



**TWIN PEAKS REVIVAL DAMN FINE PREVIEW!**

# SciFiNow

THE WORLD'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION  
FANTASY AND HORROR MAGAZINE

TM  
www.scifinow.co.uk

**NO TURNING BACK!**

## WAR OF THE WALKING DEAD

First word on Rick and  
co's revenge rampage

## LOGAN RUNS

Inside Hugh Jackman's  
X-Men swansong

**TOM HIDDLESTON,  
BRIE LARSON AND MORE  
ON THE KING OF THE APES'  
AWE-INSPIRING COMEBACK**

**THE END IS NOW**

## SS-GB ATTACKS!

Britain's answer to The Man In  
The High Castle declassified

# KONG LIVES!



**TO US, SHE'S ROYALTY**

## CARRIE FISHER REMEMBERED

A tribute to the Star Wars icon



**DIRECTOR EXCLUSIVE**

## BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Why Disney's remake  
will get you singing again

**FEATURED INSIDE**

HARRY POTTER // THE EXORCIST // READY PLAYER ONE  
KURT BUSIEK // A CURE FOR WELLNESS // THE LOVE WITCH

**Digital Edition**

ISSUE 129 www.scifinow.co.uk

THE SIGNAL  
EXISTENZ  
VIRUS  
PANDORUM

SCIENCE FEAR

**horror**

SATURDAYS IN  
**FEBRUARY**









Nothing announces your arrival quite like swatting an army helicopter out of the sky with a tree.

And so King Kong was born anew on the big screen, only this time a whole lot larger in anticipation of his eventual Godzilla brawl, and with the likes of Tom Hiddleston, Brie Larson and Samuel L. Jackson for company.

But if you think you know the full story then think again. *Kong: Skull Island* isn't going to end with the King of the Apes plummeting to his death from the top of the Empire State Building; Kong – and Warner Bros – are in this for the long haul. Expect to learn more about him than you ever thought you would.

As evidenced by the above, shared universes are all the rage now, and we were lucky enough to share ours with the aforementioned trio – along with director Jordan Vogt-Roberts – as they gave us the lowdown on why *Kong: Skull Island* will be the film event of 2017's first quarter, and why it isn't just the standard monster mash-up that we've all become accustomed to.

Also showing new sides to him this month is none other than the Wolverine, who Hugh Jackman

will be saying goodbye to for good in *Logan*, the sort-of adaptation of Mark Millar's classic *Old Man Logan* storyline that we've all been hoping for – and we have the exclusive lowdown, in addition to interviews with the stars and creators of the likes of Disney's live-action *Beauty And The Beast* remake, David Lynch's return to small-town disturbia with the new season of *Twin Peaks*, and the bloody comeback of *The Walking Dead*.

As usual, we've also decided that living in the past is an entirely healthy pursuit. To this end, we revisit the entirety of *The Exorcist*, from William Friedkin's seminal horror all the way through to Fox's surprisingly-quite-good TV series; chat to Eighties favourite – and original Lana Lang – Annette O'Toole, and catch up with *Marvel's* writer Kurt Busiek as he regales us with his love for *Wonder Woman*.

So pound your chests and roar at the sky – issue 129 of *SciFiNow* is here!

Steve

Steve Wright  
Editor





## GET EXCITED ABOUT SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING

Right from his introduction in *Captain America: Civil War*, we knew we were onto a winner with Tom Holland, and the first trailer for *Spider-Man: Homecoming* hasn't done anything to dissuade us of this belief. Okay, so Peter Parker has this whole tragic back story, but the movies have already done this storyline to death – instead, this looks like the focus is purely on fun, more specifically involving the kind of wall-crawling heroics that made Spidey so loved to begin with. Plus, Michael Keaton taking on adversary duties as the Vulture? Count us in...

## PORTAL

### 08 **Twin Peaks: Season Three**

David Lynch and co get cryptic as we discuss the spooky small town's damn fine return.

### 10 **Carrie Fisher**

We look back at the life of the *Star Wars* star and sci-fi icon.

### 17 **Mute**

Everything you need to know about Duncan Jones' new film.

## FEATURES

### 20 **Kong: Skull Island**

Tom Hiddleston, Brie Larson and Samuel L Jackson give us the exclusive lowdown on King Kong's comeback.

### 28 **King Kong: The Legacy**

Charting the King of the Apes' evolution on the big screen.

### 32 **Beauty And The Beast**

Director Bill Condon discusses Disney's live-action take on the animated classic.

### 36 **Ian McKellen**

The new Cogsworth talks *BATB*, Gandalf, Magneto and more.

### 38 **Logan**

We look ahead to Hugh Jackman's climatic Wolverine role.

### 44 **Superhero Ending Stories**

Our pick of the most memorable 'final' comic-book arcs.

### 46 **The Love Witch**

Anne Biller on combining classic Hollywood with horror.

### 48 **A Cure For Wellness**

We journey to the world's creepiest health spa with Gore Verbinski, Jason Isaacs and Dane DeHaan.

### 52 **The Art Of Harry Potter**

MinaLima talk about their astonishing Hogwarts-inspired art.

### 56 **The Walking Dead**

With battlelines drawn, producer Gale Anne Hurd talks us through Negan and Rick's upcoming face-off.

## REVIEWS

### 62 **Split**

Has M Night Shyamalan returned to form with his latest movie?

### 65 **Assassin's Creed**

Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard fight to make the first good videogame movie.

### 72 **Lemony Snicket's A Series Of Unfortunate Events**

Is Neil Patrick Harris a better Count Olaf than Jim Carrey?

### Plus...

*Passengers*, *iBoy*, *The OA* and many more

## BOOK CLUB

### 74 **Ready Player One**

Why Ernest Cline's debut novel is a 21st century sci-fi classic.

### 82 **Jen Williams**

*The Ninth Rain* author talks us through her latest novel.

### Plus...

All the latest book and comics reviews.

## TIMEWARP

### 90 **The Exorcist**

We chart the history of the world's scariest franchise.

### 98 **Annette O'Toole**

The cult icon looks back at *It* and *Smallville*.

### Plus...

*The Beyond*, *Seconds*, *Hammer Horror* and more.



20

THE CAST ON KONG'S RETURN



32





38



10



08



56



90

## MEET THE TEAM

**Q.** Which monster would you want on your side in a fight?



**Steve Wright**  
Editor

**A. Clover**  
Just to find out how it managed to decapitate the Statue of Liberty.



**Jonathan Hatfull**  
Features Editor

**A. Totoro**  
He's just so easy to get along with. There's no conflict on the Cat Bus.



**Poppy-Jay Palmer**  
Senior Staff Writer

**A. Mike Wazowski**  
I'm a lover, not a fighter. We'll settle this through dance.



**Jon Wells**  
Art Editor

**A. Medusa**  
I've got her head as long as she's got my back. Am I right?



**Jen Neal**  
Production Editor

**A. The Mosasaurus**  
Okay, so it might have eaten Katie McGrath, but he saved the day, too!

## EVERY ISSUE

**112 SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Subscribe to the magazine and save today

**114 NEXT ISSUE**

Your first look at the next issue of SciFiNow

SciFiNow THE HOTTEST NEWS FIRST

# PORTAL

Your essential, trustworthy and unrivalled guide to the latest genre happenings



WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL  
INTERVIEWS ADAM TANSWELL

**David Lynch, Kyle MacLachlan and Laura Dern on the return of Twin Peaks**

# BACK IN STYLE







Looking back at the *Star Wars* icon's incredible legacy

© Joseph Sinclair



Eoin Macken gives us his wish list for a Gwaine-fronted spin-off



Discover a Nazi dystopian Britain in the BBC's new drama



Get your first look at Duncan Jones' *Warcraft* follow-up

**It's nearly here.** Admittedly, it has been a bit longer than the 25 years that we were promised, but David Lynch and Mark Frost will be taking us back to *Twin Peaks* in just a few months for 18 hours, and we're happier than Special Agent Dale Cooper enjoying a midnight-black cup of coffee and a slice of damn fine cherry pie.

"I see it as a film," Lynch said, "And film in parts is what people would experience, and it was a joyful, fantastic trip with this great crew and great cast, and this word 'expect' is a magical word, and people expect things, and their expectations are met, hopefully, when they see the thing."

The filmmaker was taking questions at the TCAs, and as you'd expect, he was even more cryptic than usual. When asked if Laura Dern was always going to be involved, he answered, "I love Laura Dern." When he was told that Showtime head honcho David Nevins described the show as "The pure heroin version of David Lynch," he replied, "I hear heroin is a very popular drug these days." He would at least clarify that the events of *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me* were "Very much important for this." He was coy, he was cryptic, and we wouldn't have him any other way.

