect of dark energy is repulsive, pulling things away from each other and making the Universe's expansion accelerate. About a year ago, the XENON1T experiment reported an unexpected signal, or excess, over the expected background. "These sorts of excesses are often flukes, but once in a while they can also lead to fundamental discoveries," said Dr Luca Visinelli, a researcher at Frascati National Laboratories in Italy, a co-author of the study. "We explored a model in which this signal could be attributable to dark energy, rather than the dark matter the experiment was originally devised to detect." At the time, the most popular explanation for the excess were axions -- hypothetical, extremely light particles -- produced in the Sun. However, this explanation does not stand up to observations, since the amount of axions that would be required to explain the XENON1T signal would drastically alter the evolution of stars much heavier than the Sun, in conflict with what we observe. We are far from fully understanding what dark energy is, but most physical models for dark energy would lead to the existence of a so-called fifth force. There are four fundamental forces in the universe, and anything that can't be explained by one of these forces is sometimes referred to as the result of an unknown fifth force. However, we know that Einstein's theory of gravity works extremely well in the local universe. Therefore, any fifth force associated to dark energy is unwanted and must be 'hidden' or 'screened' when it comes to small scales, and can only operate on the largest scales where Einstein's theory of gravity fails to explain the acceleration of

the Universe. To hide the fifth force, many models for dark energy are equipped with so-called screening mechanisms, which dynamically hide the fifth force. Vagnozzi and his co-authors constructed a physical model, which used a type of screening mechanism known as chameleon screening, to show that dark energy particles produced in the Sun's strong magnetic fields could explain the XENON1T excess. "Our chameleon screening shuts down the production of dark energy particles in very dense objects, avoiding the problems faced by solar axions," said Vagnozzi. "It also allows us to decouple what happens in the local very dense Universe from what happens on the largest scales, where the density is extremely low." The researchers used their model to show what would happen in the detector if the dark energy was produced in a particular region of the Sun, called the tachocline, where the magnetic fields are particularly strong. "It was really surprising that this excess could in principle have been caused by dark energy rather than dark matter," said Vagnozzi. "When things click together like that, it's really special." Their calculations suggest that experiments like XENON1T, which are designed to detect dark matter, could also be used to detect dark energy. However, the original excess still needs to be convincingly confirmed. "We first need to know that this wasn't simply a fluke," said Visinelli. "If XENON1T actually saw something, you'd expect to see a similar excess again in future experiments, but this time with a much stronger signal." If the excess was the result of dark energy, upcoming upgrades to the XENON1T experiment, as well as experiments pursuing similar goals such as LUX-Zeplin and PandaX-xT, mean that it could be possible to directly detect dark energy within the next decade.

Modern Snakes Evolved From a Few Survivors of Dino-Killing Asteroid

A new study suggests that all living snakes evolved from a handful of species that survived the giant asteroid impact that wiped out the dinosaurs and



most other living things at the end of the Cretaceous. The authors say that this devastating extinction event was a form of 'creative destruction' that allowed snakes to diversify into new niches, previously filled by their competitors. The research, published in *Nature*

Communications, shows that snakes, today including almost 4000 living species, started to diversify around the time that an extra-terrestrial impact wiped out the dinosaurs and most other species on the planet. The study, led by scientists at the University of Bath and including collaborators from Bristol, Cambridge and Germany, used fossils and analyzed genetic differences between modern snakes to reconstruct snake evolution. The analyses helped to pinpoint the time that modern snakes evolved. Their results show that all living snakes trace back to just a handful of species that survived the asteroid impact 66 million years ago, the same extinction that wiped out the dinosaurs. The

authors argue that the ability of snakes to shelter underground and go for long periods without food helped them survive the destructive effects of the impact. In the aftermath, the extinction of their competitors -- including Cretaceous snakes and the dinosaurs themselves -- allowed snakes to move into new niches, new habitats and new continents. Snakes then began to diversify, producing lineages like vipers, cobras, garter snakes, pythons, and boas, exploiting new habitats, and new prey. Modern snake diversity -- including tree snakes, sea snakes, venomous vipers and cobras, and huge constrictors like boas and pythons -- emerged only after the dinosaur extinction. Fossils also show a change in the shape of snake vertebrae in the aftermath, resulting from the extinction of Cretaceous lineages and the appearance of new groups, including giant sea snakes up to 10 meters long. "It's remarkable, because not only are they surviving an extinction that wipes out so many other animals, but within a few million years they are innovating, using their habitats in new ways," said lead author and recent Bath graduate Dr Catherine Klein, who now works at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (FAU) in Germany. The study also suggests that snakes began to spread across the globe around this time.