"There's no one like him," enthused Dern, whose role in the revival is still totally unknown ("I am playing my very own character, different from their characters, and yet not able to discuss who the character is," she teased). "And to borrow a phrase, I love David Lynch... every day is magical, hilarious. You're seeing something you've never seen before. You're asked to be boundaryless in a way you're never asked on any other film or television set. And so it's just the



Many familiar faces will be returning, including (inset) Richard Beymer, Harry Goaz and Sherilyn Fenn.

most freeing, wild, wonderful family ride you could ask for in your life."

We still don't know in what state we'll meet Kyle MacLachlan's Special Agent Dale Cooper, who was last seen possessed by malevolent spirit BOB, slamming his bleeding head into a mirror and asking "How's Annie?"

"In terms of the return, it was – it wasn't seamless necessarily," MacLachlan revealed. "Everybody's a little older, and you're coming from a different place. But I slipped back into it pretty easily... It was left at the end of Season Two, and that was kind of where I left it, you know, and never expecting to return, but also recognising that – just how fantastic that character of Dale Cooper is, and so grateful to have had that experience playing him. So the idea of a return, for me, was a gift, not only to



be able to work with David again within that world, but to be able to return to that character."

Of course, one thing we should expect is the unexpected. Mädchen Amick (who played Double R Diner waitress Shelly) has had 25 years to reflect on what might have happened to her character, but you never know with Lynch. "I can say I was surprised," she teased. "I had ideas of where Shelly might have gone, and I was surprised about her journey."

What Lynch did make clear was just how much the show, this world and those characters mean to him. "I love this world of *Twin Peaks*," he enthused. "And I often thought about what might be happening. I often just remembered the beautiful world and the beautiful characters, so it was Mark who contacted me. It was many years ago now, and asked if I wanted to go back into that world, and we met at Musso & Frank and talked, and that's what got us going again for this one."

We still can't really believe that it's happening again, and neither can Amick. "I very adamantly, when people would ask me [if it would return], I was like, 'No, absolutely not,'" she laughed. "I don't know if we could do that again." And I told David that I had just answered that question, and he just giggled."

*Twin Peaks: Season Three* begins on Sky Atlantic on 21 May.

## THE SECRET HISTORY OF TWIN PEAKS: DECLASSIFIED

What we learned from Mark Frost's tie-in novel

### FINAL RESPECTS

Not every cast member is back for Season Three, and some of their absences are explained in the book. Pete Martell (Jack Nance) and Andrew Packard (Dan O'Herlihy) died in the bank explosion – with Audrey Horne (Sherilyn Fenn) the only survivor, and Hank Jennings (Chris Mulkey) is murdered in prison.

### RUN OF THE MILL

Following the death of her brother and husband, Catherine Martell (Piper Laurie) becomes recluse, closing the mill and selling the land to Benjamin Horne (Richard Beymer) – who seems to have survived his fall – devastating the local economy. Whether the town recovers in the time following remains to be seen.

### THE FATE OF DALE

Garland Briggs (Don S Davis), – revealed at the end of the book as the author – was stationed in *Twin Peaks* to report on signs of extraterrestrial activity. He meets Dale after his return from the Black Lodge, reporting, "Something's wrong." What happened next is marked as "many levels above top secret."





# CARRIE FISHER: 1956-2016

Celebrating  
the life of  
sci-fi royalty

WORDS STEVE WRIGHT

**I**t's inescapable: Carrie Fisher will forever be remembered as Princess Leia Organa, an instantly iconic character in the pantheon of science fiction. While there are undoubtedly worse legacies to be had, this role doesn't sum up Fisher's many skills, or just how much of a loss she is.

The daughter of singer Eddie Fisher and actress Debbie Reynolds, Fisher was always destined for a career in showbusiness – indeed, *Star Wars* was only her second role after *Shampoo* in 1975, with her subsequent reprisals of the Princess Leia role in *The Empire Strikes Back* in 1980 and *Return Of The Jedi* in 1983 cementing her iconic status.

Whether it was *A New Hope*'s white gown, or that gold bikini in *Return Of The Jedi* ("Tell them that a giant slug captured me and forced me to wear that stupid outfit, and then I killed him because I didn't like it", she once remarked to someone asking what to tell

their children about the costume), everyone has their version of Leia that they remember. In an age where female characters not defined by their relationship weren't commonplace, she stood apart.

Brave, strong and always willing to take the lead – think back to her trash-compactor Death Star escape – that she has been able to reprise her role for a new generation for *The Force Awakens* and the

**“DROWNED  
IN MOONLIGHT,  
STRANGLER  
BY MY  
OWN BRA”**  
CARRIE FISHER

upcoming *Episode VIII* has been a treat indeed. Not only due to the return of Leia, but because her regular appearances on promotional tours, interviews and chat shows have allowed us to recall just how great value she is. Her tip to co-star Daisy Ridley "not to go through the crew like wildfire" remains a highlight.

Although her frank and open nature frequently made her a source of great entertainment, it served another more important purpose. Her problems were well-documented, having been diagnosed as bi-polar in later life, and suffering from drug addiction



While the role kick-started her career, it also brought with it the trials that fame sometimes induces.



The *Green Lantern Corps* team seem intent on confusing everyone, as Ryan Reynolds has reportedly been shortlisted for a role.



## PLANET HULK

Hulk and the God of Thunder will face off in *Thor: Ragnarok*

Good news, *X-Files* fans: there will be another season. Bad news, *X-Files* fans: it won't be until 2018.



# 4

The number of characters returning for *Deadpool 2* (Colossus, Negasonic Teenage Warhead, Dopinder and, erm, Deadpool).





© Gage Skidmore

It was great to see her back as Leia in *The Force Awakens*.

## BEYOND STAR WARS

The best of Carrie outside the saga...

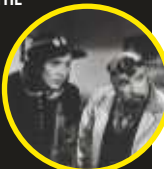
### POSTCARDS FROM THE EDGE (1987)

A semi-autobiographical take on Fisher's own life, this was later adapted into a film – with the analog Fisher being played by Meryl Streep.



### AMAZON WOMEN ON THE MOON (1987)

An under-watched anthology parody of Fifties B-movies, Fisher features in one segment – well worth checking out.



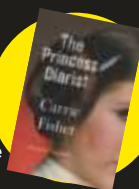
### THE 'BURBS (1989)

Fisher starred alongside Tom Hanks in Joe Dante's memorable tale of spooky small-town suburbia.



### THE PRINCESS DIARIST (2016)

Published shortly before her death, she sheds light on the filming experience on *A New Hope*.



Star Wars was only her second ever film.

at various points. Fisher never shied away from discussing her issues, both in public and throughout her extensive written work. The semi-autobiographical *Postcards From The Edge* and *Wishful Drinking*, the adaptation of her one-woman stage show, are notably essential reading.

Whether it was through on-screen interviews (such as her appearance in Stephen Fry's BBC documentary *The Secret Life Of The Manic Depressive*), or via her 'Advice From The Dark Side' column in *The Guardian*, Fisher had no problem relaying her life experiences to those who needed advice, and doing so in a fittingly insightful, sensitive and self-deprecating manner.



Beyond all this, there were all the other film roles that allowed her to leave her mark. While Rob Reiner's *When Harry Met Sally* and Woody Allen's *Hannah And Her Sisters* are probably the best-known examples, her genre work can't be overlooked either. Whether it's her more prominent roles in the likes of Joe Dante's *The 'Burbs* and John Landis' *The Blues Brothers*, or cameos in *Austin Powers*, *Scream 3*, *Jay And Silent Bob Strike Back*, *Fanboys* and more (not to mention via TV in *Smallville*, *Family Guy*, *Robot Chicken* et al), it's clear that talking about *Star Wars* only scratches the surface when it comes to Carrie Fisher.

The above words provide a curtailed summary of her life and achievements, but it's only fitting to let her have the final word, as she wrote in *Wishful Drinking*: "I tell my younger friends that no matter how I go, I want it reported that I drowned in moonlight, strangled by my own bra."

## MUSIC MEISTER

The confirmed identity of the villain in the *Supergirl/The Flash* musical crossover. Kind of apt, really. Casting is yet to be announced.

Studio Ghibli is living on (sort of) via Goro Miyazaki's Amazon adaptation of *Ronja, The Robber's Daughter*

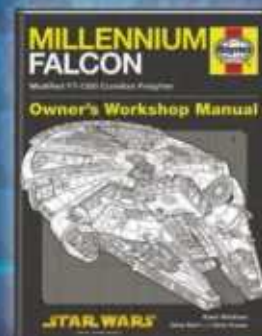
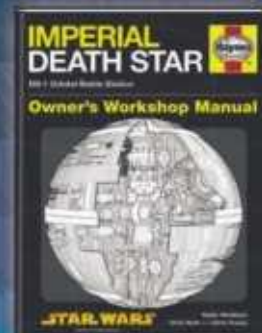


## 19 MARCH

The return date of AMC's post-apocalyptic hit *Into The Badlands* starring Daniel Wu, Orla Brady and Sarah Bolger.



A WORLD OF INFORMATION



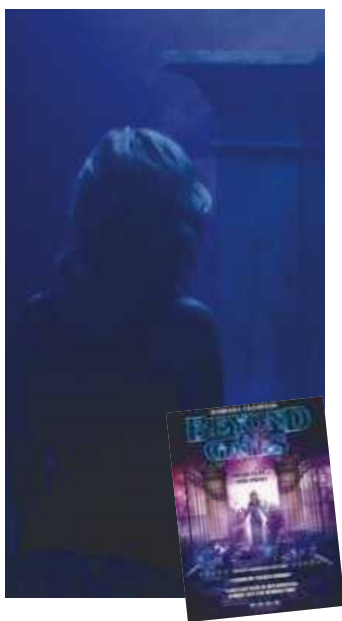
WAITING TO BE DISCOVERED



Haynes  
shows you how



www.haynes.co.uk



## "IT'S LIKE A HORROR JUMANJI"

WORDS  
JONATHAN  
HATFULL

Barbara Crampton and Jackson Stewart talk *Beyond The Gates*

**F**or a long time I'd really wanted to make like a haunted house *Phantasm* type of movie; something in the vein of the Eighties supernatural adventure horror movies, which we haven't really seen in a while," *Beyond The Gates* director and co-writer Jackson Stewart tells us.

It's a throwback horror with heart that pits estranged brothers John (Chase Williamson) and Hank (Graham Skipper) and Hank's girlfriend Margot (Brea Grant) against a malevolent VCR horror game, hosted by an icy spirit (Barbara Crampton, who also produces).

"I met with [co-writer] Stephen Scarlata and he pitched me this idea about a VCR board game that leads to another dimension. As soon as I heard that, I was like 'That's the perfect engine for this thing!'"

"I wasn't familiar with those games," Crampton tells us. "[Stewart] just told me that it was a horror adventure tale, like a horror *Jumanji*. That sparked my interest and I was quite surprised at the depth of the relationship between the two brothers and that's really what hooked me. With it also being an Eighties throwback horror movie, it felt like a no-brainer for me to be involved."

Crampton's Evelyn tells the players that they're going to have to follow the rules of the game if they want to find out what happened to their father, and there's a great combination of gory shocks, and a genuinely affecting character story. "To me, the things that really work in those movies in that era is when they put the characters first," Stewart explains. "I'd say [horror] was almost as important as the brothers' relationship," he laughs. "To deliver [as much] crazy gore on our budget."

Precision Pictures presents *Beyond The Gates* on Digital from 13 February and DVD on 20 February.

## VINCENT D'ONOFRIO: THE GREAT AND POWERFUL

The Kingpin himself on swapping Hell's Kitchen for Oz in *Emerald City* WORDS RUSSELL SHEATH

**F**rom *Jurassic World* to stealing the show as Wilson Fisk in Marvel's *Daredevil*, Vincent

D'Onofrio is fast becoming one of the most eye-catching actors around. We spoke to him about his newest role in *The Wizard Of Oz* reimagining, *Emerald City*...

**What can you tell us about *Emerald City* and your take as The Wizard?**

The Wizard has manipulated the people of Oz into thinking he is a wizard by the sheer demand of wanting to be called 'The Wizard', and because he has bought electricity to this world. It's a world where if you weren't a Witch you couldn't turn a light on. The Wizard changed that, but he's a total fake, and he takes on this image to mask his true self and his insecurities.

**What can you tell us about the impact of Dorothy's (played by Adria Arjona) arrival in Oz?**

When Dorothy comes into the picture, she actually causes a crack in society, and all the factions who have been vying for power over Oz start to gain a better foothold because of those cracks.

**When you are dealing with *The Wizard Of Oz*, is there any trepidation on your part about going into a piece which is so well known?**

You can't help it, to some degree. When you play someone who people know, even when it's someone from fiction, they sort of have their own version of these characters. You just have to relax and create and hope for the best.

In the end you rise to the occasion and make it the best thing you can.

**It's such a large production – presumably you have high hopes for *Emerald City* and the evolution of the Wizard?**

I have a feeling that if *Emerald City* goes on, there is the opportunity for that character to turn into something spectacular and rewarding. The Wizard is a very complicated, human person with many faults, the seed is there to create a crazy and interesting character.

*Emerald City* is airing now on 5STAR.

D'Onofrio has become something of a genre name of late.



So, has Episode VIII got a good name or not?



58%  
The Force  
is strong  
in it

23%  
Undecided,  
we are

13% We  
have  
a bad  
feeling...

6%  
Noooo!!!!



The last remnants of Seth Grahame-Smith's *The Flash* script have been swept aside, with Joby Harold now running the show.

Bryan Singer isn't done with the X-Men yet, as he will be helming Fox's new TV series. Hopefully it's more *Days Of Future Past* and less *Apocalypse*.







## FIVE THINGS WITH EOIN MACKEN

The star of *Resident Evil: The Final Chapter* on Milla Jovovich, genre and being a Knight of the Round Table

WORDS JEN NEAL

### 1 Fighting the undead

The last time we saw Eoin Macken in our pages was as Sir Gwaine on *Merlin*. Now, he is returning in *Resident Evil: The Final Chapter* as Doc, a new character they meet along the way back to Hive. "On her way, [Milla Jovovich's Alice] comes across a small band of survivors," he tells us. "My character is the respectable leader of these survivors. He's trying to keep a little bit of hope alive. He's a bit knackered, and they're on edge with each other. Doc is just trying to keep everybody from dying!"

### 2 Playing the game

"I used to love playing it!" Macken tells us of the *Resident Evil* games. "It used to scare the crap out of me. I didn't actually enjoy playing them, because it was always threatening and predacious. I used to find it really stressful." He admits that he struggled to get to the end of the games. "I never got to the end, I got half way through the last one... I used to struggle to sleep afterwards! I don't think it was because I was afraid, but because I was on edge."

### 3 Having fun

Despite *Resident Evil*'s established makeup, Macken found coming into the husband-and-wife partnership of Milla Jovovich and Paul WS Anderson not that difficult. "It was actually really easy," he says. "I cannot express enough how I really enjoyed doing it. I had a great time." Of his co-star he says, "Milla has one of the best attitudes I have ever encountered. Honestly, I had a really nice time."

### 4 Working in genre

Macken isn't just an actor; he also has writer, director and cinematographer strings to his bow, including *The Green Rabbit & The Ice Cream Girl* and *The Inside*. "I want to make everything. A lot of it is experimenting... finding a story or character that I like and running with it." But while he enjoys all areas of the craft, he is an actor first and foremost. "I love acting. Acting was my first love. I really enjoy it. I enjoy just telling stories."

### 5 Keeping the magic secret

Gwaine came bar-brawling onto our screens back in 2010 before becoming a series regular in Series Four of *Merlin*, and it is an experience that Macken recalls fondly. "When you're working with people you like, you look forward to being on set, because you're hanging out with your friends." He goes coy when he is asked about the finale, in which many of the major characters died. "Yeah, that really wasn't the best way to go about it," he laughs. "However, having said that, I don't think Gwaine actually died! That's my opinion on it."

*Resident Evil: The Final Chapter* is in cinemas now.



WORDS POPPY-JAY PALMER

# "HISTORY ALWAYS REPEATS ITSELF"

Alternate-history series **SS-GB** star on playing Nazis and fighting the power

**T**he BBC's new dystopian miniseries, *SS-GB*, could not have come at a more appropriate time. Based on Len Deighton's 1976 novel of the same name, the series is set to take a look at what life would be like if World War II had ended differently, like Amazon's *The Man In The High Castle*. But in this story, the focus is on the Nazi occupation of Great Britain.

With Winston Churchill shot as a war criminal and King George VI being held prisoner, Britain has descended into chaos. The resulting story revolves around police detective Douglas Archer (Sam Riley), who uncovers a web of mysteries involving atomic weapons research secrets while investigating what should have been a routine murder case. We spoke to actor Lars Eidinger, who plays complicated SS Standartenführer Oskar Huth, to find out more...