Although the ancestor of living snakes probably lived somewhere in the Southern Hemisphere, snakes first appear to have spread to Asia after the extinction. Dr Nick Longrich, from the Milner Centre for Evolution at the University of Bath and the corresponding author, said: "Our research suggests that extinction acted as a form of 'creative destruction' - by wiping out old species, it allowed survivors to exploit the gaps in the ecosystem, experimenting with new lifestyles and habitats. "This seems to be a general feature of evolution -- it's the periods immediately after major extinctions where we see evolution at its most wildly experimental and innovative. "The destruction of biodiversity makes room for new things to emerge and colonize new landmasses. Ultimately life becomes even more diverse than before." The study also found evidence for a second major diversification event around the time that the world shifted from a warm 'Greenhouse Earth' into a cold 'Icehouse' climate, which saw the formation of polar icecaps and the start of the Ice Ages. The patterns seen in snakes hint at a key role for catastrophes -- severe, rapid, and global environmental disruptions -- in driving evolutionary change.

Your Place To Talk!



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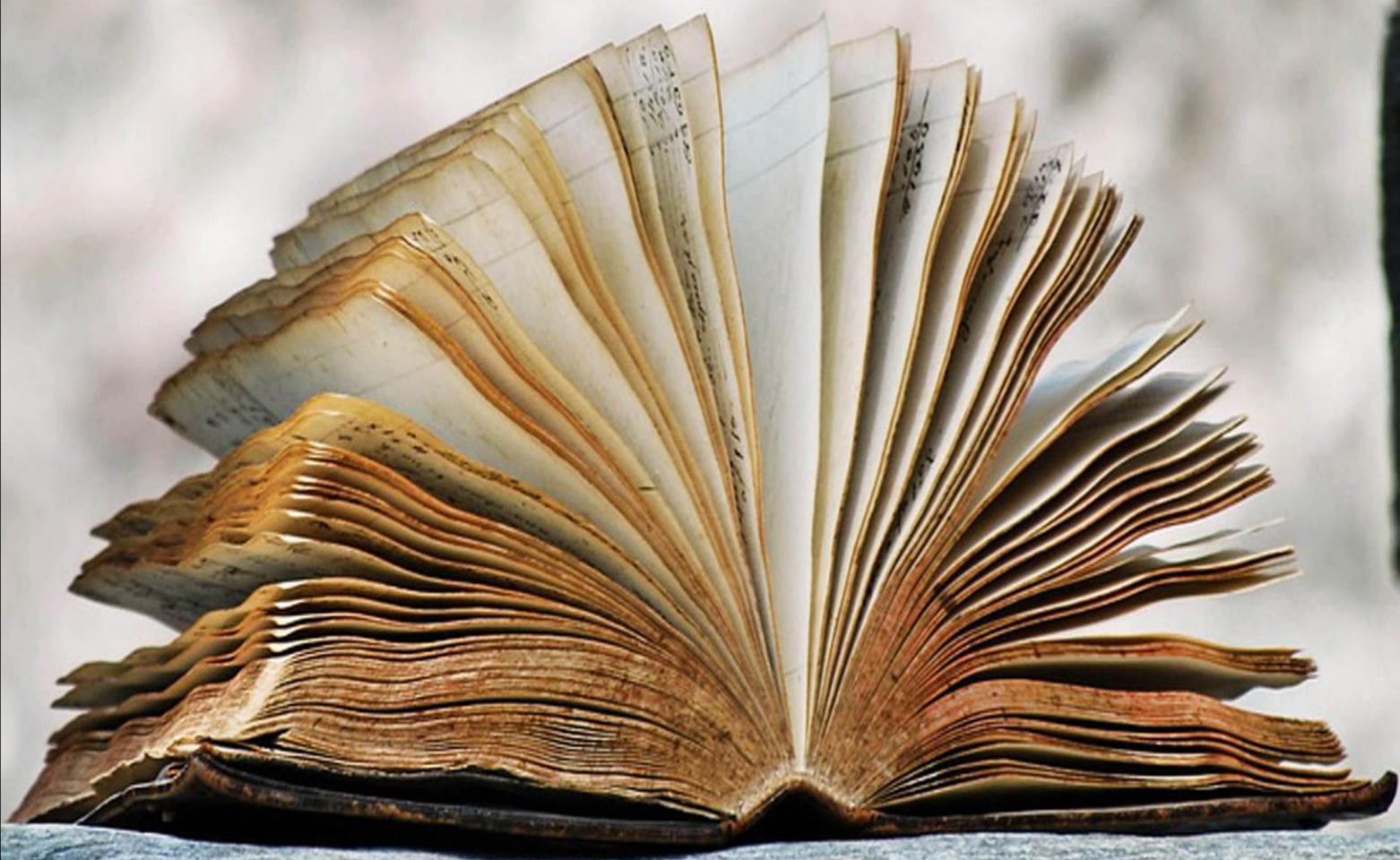
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Storytellers





Rangers *of* Liberus

~ The One with Magic ~

By Marcus Blake

“Preview”