## How did you end up getting involved with *SS-GB*?

It was the director, Philip Kadelbach from Germany, who wanted to meet me and introduce me to the project. I was very happy to get the chance to be a part of it, because I get a lot of offers from Germany to play in movies which deal with this kind of re-enactment – which I have big problems with, to be honest.

Yesterday, I went to the Holocaust monument in Paris. That gave me, again, the feeling that it's really



Sam Riley stars as police detective Douglas Archer.

not a good idea to do this kind of storytelling, this re-enactment of concentration camp situations, because there's a big danger that you banalise it. I was so happy that *SS-GB* deals with the subject, but in a fictional situation, to pretend that the Germans won the war, that they occupied Great Britain, which gives me much better grounding for the situation. The whole story with the Nazis is more the background of a completely different story.

## Could you tell us a bit about your character, Huth?

I love the character! Some actors in Germany are not willing to play Nazi characters anymore, but for me it's a completely different situation – I love those characters.

Huth is a very playful character. He's a living paradox – on the one hand he has all this arrogance that you'd expect from a Nazi, but on the other, when you go into the story you realise that he's a very sensitive character, which I like. I think if it was one-dimensional it would be very boring. It's important to give him as many layers as possible.

## Do you think *SS-GB*'s story is reflective of the real world's current political climate?

For me, it's always interesting to go into these situations, although they are meant to be historical, to see that these kinds of conflicts are imminent, that we cannot get rid of them. History will always repeat itself.

It's the same with Shakespeare plays. If you do *Richard III*, for example, this kind of play, you try to see the parallel to the election of Trump. For me, it's frustrating to see that these kinds of geniuses like Shakespeare see these conflicts coming and write something to make them transparent, but [they still] cannot change anything, although they think they have the power to. History repeats itself every day. There are so many parallels

with what we show in *SS-GB*, especially with the conflict between the power and the resistance.

## Is Archer part of the resistance?

[Archer] is a brave character, but he's not really fighting the power, and that makes him very human. It's easy for us to say from that distance that we would never have been Nazis, but nearly all of the Germans had been Nazis. There were millions of Germans hiding from the Nazis, and there were just a few people being resistance.

I think you always have to understand these conflicts out of the logic of the time itself. In this time, [people had] completely different values, so it's very, very rare that people would decided to fight against it. I think this is Archer's conflict.

*SS-GB* will air on BBC1 later in the year.



Kate Bosworth also features as Barbara Barga.



# BEST OF THE BILLBOARDS

Celebrating the best, worst and weirdest movie posters

WORDS POPPY-JAY PALMER



## MEMORY BANK

Welcome to Memory Bank, where we shuffle through the dusty archives of the Sci-FiNow vault, and have a look back at what we got right, what we got wrong, and who we were all obsessed with for that particular month.

This month, we're flicking through issue 83, which featured on the cover one of TV's greatest love triangles: Nina Dobrev, Paul Wesley and Ian Somerhalder as Elena, Stefan and Damon of *The Vampire Diaries*. The feature in question was for Season Five, all those years ago, before Dobrev made her exit, before Elena had enrolled at university and the show's spin-off, *The Originals*, had even started airing. Weirdly, Season Five only aired in 2013, but it feels like a lot longer than that.

Issue 83 also featured our *Kick-Ass 2* coverage, which inspired a big, bad list of the 50 most controversial moments in sci-fi, fantasy and horror. Among the half-century were Kirk and Uhura's kiss in *TOS* episode 'Plato's Stepchildren', which impressed/apalled when it became TV's first interracial snog in 1968; *ParaNorman*, featuring a male jock with a boyfriend, making him the first openly queer character in a mainstream kids' film; and pretty much the entirety of *The Exorcist*.

Elsewhere, author Cassandra Clare and actors Lily Collins and Jamie Campbell Bower got us hyped about fantasy film *The Mortal Instruments*, which of course ended up being a hot mess. Three years later we were gifted the Freeform series *Shadowhunters*, based on the same book series, to help sweep it under the rug.



### KONG SKULL ISLAND

The classic monster movie reboot's poster game has been strong and majestic since the start, much like King Kong himself. But we think it might have finally peaked with this gorgeous banner that brings together the old and the new. If a poster could ever single-handedly massively increase our expectations and/or excitement levels, it's this one. It has a gorgeous pallet, and Kong looks absolutely flawless.



### SPLIT

The abstract, two-tone silhouette almost looks like a tribute to minimalist Saul Bass' poster work on classics like *Vertigo* and *Anatomy Of A Murder*. Our only issue with it is there only seems to be 12 people climbing inside him, not the 23 of the movie.

“THE SILHOUETTE ALMOST LOOKS LIKE A TRIBUTE TO MINIMALIST SAUL BASS' WORK”



### POOL PARTY MASSACRE

We don't know what the hell this film is supposed to be, but this colourful pulp-style poster has got us wanting to find out more. Classic horror font wins us over every time.



### THE LURE

Again, we don't really know what is happening in this poster for *The Lure*, but we know that we like it. Everything from the bright yellow text to the tail flopping out of the bathtub to the mermaid and the picture of a cat doing the exact same pose is absolutely wonderful, if incredibly weird.



### MONSTER TRUCKS

The posters and trailers leading up to *Monster Trucks* have been fun, but pretty standard, which is why we were so surprised at discovering this beauty that seems to have taken inspiration from the work of Drew Struzan, who designed posters for the likes of *Indiana Jones*, *Star Wars* and *The Thing*. There are a lot of little details, every time we look at it we find something new. A+ poster work.

WORDS POPPY-JAY PALMER

# POWER RANGERS

Channel your inner Ranger with the kick-ass new trailer

**T**he Rangers are coming! The Rangers are coming! With the reboot on the release horizon for March, Jason (Dacre Montgomery), Trini (Becky G), Zack (Ludi Lin), Billy (RJ Cyler) and Kimberly (Naomi Scott) are prepping their Power Coins and souping up their Zords as morphin' time approaches. Here's a breakdown of the latest shamelessly original trailer...



## 1 Screw-ups

The scene is set; these screw-up kids from Angel Grove don't really know what they're doing with their lives.



## 2 Power Coins

The soon-to-be Rangers' discovery of the Power Coins comes pretty early on. We're already high on origin-story excitement.



## 3 Pool party

We're getting good vibes from this cast of characters. Instead of freaking when the coins begin to glow, they start cracking jokes.



## 4 Zordon of Eltar

The Rangers' galactic sage has been updated for the modern reboot, and he's never looked better. Bryan Cranston is a bonus.



## 5 Alpha high-five

The Ranger's robot assistant Alpha 5 (voiced by Bill Hader) has undergone a drastic makeover, but we like it. He's kind of adorable.



## 6 "Pee in that cup!"

After the intensity of the first trailer, it's great to see that the second one balances it out with some jokes.



## 7 Rita Repulsa

A large part of the reason we're so hyped for this film is Elizabeth Banks as Rita Repulsa, and so far we're not disappointed.



## 8 Just wow

Look at her some more. Look at how deliciously creepy she is. If this makes you feel nothing then are you even alive?



## 9 "It's morphin' time!"

It's time to morph the hell up! This is living! It's amazing how excitable three little words can make a person.



## 10 Suits you

We're not going to lie: we may have chuckled a little when the Ranger suits were unveiled last year, but they look amazing here.



## 11 Superhero landing

Power Rangers drags itself into the superhero genre with this awesome quintuple landing. We're covered in goosebumps.



## 12 Goldar vs Megazord

Look at that! It's a Goldar-versus-Megazord fistfight! This is everything we could have asked for! We've lost our minds!



# 6 THINGS WE KNOW ABOUT MUTE

Reasons to get hyped  
for Duncan Jones' Moon  
"spiritual sequel"

WORDS POPPY-JAY PALMER

## DUNCAN

### JONES IS DIRECTING

We're big fans of Duncan Jones' work, even if his 2016 effort *Warcraft: The Beginning* left a lot to be desired. But seeing as Jones has described *Mute* as a "spiritual sequel" to his 2009 masterpiece *Moon*, easily his best film, we're hyped to see what he's got in store.

## THE CONCEPT IS INTRIGUING

*Mute* is called *Mute* because it revolves around the struggles of a mute bartender. Those struggles begin to develop after the love of his life mysteriously goes missing, which causes the bartender to descend into the city's dark underbelly in order to gather clues that will help him get her back.

## IT'S GOT A GREAT CAST

Playing the mute bartender, known as Leo Beiler, is the brilliant Alexander Skarsgård, which is alone enough to make us want to watch *Mute*. It also stars Paul Rudd as a surgeon, Justin Theroux as his best friend, Seyneb Saleh as Leo's missing girlfriend, and Sam Rockwell.

## PAUL RUDD HAS A MOUSTACHE

If a still was ever going to make people want to watch a film, it's this still of Paul Rudd as a surgeon named 'Cactus' Bill. We don't why his nickname is 'Cactus', but we're eager to find out. Maybe it's because his moustache is prickly. We hope it's because his moustache is prickly.

## IT'S BEEN IN DEVELOPMENT FOREVER

After working on making *Mute* happen for 12 years, Jones is thrilled to finally be able to show it to the world. Development hell is no place to be, but we're sure Jones has managed to crawl from its pits with a great movie intact.

## CLINT MANSELL IS BRINGING THE MUSIC

Jones is bringing back his buddy, composer Clint Mansell who he worked with on *Moon*, to write the score for *Mute*. Even if the film ends up disappointing us (which is highly unlikely), you can still bet we're probably going to be blasting Mansell's work on Spotify.

*Mute* will premiere on Netflix later in the year.



# STARS IN SHADOW

Developer Jim Francis talks us through this intriguing turn-based strategy

**Can you tell us a bit about what *Stars In Shadow* is about?**

*Stars In Shadow* is a turn-based strategy game of galactic exploration and conquest. The game is set in a galaxy just awakening from a long, dark age in which aliens civilisations both new and ancient are eager to explore and expand.

**What were you inspired by?**

The classic titles in the space 4X genre were, of course, an important inspiration, notably *Master Of Orion* and *Sword Of The Stars*. *Star Control 2* was frequently discussed as an example of great character development and a balance between lighter and more serious tones, both in storytelling and art style. Art inspirations include the aforementioned game titles and animated titles such as *Space Battleship Yamato*.

**What was behind the decision to make the game mechanics turn-based rather than something else?**

We prefer the control and depth of turn-based games. One argument for using real-time, especially in tactical combat, is to avoid slowing the game down, but we find it's the control and depth of turn-based play that makes tactical combat compelling rather than a waste of time. In *SIS*, tactical combat is the core of the game, and



**“IT WILL APPEAL MOST TO THOSE WHO ENJOYED THE 4X CLASSICS, AND THOSE WHO LIKE A BIT OF CHARACTER”**

JIM FRANCIS

so we instead worked on reducing micromanagement in the strategic level so that the game doesn't drag as much in the later stages.

**What kind of audience are you aiming for?**

The game is designed to our own tastes, really, but I think it will appeal most to those who enjoyed the 4X classics, and those who like a little bit of character in the factions and setting.

**To round things off, why should people buy *Stars In Shadow*?**

If you're a space 4X fan who feels that some of the more recent titles in the genre have been light on the qualities that made the classics fun, *Stars In Shadow* may punch your ticket.

*Stars In Shadow* is available to download on Steam now.



## DAYS OF FUTURE NOW

Here are some upcoming UK conventions that you can't afford to miss...

### Bolton Comic-Con

**18 February**  
Macron Stadium  
NorthWestComicCons.co.uk  
Price: £7  
Convention lovers on a budget will feel at home at this geeky get-together.

### Capital Sci-Fi Con

**18-19 February**  
Meadowbank Sports Centre, Edinburgh  
CapitalSciFiCon.co.uk  
Price: £5-£18  
This pop culture celebration is being organised by fans for fans.

### Digi-Con 3

**25-26 February**  
Doncaster Deaf Trust  
Digi-Fest.co.uk  
Price: £5-£25  
This convention comes from a pair of lovers of sci-fi, Disney, Ghibli, anime and Harry Potter.

### Dunfermline Comic Con

**11 March**  
Pittencreeff Park's Glen Pavilion  
LittleShopOfHeroes.co.uk  
Price: £5-£7.50  
This year, the con has decided to adopt a *Little Shop Of Heroes* theme.

### Majikkon

**11 March**  
Huddersfield Leisure Centre  
Majikkon.com  
Price: £3-£10  
This colourful convention is the perfect playground for northern fans of manga and anime.

### MCM Liverpool

**11-12 March**  
Exhibition Centre, Liverpool  
www.fantomfilms.co.uk/events/eventsmain.htm  
Price: £15-£20  
Special guests at Liverpool's MCM con include Sam J Jones and Trina Nishimura.

### Leamington Comic Con

**25 March**  
Main Stage, Royal Spa Centre  
Facebook.com/LeamComicCon  
Price: £12-£46  
The award-winning comic con returns with more cosplay, panels and goodies than ever.

### ROBOT

**25 March**  
The Millennium Gallery, Sheffield  
RobotCon.co.uk  
Price: TBC  
The Illustration and Creative Arts Convention will feature amazing artwork from all kinds of artists.





## Grimm's Final Days

Showrunners David Greenwalt and Jim Kouf explain why it was time to close the book

WORDS MICHAEL SIMPSON

"We said goodbye to all our actors last night, and there were a lot of tears and a lot of heartfelt talks," says David Greenwalt, co-creator of *Grimm*.

After celebrating its 100th episode last season, the supernatural series inspired by *Grimm's Fairy Tales* was renewed by NBC last April. The 13-episode order hinted, however, that *Grimm's* sixth season may be its last. Thus, the cancellation announcement was not a shock, according to co-creator Jim Kouf.

"I think that we had a good run, and we did what they needed us to do for that long period of time. I think it was the right time. We wrapped up the series in a meaningful way that pays homage to the beginning of the series. It's the right way to go out."

Being able to bring *Grimm* to a conclusion was very satisfying, says Kouf. Even so, it was several episodes into Season Six before the writers settled on a script for the finale that ties it all together.

"At first we had kind of a strange pitch for the end, and then we got some notes back from the network and we had a really good pitch," Greenwalt explains. "But as we approached the end, I would say it changed quite dramatically and morphed into something else altogether."

As for the dozen episodes that build up to the series finale, Kouf reveals that there will be a mix of classic *Grimm* monster-of-the-week stories, bookended by the continuation of the show's long-running serialised storyline.

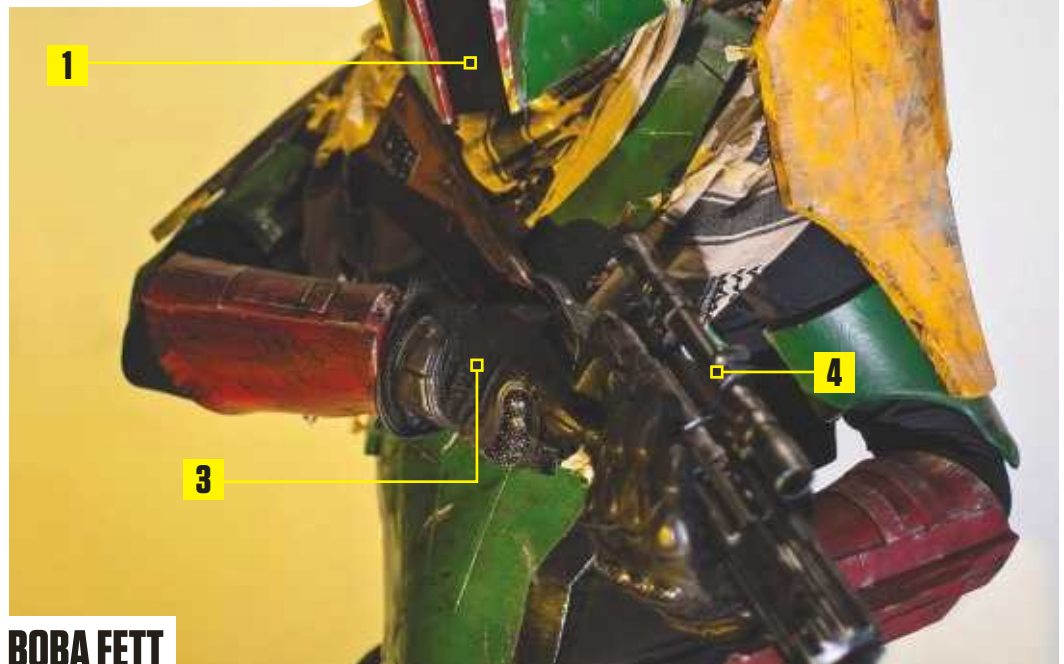
When *Grimm* reaches the last of its 123 episodes in the spring, everything will be resolved.

"You're not left scratching your head at the end of the series," promises Greenwalt.

*Grimm's* final season premieres on 14 February at 9pm on W.