1

The night was restless. The three Rangers could feel it as they tracked something in the darkness during their night patrol. Rathgar was the first to say it. “The air is foul, can you smell it?” the other two Rangers Jaedann and Hanniah didn’t disagree. Bad smells were always a good indicator to a Ranger that danger was lurking. They made their way through the heavily wooded area towards one of the small ports along the outer coastlines of Liberus. Jaedann stopped them and then bent down to look at the ground. It had been trampled on by what appeared to be a large group or herd of animals. Not by horses, but by heavy feet and bigger than a normal human. Finally, he saw it, crow feathers and small thorns around the outer edges. It wasn’t natural, they had been made that way; a symbol for those who wore the feathers and their warlike identity. Jaedann showed Rathgar the feather. After examining it closely, he replied. “It’s Barbarian, the Crowthornn clan to be exact.”

Hearing that surprised Jaedann and Hanniah. Rathgar was not so easily surprised by the motives of the Barbarian clans since he came from one himself. He had once been a Ravenbeak until he had been cast out for loving the wrong woman and killing her husband in the Barbarian tradition of trial by combat when it came to settling disputes. He may have won the fight, but lost the woman he loved and his home. Now he was a Ranger on the outskirts of the world known as Annmar. Jaedann asked his friend Rathgar. “This is strange, Crowthornns don’t venture this far to the coast, do they?”

Rathgar shook his head. “No, unless it is for gold...lots of gold.”

Hanniah asked. “Then what else would they be looking for?”

“They’re not looking for anything except people to pillage and murder. That’s the only service Crowthornns sell to outsiders and I know for a fact, no Barbarian would hire them to venture this far west.”

The three Rangers followed the trail left by Crowthornns. Rathgar figured it had to be at twenty of them, which equaled about a hundred Belmerien Knights in terms of ferociousness and fighting ability. But Barbarians were always more savage when it came to fighting and that made them more dangerous. The trail was leading to the coastline east of the Liberus, a trading town, and a small port only used by smugglers and blackmarket dealers.

They were less than one mil (miles in Annmar) from the coast when Hanniah saw the smoke dance in the moonlight that that helped light the way. It was a full moon that night and gave off just enough light to see smoke rising above the tree line. She said to the other Rangers. "Look, smoke. Something's on fire." Jaedann and Rathgar couldn't see anything, but they never doubted her instincts. Jordan asked if she could climb a tree and see what was burning. Hanniah was very skilled at such things. She quickly scurried up one of the big redwood trees just enough above the tree line. Hanniah saw what was burning and said. "It is a small ship next to the broken dock. Crowthornns set it on fire." She could also see the Barbarians slaughtering people on the beach. They were not doing a good job defending themselves against the Barbarians raiding the area. Most of them were dead already.

Jaedann, Hanniah, and Rathgar sprinted to the small port, hoping to catch the Barbarians by surprise. As they reached the base of the tree line before the beach started, Jaedann stopped them. He commented. "They are mostly women, that ship is not a smuggler's ship. This is something else. why are Crowthornns interested in this ship."

Hanniah got annoyed as women were screaming while being hacked to death on the beach. She replied. "It doesn't matter, we need to stop this." Jaedann was going to say something, but quickly realized she was right, and they needed to help. They mystery if why the Crowthornns were there, could be solved later. He ordered Rathgar to go around and flank the Barbarians. He and Hanniah were going to use their bows and drive the Crowthornns towards his direction by shooting arrows at them while remaining hidden in the tree line. Rathgar smiled at the idea and even commented. "Great, my axes just got sharpened and need some blood on them."

Rathgar snuck around and flanked the croutons while still being hidden in the tree line. Hanniah and Jaedann stood side by side and got into position while also being hidden by the trees at the edge of the beach. They raised their bows. Steadied their arms and aimed. Arrows flew from the trees. Two Barbarians went down, then two more right after as more arrows came flying from the darkness of the tree line. The rest of the Crowthornns did not know what was happening and started to scatter. Jaedann and Hanniah shot two more arrows and killed two more before emerging from the trees. Jaedann's strategy was working, Crowthornns were running in the opposite direction toward where Rathgar was hidden. He came out of the tree line like a ghost and two Crowthornns did not even see it coming as his ax blades swiftly severed their heads. He swung the axes with precision and killed two more. The rest of the small barbarian army were trapped between Rathgar and his axes plus, Hanniah and Jaedann with their bows and swords, and the water they hated more. Sure, there were more of them than the three Rangers killing them with ease, but they had little chance as the Rangers took care of business. Rathgar didn't even get a scratch on him, but his newly sharpened axes were coated in Barbarian blood. Jaedann was out of arrows as the last Crowthornn came running towards him. He ducked and rolled behind him, pulling his sword out and slicing the Crowthornn down the back just to get him down. Then he finished the job by cutting off his head. They had killed all the Crowthornns except for one who escaped into the woods and ran away. Rathgar remarked that Crowthornns were cowards compared to other Barbarian clans, but he had never liked the Crowthornn clan anyway.

Most of the people who had been on the ship and had gotten off were found dead on the beach. As the Rangers were searching the area, Hanniah found an old woman still alive, but bleeding out. She was still conscious. Jaedann knelt beside her and asked. "Why did they attack you?" He was hoping that she had some clue to why these innocent people were attacked. The old woman replied as she coughed up blood. "You must protect here."

The Rangers looked at each other with curiosity and then looked back at the old woman. Jaedann asked. "Who?"

"The woman repeated. "Protect her, she is the one."

"Who is *her*?"

"The old woman gasped for air as blood filled her mouth. Then she grabbed Jaedann's arm and with last words said. "You must protect her with your life." They were ominous words, the kind that could send shivers through your body. The old woman died before she could say anything else, but her word left all three of them wondering who this mysterious girl was. The Rangers were confused, but that was to be expected. Rathgar spoke up. "Her, any idea who the woman was talking about? Is there anyone else alive?" They all looked around and could see that no one was moving on the beach. Hanniah suggested they check the small ship that was docked. Jaedann and Hanniah climbed aboard. They searched the ship, but found nothing of interest. Hanniah was the one who spoke up first. "I don't get it, there's nothing on this ship except the bare essentials they would need to sail, nothing of value."

She was right, there was nothing of value. The cargo-hold barely had anything in it, which made the entire situation even more strange. The ship had nothing that Crowthornn Barbarians would want. Then Jaedann heard a noise coming from the back wall. After looking closely, he spotted the hidden storage room, covered by barrels filled with fruit. He and Hanniah cleared away the barrels and opened the storage door.

Whoosh! An Arrow went whizzing by Jaedenn's head. His quick reaction knocked it out of the way. He and Hanniah saw that it was a young girl. She was frightened, but still tried to load another arrow in the crossbow and then she stumbled backwards, tripping over a boxed container. The girl fell, hit her head and knocked herself out. It was a bit amusing to Hanniah. She laughed and commented on it. "What was that?"

Jaedann softly smiled. "I guess we have a survivor. An unconscious one, but a survivor. Maybe if she comes to, she can tell us what the Crowthornns were looking for." Jaedann and Hanniah got the girl off the boat. To Rathgar's surprise, he asked. "Who is that? Is that girl that old woman was talking about?"

Jaedann replied. "We don't know, but she's the only one alive and may have answers to what really happened here."

"We're not taking her with us, are we?"

Jaedann nodded. "Yes, maybe Vorak can help her and I want to know why Crowthornns are venturing this far. Let us see what she has to say about it."

Rathgar grumbled. "She's dead weight. We should just leave her here for the Crowthorns. They'll just keep coming back until they get what they want. We should save the Liberus the headache...let the Crowthornns have her and they will be gone."

Hanniah shot him a dirty look. "We don't leave innocent women behind despite the half-wit notions of Barbarians, especially Ravenbeaks."

Rathgar was about to say something, but Jaedann interrupted. "It's best not to argue with her when she's mad. You tend to lose important body parts when you stoke the fiery wrath of Hanniah Bloodshout and I guarantee you'll miss what she takes from you." Rathgar didn't say anything after that. The look by Hanniah was warning enough that the best decision was to shut up and go along. Jaedann put the unconscious girl over his saddle in front of him and the Rangers rode off into the night back to the trading city they had sworn to protect.

2

The two men sat on their horses beneath the moonlight on a hilltop that overlooked a valley. The night was getting cold. Finally, Yvain asked the man next to him. "Sansonn, how long is this supposed to take? These Crowthornns should be back by now. I thought you said they could get the job done and quick?"

Sansonn chuckled. "Relax, they will be here. Sometimes, Crowthornns take extra time with the women after they are done pillaging...if you know what I mean."

Yvain gave him a dirty look. He did not like that remark any more than he liked Sansonn. Yvain considered himself a virtuous man and did not approve of such things. "Of course I do, but raping is usually a quick sport in my experience with the soldiers I have commanded."

"Not to Barbarians. Just like with food and drink, they take the time to enjoy what they consider the spoils of a good hunt."

In the distance they could see the silhouette of someone running through the trees up the steel hill. It was only one Crowthornn when there should be twenty. Yvain commented on that fact. The Crowthornn reached the top of the hill where they two men were sitting on their horses. It was the leader of the group and both men were gravely surprised to see only him. Sansonn spoke first. "Khonnnd, where is the rest of your men?"

He grumbled. "Dead, all of them."

Sansonn, stunned a what he was hearing asked. "Dead...how? Who did this to your kinsmen?"

"Rangers. They shot arrows from the woods like cowards. And there was another Barbarian...I recognized his battle axes. I barely escaped."

Yvain replied. "Or you ran instead of fighting. That is the truth, isn't it?"