## COSPLAY OF THE MONTH

Send your cosplay to @SciFiNow or Facebook.com/SciFiNow



### BOBA FETT

COSPLAYER: THE MIGHTY AVENGER: JAMIE COATSWORTH FROM: BRISTOL, UK PHOTO: GEEKBOT COSPLAY & PHOTOGRAPHY TWITTER: /@\_MIGHTYAVENGER

#### THE CHARACTER

**1** Boba Fett has always been a character that has a certain mystery about him. We only see him briefly in the movies, but he always has a presence about him, which makes us not take our eyes off of him. I remember having loads of different action figures of him when I was young, and just thought he was this really cool character who wore an awesome helmet and had this amazing armour.

#### THE COSTUME

**2** The majority of this costume is made from EVA foam. I started creating templates for the armour and tried different techniques when deciding how to put it together. The helmet was a resin kit that I purchased, I had to paint it and smooth it down to a point where I was happy with it. Mobility was one of the main problems I encountered with this costume.

#### THE DESIGN

**3** My costume is loosely based on an action figure, the awesome Play Arts Kai *Star Wars* line; I'd recommend checking them out. The reason I was inspired by this is because I wanted a Boba Fett costume that was different to the original. It has a modern take on the character, but it's still easily recognisable. I felt that this was a really interesting design that still captured the image of Boba.

#### THE ACCESSORIES

**4** The costume contained a few accessories, such as the EE-3 Carbine Rifle. I actually found a toy of it online, which I took apart, stripped down so I could paint and weathered, making it as movie-accurate as possible. I then added a scarf to the costume, which I found at my local military store, just to bring something more to the character, to differentiate him from the original costume he wears.

## HOT TOPICS

Your most-read posts on SciFiNow.co.uk



**FRIGHTFEST GLASGOW REVEALS LINEUP**

[tinyurl.com/zsortnz](http://tinyurl.com/zsortnz)



**MILES MORALES FOR SPIDER-MAN ANIMATION**

[tinyurl.com/zx927jx](http://tinyurl.com/zx927jx)



**GOOSEBUMPS 2 GETS A RELEASE DATE**

[tinyurl.com/ztn4c8p](http://tinyurl.com/ztn4c8p)



**INFINITY WAR CONFIRMS NEBULA**

[tinyurl.com/zh8auaq](http://tinyurl.com/zh8auaq)



**THE PREDATOR CASTS KEEGAN-MICHAEL KEY**

[tinyurl.com/hto5gdv](http://tinyurl.com/hto5gdv)





**COVER FEATURE**

Kong: Skull Island

# KING OF THE APES





# HOLLYWOOD'S MOST FAMOUS PRIMATE IS BACK, AND HE'S GEARING UP FOR A FIGHT. WE TALK TO DIRECTOR JORDAN VOGT-ROBERTS AND ACTORS TOM HIDDLESTON, BRIE LARSON AND SAMUEL L JACKSON ABOUT THE KING'S RETURN IN KONG: SKULL ISLAND...

WORDS POPPY-JAY PALMER INTERVIEWS JOANNA OZDOBINSKA

**E**VER SINCE KING KONG'S LEGENDARY PICTURES ORIGIN MOVIE WAS ANNOUNCED AT SAN DIEGO COMIC-CON IN 2014, MOST OF US HAVE BEEN PATIENTLY WAITING FOR ONE THING: KONG AND GODZILLA IN A FIGHT TO THE DEATH ON A DARK, STORMY NIGHT,

hopefully over Tokyo, and with lots of collateral damage. The bigger and more brutal, the better. *Kong: Skull Island* looked like it was going to be a two-hour set-up for the kaiju battle of the century, but it's more than that.

Instead of going down the usual root of bringing in the big guns like JJ Abrams and Shane Black to reboot massive franchises, *Kong: Skull Island* hired indie director Jordan Vogt-Robert (previously responsible for 2013 life-affirming comedy *The Kings Of Summer*) to take on the project, which ought to yield interesting results.

Before Vogt-Roberts discovered film history, arthouse cinema and foreign film – which he confesses is what he normally lives, breathes and sleeps – he only really had access to studio films. “I grew up going to the theatre with my parents, and back then, unlike now... going to the theatre was great, and people used to walk out of the theatres, and even if they didn't love the movie it was like, ‘Great! I went to the movies and had a good time.’”

Nowadays, a cinema trip is a completely different experience. “That church of going to the theatre was so important to me as a kid,” Vogt-Roberts continues. “I just loved those movies that I grew up on. Back then, movies didn't have the same sort of connotation that they do now, which is that now a lot of people want to look at a big movie, and instantly sort of talk down on it or

assume that it's going to be just a cash grab. I always had this in me as I was making indies; I wanted to tell a big movie, I wanted to tell a movie on that scale and on that level.”

After completing *The Kings Of Summer*, Vogt-Roberts decided to do just that when Legendary approached him with the offer of a new *King Kong* movie. “I had the same reaction I think everyone did, which was ‘Why?’” he laughs. “‘Why tell that story?’ We have done it, we have done it well, and we have remade it well.

“The cool thing about Legendary as a studio is that I then started pitching this very crazy idea... I honestly thought they were going to laugh me out of the room when I said, ‘I want to set this in 1973, and I want to make it like a Vietnam War movie with monsters, and I want to lean into the movies of that era and the style of filmmaking of that era and the genre mash-up of choppers and napalm and monsters.’ Because to me,

I haven't seen that. I was like, ‘This is a movie I would see.’ I honestly expected Legendary to be like, ‘Ha! Get out of this room!’ Like, ‘No, thank you!’”

But instead of laughing Vogt-Roberts out of the room, the studio was immediately on board with the setting change for the film. “For me, there were so many things embedded in that idea, and not just because right now if you look at what is going on in the world, it's like a complete black mirror to everything that was happening in the Seventies – and we just got our Nixon back. It's crazy.

“I loved the idea of taking characters from that time period, who were sort of caught one foot in the old guard and one foot in the new guard, and thrusting them in a world where they were presented with myth and monsters and putting them back in the food chain. We as humans don't talk about how crazy it is that we have been removed from the food chain and what happens when you are put back in it.” ➤



Tom Hiddleston on set with director Jordan Vogt-Roberts.



# COVER FEATURE

Kong: Skull Island

➤ **IT HAS BEEN ALMOST 85 YEARS SINCE THE ORIGINAL KING KONG WAS RELEASED, COMPLETE WITH WILLIS H O'BRIEN'S STOP-MOTION CREATIONS, AND**

filmmaking technology has obviously changed a lot since then. But it has also been 12 years since Peter Jackson's 2005 remake, and although Jackson's crew were using CGI to bring the ape to life, we have come pretty far since then, too.

"I think it's really tricky, because now people are doing Olympic-sized backflips every day casually, and not just in movies, but in TV," Vogt-Roberts tells us. "Back in the day, when you look at what Ray Harryhausen or Willis O'Brien were doing, and the movies of the Eighties and Nineties when special effects and genre storytelling was less prevalent, it was more special, because there was less and it was harder to do."

Now that it's fairly easy to whip up a giant CG creature in comparison to the time and effort it took to model a stop-motion beast, they're everywhere. The real questions are: how do you make that resonate? How do you make that special again? Create something that audiences have never seen before?

"I just feel like a lot of these movies now, it's stuff that you have seen over again, and it becomes derivative," he says. "That is why I think a lot of it feels so noisy to people, because you are just like, 'I have seen this'. It's about finding ways to subvert that expectation and finding ways to use the technology and do new things with characters, and do things with how they reflect the humans as well. So it was just a long process of trying to find a way to do new things with that technology, as opposed to bombarding people with special effects, because who cares anymore?"

Although technology has greatly advanced, Vogt-Roberts insists that *Kong: Skull Island's* apes will still be a throwback to the original, with him being almost like a proper, old-fashioned movie monster.

"He is a classic 'I am a beast, I am a destroyer,'" he tells us. "You look at Kong in that original film, and before he has his sort of humanised *Beauty And The Beast* story – he is eating people, he is destroying people. And so there is an element of him that is like this berserker, God-like figure."



Samuel L. Jackson goes full Captain Ahab as army colonel Packard.



**"HOW BIG OF A CREATURE WOULD IT HAVE TO BE TO LOOK AT IT AND FOR YOUR BRAIN TO SAY, 'THAT THING I AM LOOKING AT, IS IT A GOD?'"**

**JORDAN VOGT-ROBERTS**



## MASTERS OF MO-CAP

Andy Serkis set the bar for motion capture, but others are stepping up to reach it

John Goodman as William 'Bill' Randa, the brains behind the exhibition.