Khonnd growled back. "Crowthornns do not run from a fight...we only leave the fight to get more men if need be. That's what I am going to do so we can hunt these Rangers down and spread their insides throughout the valley."

Yvain did not like having to deal with barbarians any more than he had to. He did not trust them and believed they should only be used as fodder in a battle. He was about to say something snobbish and condescending, but Sansonn interrupted. "Khonnd, did you find it?"

"Everybody is dead. We killed them all before the Rangers showed up."

Yvain responded. "Then why don't you have the head. Our deal what that you bring the head of the Elf."

"We found no Elf."

"Then you didn't get everybody."

Khonnd grumbled. "Maybe there was no Elf on that ship."

Yvain gave the barbarian a fake smile. "There was because someone a lot more powerful and certainly a lot smarter than you, saw it."

Khonnd grabbed the bridle of the horse Yvain was sitting on and in an angry tone replied. "Are you calling me a liar."

Yvain quickly pulled out his small dagger from its sheath and in a downward motion used it to cut off a few of Khonnds fingers. The Barbarian grabbed his hand in pain and was about to attack when Yvain grabbed his head and put the dagger to his throat. "I'm not calling you a liar, but you are clearly mistaken. If you want to see the rest of your gold and weapons, then you will gather a small force and find the Elf. And the next time I see you, you better have its head with you."

Sansonn said to Khonnd. "If the Elf is not among the dead, then the Rangers probably found it and took it back to Liberus, which means you will need a much larger army, but there should be plenty of wealth there to make it worth your while before you burn it to the ground."

Yvain sternly looked at Khonnd. "You have a week, after that I will find another clan to get the job done and we have plenty of gold to make sure the job gets done right." Khonnd was about to respond, but Yvain and Sansonn rode off before he could growl a final word. As the two men rode off into the night towards the village they were staying at, Sansonn asked. "If you suspect who you are looking for to be in Liberus then, why not just send your own army to sack the place. You would be within your right since there is no telling how many black-market goods from your kingdom flow through there every day."

Yvain gave him a stern look as if to say, *how dare this man suggest such a thing*. He simply said. "Anntheia cannot be involved yet. If we send an army then other kingdoms will ask questions and no one must know our true intent. They must not know who we are looking for." Sansonn was confused. He was just a mercenary who brought people together for the right price. In order to be trusted and continually get business, it meant he could not ask too many questions. But this job had him overly curious, so naturally, he wanted to know more. Yvain shot down any further questions by saying. "We will not talk about this again. Just make sure this Barbarian clan gets the job done or you will suffer the same as them." Sansonn knew well enough not to press the issue and stayed silent for the rest of their ride back to the village.

3

The Rangers finally arrived back to the large trading town known as Liberus. The place carried on like a trading post with no permanent residents, only visitors, although at least a third of the folks and two generations there had lived in Liberus since it was first established over fifty years ago. Liberus even had its own government and its own code of conduct that everybody who lived there or passed agreed to live by. There was a Magistrate and a small council that the people themselves elected. Something unheard of in a land with kings and noblemen, and hereditary titles. This is what made Liberus one of the best free cities to live in for those who did not want to live under the rule of a kingdom or had been banished from their homeland.

Liberus was buzzing with excitement when the Rangers arrived back. The place rarely slept as visitors entertained themselves through most of the night with drinking, gambling, and whores. And there was plenty of brawling between sailors looking to trade and merchants all too eager to take their goods and give little coin in return. Some were friendly and just there to blow off steam, and some were more of a serious nature. Rathgar looked around as they rode in and to him it felt like one big party was happening without him. He commented. "From the looks of it, I will not be getting much sleep tonight."

Jaedann laughed. "How many women will there be tonight?"

Rathgar smiled. "At least there with plenty of ale in-between."

Hanniah responded in jest. "Is that three at the same time or spaced out through the night?"

"We Barbarians always do things in threes. It's just a matter of how many times." Jaedann and Hanniah laughed at his thunderous enthusiasm. Jaedann told him that he could join the festivities and he was not needed for the rest of the evening. He and Hanniah could take the girl to the Cleric.

Vorak kept to himself. He enjoyed a nice ale every now and then, but as the cleric for Liberus, he was the religious prefect, the doctor, and record keeper. He spent most nights writing down the history of this place, the same kind of job he did in his former life. Vorak was startled by the knock at his door, but assumed it was important. It was Jaedann and he carried the unconscious girl in his arms. He explained to Vorak what had happened on their patrol and how they found her including how she knocked herself out. Vorak had him lay her down on the extra bed, he had in his cabin for folks who were sick or hurt. He asked. "Was anybody else hurt?"

Jaedann replied. "No, everybody else is dead. Killed by a Barbarian clan called the Crowthornns?"

Vorak was surprised. "That is strange...clans don't usually venture down to the coastal lands."

"That is what we thought too. But we need to talk to this girl. Is she going to live?"

Vorak did a quick examination. He replied. "Yes, she hit her head pretty hard, but she will wake up, eventually."

Vorak went to his mending table and made up a sticky substance out of herbs and moss. It was an ointment that would help heal the wound on the back of the girl's head. She was wearing a hat that resembled something more like a bonnet and when it was removed by Vorak, her long beautiful light reddish hair fell down covering most of her face and chest. But Vorak, Jaedann, and Hanniah all noticed her ears at the same time as they were poking out of her long hair. Jaedann said it first. "Holy Fuk, she is an Elf." Hanniah looked at Jaedann, stunned, but Vorak took a closer look at the girl's eyes. "No...actually, she is a Half-Elf and what is even more strange, she has one blue eye and one green eye. Elves usually have piercing blue eyes or green eyes, having both is a sign, but I do not know of what."

Hanniah asked. "How did a Half-Elf even get here? I didn't know there any around."

Vorak said. "They are not common, but you can find them in the port towns of the Elven Kingdom of Dorwinn. I believe a good majority of them live in some of the small villages on the edge of the Kingdom of Belmere."

Jaedann spoke up. "That is true, usually the bastard children of Belmere children and Elf maidens, but I don't think this one came from there. She came from west of here, from across the Sea. There were things on that ship that were not from Annmar and I believe they came with them from their port of origin; from across the Elmsonn Sea. So the bigger question is what is a Half-Elf doing across the sea and why did she come to Annmar?"

Hanniah responded. "That wasn't a merchant ship the Crownthornns raided. You don't suppose the crew were hiding her?"

Jaedann shrugged. Vorak finished putting the ointment on the girl's head and said. "We won't solve that mystery until she wakes up. There's nothing you can do until then. Go get some sleep or get drunk...I'll find you when she wakes up."

Jaedann was going to say something, but Hanniah stopped him. "Jaedann, let it go...it can't wait. In the meantime, buy me a drink. You need one too and perhaps we can blow off some steam." He was extremely curious about the girl, but didn't argue. They left to join the al the fun that would be raging until early morning, perhaps even until the sun came up. Hanniah remarked that other than a drink Jaedann could benefit from the soft touch of a good woman. Jaedann agreed.

4

There were multiple spots to drink and gamble in Liberus, but the most popular place was The Devil's Tavern. It was also the biggest. The place even had a fighting pit right off the outside deck for friendly brawls and blowing off steam as Jaedann called it. Rathgar was in the pit giving his opponent quite the beating and taking even fewer punches when Hanniah and Jaedann walked into The Devil's Tavern. They were talking about the girl as they walked in and made their way to the bar. Jaedann said. "All I'm saying is this was not a normal raid by a Barbarian clan, there's something strange about that girl." The bartender handed each of them a mug of ale.

Hanniah replied. "You're overthinking this...she's just a girl who got lucky and survived a raid. Before you claim that Crownthornns coming down this far is strange, barbarian clans venture further every year with their raids when they can't find enough plunder. It was only a matter of time before they came this far."

Jaedann took a sip of ale. "I wish that were true, but I think you're wrong, I fear that this is a warning of some kind. Something bigger is coming our way."

"Did you see an omen because you do not strike me as someone who believes in those sorts of things?"

"No, just a feeling. It's like when you get restless the night before a big battle."

Hanniah took a sip of her ale. "And how would you know that? Have you been in many big battles?"

Jaedann softly smiled. "Just like you, I wasn't always a Ranger. A long time ago, I was a soldier."

"What army?"

"It does not matter, but when you're a soldier, you learn to read the signs and believe more in your instincts when it comes to big events especially that of war."

"The same as reading an omen."

"It's different. It's feelings based off of experience and not superstitions. To me, it feels like something bigger is going to happen and this wasn't some random incident. I don't know what it is, but I know it's coming."

Hanniah finished her mug of ale. "As long as it's not coming tonight, I don't care. I want to get drunk and ravished...and sleep way past the sunrise. You should quit over thinking this and do the same. You may need those things more than I do. Everything can wait until the morning." That's all she said as she walked off to find the fun she was looking for. Hanniah was a wild spirit and on most nights she needed to be tamed so she could feel like something new the next day. Jaedann in many ways was the same way. He just wasn't as boisterous about it like his fellow Rangers, but had his regular thing with a fair haired maiden in Liberus by the name of Milley. She was the unmarried daughter of a merchant who traded in stolen and borrowed goods.

It was early in the morning and just a little past sunrise when the girl finally woke up. Vorak was asleep himself when he heard her screams. The girl had no idea where she was and the last thing she remembered were

people with swords standing over her. Of course, she was scared, her screams were only normal. Vorak quickly woke and ran to the girl's bedside, trying to calm her down. He said. "Girl, it's okay...you're safe. You're not hurt...look at me, you're safe." She stopped screaming just long enough to ask. "Where am I?"