© Raven U



### ALAN TUDYK

*Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (K-2SO)  
*I, Robot* (Sonny)

Alan Tudyk finally got back on the mo-cap horse after a 12-year break for the sassy droid K-2SO in *Rogue One*, and we're so glad he did.



© Karen Selo



### LIAM NEESON

*A Monster Calls* (The Monster)

We knew Liam Neeson had an incredible voice, but we never knew quite how majestic he could be until he played a giant, sentient tree.



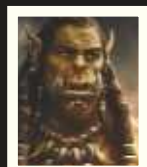
© Cage Skidmore



### TOBY KEBBELL

*Warcraft* (Durotan)  
*Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes* (Koba)

As an established actor and up-and-coming mo-cap artist, we're excited to see what Toby Kebbell will play next. But it'll probably be hairy.



© David Shankbone



### TERRY NOTARY

*Kong: Skull Island* (Kong)  
*Warcraft* (Peon)  
*Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes* (Rocket)  
*The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* (Goblin)  
*Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes* (Rocket/Bright Eyes)  
*Avatar* (Banshee)

The most prolific motion-capture artist on our list, Notary looks to be gearing up to steal the trophy from Andy Serkis' expressive hands.



© Natasha Bauers



### SHARLTO COPLEY

*Chappie* (Chappie)

For some reason we thought Sharlto Copley had done more mo-cap than this, but his performance as Chappie was enough marvellous mo-cap for anyone.



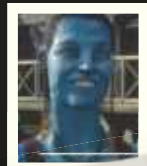
© David Shankbone



### SIGOURNEY WEAVER

*Avatar* (Dr Grace Augustine)

Genre goddess Sigourney Weaver has only had a crack at mo-cap once as a Na'vi avatar in *Avatar*. But she was easily one of the best things about that film.



## VOGT-ROBERTS IS KEEN TO TELL US THAT THE INCREASED SIZE OF KONG WAS DUE TO THIS GOD-LIKE IMAGE OF HIM FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE - THE

image of humans standing and looking at this thing towering over them was important to the director. "There is a narrative right now that our Kong is just big because he needs to fight Godzilla for the franchise, but that was actually a decision I had made early on," he informs us. "If you guys stood here, how big of a creature would it have to be for you guys to look at it towering above you and for your brain to say, 'That thing I am looking at, is it a god?'"

The result is a mix of both feral beast and classic Kong: a lonely, misunderstood creature. "We are very explicitly not playing the *Beauty And The Beast* story in our film for the first time in a lot of the *Kong* movies. So he is a weird mix of having very animalistic elements, but then he has nobility to him and a God-like quality, and there is a very human undercurrent of that. Even when you see him in motion, the way that he walks - and he doesn't walk like an ape, he doesn't have those sort of simian qualities - he lumbers through that space like more of a God."

With the *Beauty And The Beast* theme out of the window, we don't have to worry about the weird romantic relationship between Kong and the film's female lead that has cropped up

in other versions of the story. In fact, actor Samuel L Jackson confirms that the film will contain no romance, sex or general hanky-panky of any kind.

"If you look closely at the bugs, maybe, you know, but no," he says. "I mean, there's sexy people, I guess, because Tom [Hiddleston] is sexy, Brie [Larson] is sexy, and I guess some of the other guys in the army uniform, being sweaty in the jungle - you know, that old thing - it might work for you in another way. And they have big guns!"

Jackson comes into the film as Packard, an army colonel who arrives on Skull Island just as the Vietnam War is ending. A soldier through-and-through, Packard is eager to get one last mission under his belt and have a look at the creatures that inhabit the island. The subsequent relationship between Packard and Kong is one that we may have seen before.

"[Packard's team] get there, and everything goes sideways with these monsters, and his men are dying," Jackson explains. "He pretty much turns into Captain Ahab with King Kong. Kong becomes his white whale, because he's killing his men, and wants the exact same measure of revenge for that. He still thinks man is superior to any animal on the planet - we're men."

Packard wasn't always set to be played by Jackson. After scheduling conflicts, JK Simmons exited the

Brie Larson is also on board as war photographer Weaver.



# COVER FEATURE

Kong: Skull Island

➤ film, and Jackson came in as his replacement. As a lifelong fan of monster movies, the latter felt a strong connection to the role.

"I do [these films] because I enjoyed them when I was a kid, and they were the adventure movies that I went to see," he tells us. "[They're] the stuff dreams are made of when you're a kid, you want to run from something big or you want to be in the jungle with Tarzan to see him fight a lion. That's what movies are made for: to take you out of your everyday existence and to something that's fantastic, wonderful and adventurous. For us it's a safe environment to play in, and I enjoy doing that. Sometimes I choose a movie just because it was a movie I would have gone to see when I was a kid. Or now!"

A lot of the film's excitement, for the cast and crew at least, came from the fact that it was filmed on location in Hawaii, Australia's Gold Coast and Vietnam. "Vietnam was totally magical," says Jackson. "I mean, the topography and the people. Once you get out of Hanoi, which is like New York on crack, and out to the countryside, it's amazing and peaceful.

"I guess in our mind it's one thing," he continues, "but you're in a country that's got a 90-something per cent

literacy rate, and when we were going to work at 5am there are hundreds of kids on bicycles going to school. It's like, 'This is awesome,' and you see people walking down the road with their water buffalo taking them to rice patties, and you see people bend over in patties and working all day. The communal style of living that most of them have out there is a wonderful sense of... you kind of say, 'Well Communism can't be that bad, look what's going on here.'"

**A**CADEMY AWARD-WINNING ACTRESS BRIE LARSON JOINS JACKSON IN THE FILM AS MASON WEAVER, A WAR PHOTOGRAPHER. "SHE'S AN ANTI-war photographer, self described," Larson explains, "And she's not afraid to be in the centre of the action."

Like Packard, Weaver has her own reasons for tracking down Kong. "She's a big believer in telling the truth," says Larson, "So the idea of going on this mission, she has a hunch that something's up, and then with time realises that there's a bigger story here... one that she didn't expect. For her and every character in this film, they go through ➤



Vogt-Roberts directs off the back of indie hit *The King Of Summer*.

## APPLICATION FOR MURDER

Job advertisements that lead to certain death...

### NAVIGATOR WANTED

Weyland-Yutani is looking for mechanics and navigators to embark on a trucking expedition into deep space. Salary is dependent on experience. Bonus situation not open to discussion. Contact HR@weyland-yutani.net.

### ASTRONAUT POSITION AVAILABLE

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration is accepting applications from experienced scientists to join the team on the Discovery One for a Jupiter-bound mission.

The operations will be controlled by NASA's failsafe, state of the art HAL 9000 computer.

To demonstrate levels of scientific and astronomical knowledge, candidates should send a portfolio of research to the address below. Space awaits! Dept. of Human Relations NASA Headquarters Washington DC 20546-0001

### PLEASE HELP

Looking for spelunking experts for a cave descent. These bastards got me once, and I'm not going to let them get me again. Call 555 389 6663. Ask for Sarah.

### CALLING ALL MARYLAND-BASED AMATEUR FILMMAKERS!

We're looking for an experienced camera operator to help uncover a mystery... the mystery of Blair Witch! Please note: this is an unpaid role but you will be reimbursed for travel and snacks!

### EXPLORERS WANTED!

Fancy one last mission before returning home from Vietnam? Join our troops on a possibly risk-free exploration mission to Skull Island. Travel provided, must have at least five years combat experience.



# KONG: SKULL ISLAND

King Of The Apes

**"THAT'S WHAT MOVIES ARE MADE FOR: TO  
TAKE YOU OUT OF YOUR EVERYDAY EXISTENCE  
AND TO SOMETHING THAT'S FANTASTIC"**

**SAMUEL L JACKSON**



It's the kind of role we haven't  
seen Hiddleston in before.



# COVER FEATURE

Kong: Skull Island

This version of Kong is the biggest incarnation to date.



➤ this arc of change of recognising, 'Oh, what we're dealing with here is not something that we can exploit to bring back, that this is something that is beautiful and should be protected.'

Larson went all out when it came to prepping for her role, speaking to war photographers and journalists to find out just what it's like working on the firing line, deep in the action.

"It's incredible to realise what they're risking," she says. "They're risking their lives to tell these stories, and the extent they have to go to travelling to these places to get the shot, to bring the footage back to say, 'This is what it looks like right now' – it's incredibly brave. I was interested in understanding more of what brings someone to do that, what happens in your life that makes you go, 'This is what I need to do, this is the most important thing to me, and I'm going to risk my life for it?'"

fangless teeth into a role that requires him to run around shooting stuff. Hiddleston plays lost-soldier recovery expert and former SAS officer Captain James Conrad. "He's hired to lead ground expeditions, because they're going to need someone who knows their way around the jungle," he says.