"You are at the Cleric's house in Liberus."

The girl was still scared. "I don't know what that is."

"It's a safe place, I promise."

"What happened to me?"

"I am not sure, except for the fact that you hit your head. If you want more answers then you will need to talk the Rangers who found you and brought you here." Vorak motioned to the other young girl in the room that served as his assistant most of the time. "Go find Jaedann and the rest of them, tell them the girl is finally awake."

His assistant replied. "It is awfully early...I am sure they're all still drunk and passed out somewhere."

"Most likely, but trust me...they will sober up fast for this."

It did not take long to find the Rangers. All three of them were curled up with a companion, staying warm and getting past the hangover that had begun the night before. The news was like an instant wakeup for Jaedann, making him jump to his feet while barely getting his shirt on as he rushed to Vorak's building. Hanniah and Rathgar were both awakened in the same fashion and they both rushed from the people sharing their beds to Vorak's building.

The girl didn't say anything to all those standing in the room. In fact, she was so frightened that she was shaking. Vorak tried to calm her down by telling her that everything was okay and she could trust them. But trust is a funny thing when you were just attacked by Barbarians and then wake up to a room full of strangers who may just want to kill you all the same. How could she trust these strangers? Vorak handed her a cup. She inched away and didn't take the cup. He said. "It's just a broth with some herbs, it will make you feel better. You should drink it."

She had only asked one question until now, but she was starting to become more curious than afraid. "What is this place?"

Jaedann softly answered. "You're in Liberus. It's a small city outside the law of any kingdom in Annmar. It's essentially a trading town governed by the merchants who started it."

"You're not part of a kingdom?"

"No."

"Who are you?"

He reached out his hand to greet her. "My name is Jaedann Lionnshade, I'm a Ranger and help keep the peace around here along with my friends, Rathgar and Hanniah." She hesitated for a moment, but eventually took his hand to greet him back. She was still a little afraid, but Jaedann had a trusting face. Somehow, she felt at ease around him.

Jaedann asked. "So what about you...where was your ship coming from." She answered the question with a question of her own. "Where are the other people that were on the ship?"

Rathgar spoke up with a stern tone. "They are all dead."

The girl was frightened again after hearing the news. "Dead...they can't all be dead."

Jaedann replied. "It is true, you are the only one who survived. Do you remember anything?"

"We were attacked by some kind of warrior clan."

"They were a Barbarian clan called Crowthornns. But what I am curious about is what they were looking for, you did not have anything of value on your ship like gold or precious metals. And the ship had just enough food for a short journey."

The girl did not say anything for a moment, but finally replied. "I do not know...we were just attacked."

Rathgar said to her. "Barbarians don't come this far to the coast just to raid ships. They're an inland race. They were looking for something."

The girl replied. "I do not know."

Jaedann said to her. "I guess the captain of the ship did not tell you what was going on."

"What do you mean?"

"Rathgar is right, the Crowthornns were looking for something they thought was important, it was not just a simple raid, but perhaps the Captain or the rest of the crew did not tell you what they were really hiding."

She was a bit surprised to hear that and responded. "Hiding?"

"The crew had to have been hiding something for Crownthorns come this far, but maybe you do not know what it is, that is what I am trying to say."

She did not respond, but finally took a sip of what Vorak had given her. Jaedann asked. "Where were you going?"

"A town called Ellisar."

"I have never heard of it... what kingdom is it a part of?"

"Not sure, all I know that is where we were going."

Jaedann looked at Vorak. "Have you heard of this place?"

Vorak thought for a moment. "I am not sure. Perhaps it is somewhere in Guirinn, but why would a Half-Elf come by sea and travel to a Dwarvian kingdom?"

The girl seemed surprised by the comment. Jaedann could tell that she knew more than what she was saying, but didn't want to pry too much from the frightened girl. Enough tragedy had already beset her. Vorak suggested that she be prepared a bath and get something to eat. There would be time for more answers. The Rangers left. It was early in the morning and the sun was starting to rise above the treeline to the east of Liberus. The Rangers would be up in a little while anyway, so they decided to start their day. Rathgar suggested they get some breakfast and ale. It was how he normally started the day. All of them agreed and as they were walking to their usual breakfast spot, Rathgar asked. "None of you believed her story, right?"

Hannah replied. "She hit her head and may not remember everything, but it will come back eventually."

Jaedann responded. "No, Rathgar is right. She is hiding something."

Rathgar grabbed his Ax. "Then let's get the truth out of her."

"We don't need the ax, Rathgar."

"My axe would say different."

"Easy big guy. She will tell us when she is ready."

"Why, when we can easily speed this whole thing up."

Jaedann smiled. "So that she will trust us. You always get more truth with trust."

"I trust that my ax can get the job done."

"And most of the time, I would agree with you. But let's try not frightening her anymore and see where that gets us. Also, she may be just like you, get a little food and ale in your belly, and it will quench your fear or your thirst for blood."

"Rathgar laughed. "I do feel better with food and ale in my belly so we will give it a try, but if it does not work, my ax will make it work."

Laughing at the comment, Hannah said. "You are like a little boy with a new toy...a new ax and you want to kill everything."

Rathgar let out a thunderous laugh. "I'm a Barbarian, weapons always make the best toys, especially when you can use them to take someone's head off." All three of them laughed at the Barbarian's simple logic and he certainly was not wrong.

To Be Continued....

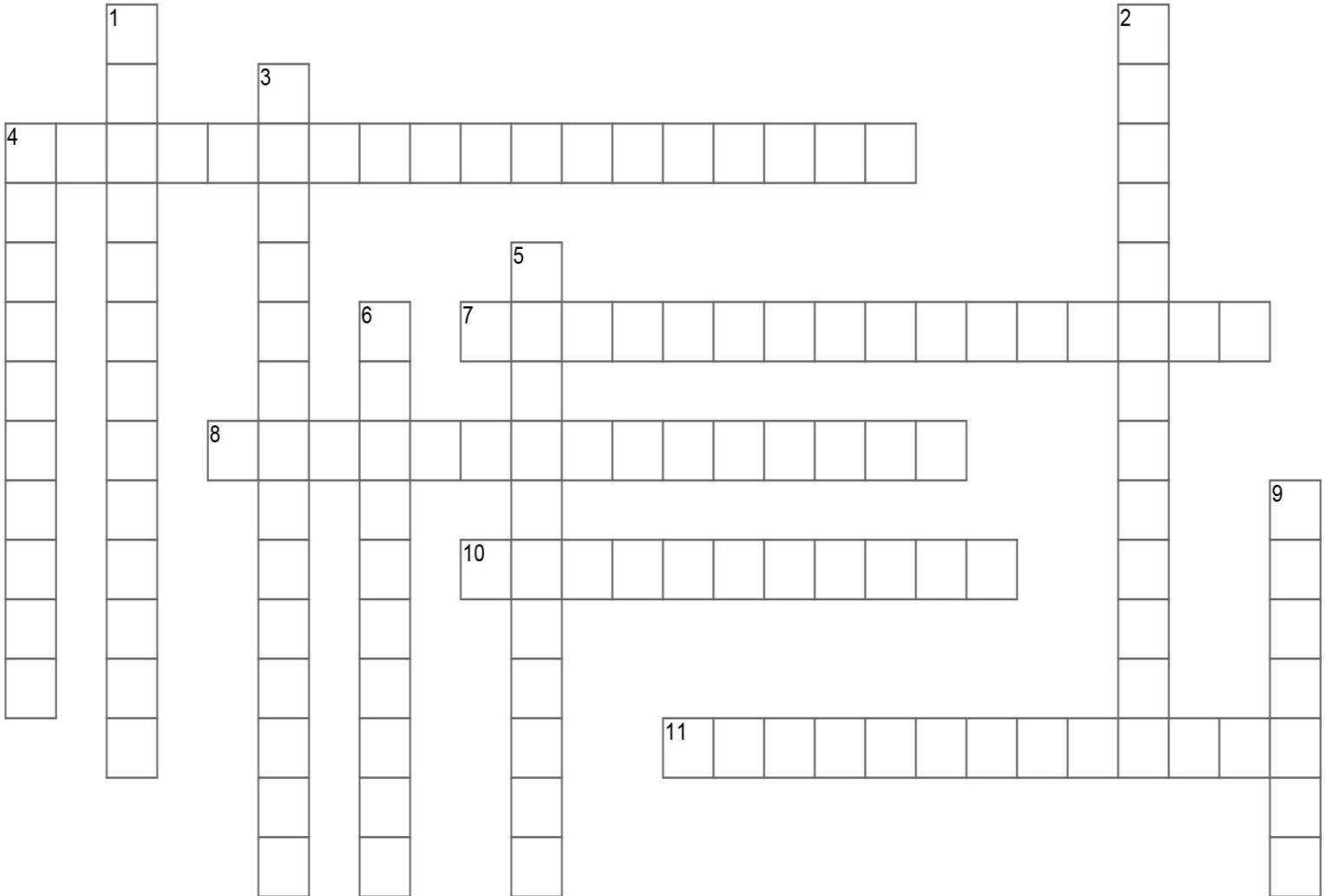
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11. American television and social media personality.

DOWN

1. Duchess of Cambridge
2. *Dancing with the Stars*
3. Some of her great songs: *Irreplaceable*, *Halo*.
4. *Hannah Montana*?
5. Was first featured on *Barney & Friends* in the early 2000.
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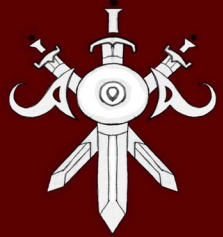
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