To hone his skills for the role, the actor received special training from an ex-US Navy Seal, who helped to put him through his paces. "It was an interesting departure for me," Hiddleston says, "[It's] the first time I'm really playing an all-out action hero... I relished that."

Hiddleston first heard about the *King Kong* remake while he was on the set of Guillermo del Toro's *Crimson Peak*, also from Legendary Pictures, where it was pitched to him by the studio's CEO, Thomas Tull. "[They were] making a kind of adventure film I grew up loving as a child, where you take the audience on a ride into undiscovered country, and there's something very thrilling about that, that I think is in the DNA of movies and the cinema," Hiddleston explains.

"Kong is at the centre of it," he continues, "He's an icon, and he's part of the history of cinema, and people love him, I love him... I think the

**"KONG IS AT THE CENTRE OF IT. HE'S AN ICON, AND HE'S PART OF THE HISTORY OF CINEMA, AND PEOPLE LOVE HIM"**

**TOM HIDDLESTON**



reason people love Kong is that he is an emblem of the power of nature, and that he is this lonely alpha-predator at the top of the food chain, and human beings think that they can intrude into his territory, and it's always very tragic. I think there's something valuable about that myth that human beings are a part of the animal kingdom, part of a natural world, and the world is at its best when it's in harmony with itself."

With the likes of John Goodman and John C Reilly on board alongside Jackson, Hiddleston and Larson, *Kong: Skull Island* has an undeniably great cast. During production, the cast has always been a part of the appeal.

"For me, I want an actor to come in as the role," Vogt-Roberts tells us. "I like actors who to some degree understand the character in their DNA a little bit better than I do so that we can have a conversation about it, or for them to have such a specific point of view who they are so that we can sit there and argue about it, or talk about it or say, 'Hey, let's try this thing.'"

"A big part of it was, who is willing to experiment?" he continues. "John C Reilly is suddenly a big part of this movie in the trailer, and I think that

**A**S FAR AS CASTING GOES, KONG: SKULL ISLAND WILL BRING US SOMETHING THAT WE HAVEN'T SEEN BEFORE: TOM HIDDLESTON AS AN ACTION HERO.

After becoming used to seeing him play spooky Goths, sad vampires, and the God of Mischief, it will be strange – but not unwelcome – to watch him sink his



# KONG: SKULL ISLAND

King Of The Apes

you guys are going to be blown away by not just the rest of the cast, but just what he is doing. A lot of that stemmed from open dialogue, conversation and experimentation, and for me that's what I want with an actor: for someone to come in and have an open mind and fight for what they believe in, and for me to fight for what I believe in and to find what that creates. I was very, very fortunate to get the cast that I got."

**T**HE CAST SINGS VOGT-ROBERTS' PRAISES IN RETURN. "HE ALWAYS HAD AN INCREDIBLE SENSE OF WHAT THIS FILM COULD BE," HIDDLESTON

says. "His idea to set it in the Seventies [was] brilliant, because that's the last time in human history that there could conceivably be an undiscovered island in the South Pacific that we didn't know about. And he understood that there would be great opportunities for music and helicopters. [The original tone meant] that he could be respectful, as he is, of every *Kong* film that had come before but also invent something that people felt that they hadn't seen."

Even after having come from a background in indie and short films, Vogt-Roberts certainly seems to know what he's doing after being handed a

multi-million-dollar beast like *Kong: Skull Island*; the trailers somehow make it look like he's been working on blockbusters for years. But the transition from the likes of *The Kings Of Summer* to *Kong* wasn't so easy.

"Filmmaking is filmmaking to some degree, and if you learn to drive a car, you can also get in a racecar," Vogt-Roberts explains. "That doesn't mean you aren't going to crash the racecar through a wall! But the principles of it are the same, right? So it was really important to me, not just because of where I come from, but my process is very heavily based in improv and spontaneity and things like that, and so I wanted to bring on actors and bring on a crew that were open and comfortable with the idea of really facilitating that. But I am very proud of the subtext of the film, what the film is actually about."

Like Vogt-Roberts, Larson also has a background in indie cinema, which helped when it came to breaking down their approaches. "One of the first conversations I had about this film was all of us were talking about how important myth is to us," says Larson. "It's the backbone of all of the greatest stories ever told, [and it's] important to respect it and bring that back to the



cinema. We will always have these big movies, I hope, for the sake of [them being] enjoyable to watch in the cinema. They're big and loud and in your face, and they are an experience. It's different than watching them at home, you want to be in that big space."

For Larson, a film can't just end with a cool visual. "There needs to be something that's underneath, something that is an older story that's explaining something, that's showing us the way that the world is and the questions that we face as a human being and this movie does have that. That was really important, and that's also why I was so excited about being a part of this, because I knew I wasn't just in a movie that's big just to be big. It's doing that because it's an exciting way to tell a story, but it's telling a story."

With a capable director, the talented cast, a dazzling colour palette and the promised narrative layers focusing on myth and humanity, something would have to go badly wrong for *Kong* not to triumph. The same goes for when he finally gets around to brushing gigantic shoulders with Godzilla. ☞

*Kong: Skull Island* will be released in cinemas on 10 March.

## THE MONSTERS PROTECTION SOCIETY

Help protect the planet's greatest wonders by sponsoring a monster today!



**NAME: Kong**  
**HABITAT: Skull Island**

Kong is 50 feet tall and misunderstood. As one of MPS's most recent monsters, Kong is looking forward to finding new sponsors.



## THE MONSTERS PROTECTION SOCIETY WELCOME PACK

Dear new monster sponsor,

Congratulations, and thank you for supporting the Monsters Protection Society by signing up to help protect a monster in need! These majestic creatures are often dismissed as beasts, but all they need is food, shelter, access to medical care and a loving sponsor to thrive in their natural environment.

With your sponsorship, you will receive:

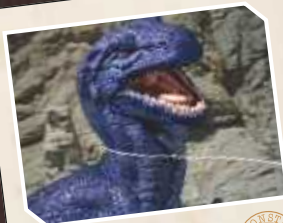
- a cuddly toy of your adopted monster
- a gift pack including a Monsters Protection Society canvas bag, stickers, fact book, calendar and photo of your adopted monster
- a free subscription to Monster Protection Society's bi-annual newsletter
- a monthly personalized letter from your adopted monster with updates on their progress

Your money and support is invaluable to our monsters. Should you wish to increase your monthly sponsorship fee and upgrade to our Super Member Sponsorship Pack, visit our website at [MSP.org/Super-Member-Sponsorship-Pack](http://MSP.org/Super-Member-Sponsorship-Pack).



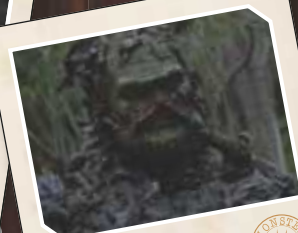
**NAME: Godzilla**  
**HABITAT: South Pacific**

Any reptile lover would be lucky to call this beautiful lizard their sponsee. Sign up today to help keep Godzilla in the water.



**NAME: Gwangi**  
**HABITAT: The Valley Of Gwangi**

This beautiful Allosaurus thrives in dry heat, feeds on Pteranodons among other things, and he really loves being around people.



**NAME: Swamp Thing**  
**HABITAT: Swamps**

As a bio-engineered plant/animal hybrid, Swamp Thing was created by man. It's now up to man to protect this magnificent creature.

I ♥  
M.P.S

**MONSTER PROTECTION SOCIETY**





# THE LEGACY

JOIN US AS WE VOYAGE THROUGH  
KING KONG'S TURBULENT, 85-YEAR-  
LONG CINEMATIC HISTORY... WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL



# KING KONG

RELEASED: 7 April 1933

## THE CREW

Directors: Merian C Cooper,  
Ernest B Schoedsack

Starring: Fay Wray,  
Robert Armstrong, Bruce Cabot

## PREPARE YOURSELF FOR...

A voyage to Skull Island from New York City with ambitious filmmaker Carl Denham and his team, with star of tomorrow Ann Darrow! Prepare to discover a world that time forgot, where tremendous monsters of history still roam free, ruled over by the Eighth Wonder Of The World himself: KONG!

## THE JOURNEY

*King Kong* was a true labour of love for Merian C Cooper, drawn from his lifetime of fascination with stories of giant gorillas emerging from the jungle to stun explorers. Not only did the work of the great Willis O'Brien and his team change creature effects forever as they were forced to invent new methods of filmmaking; it inspired legions of artists, from Ray Harryhausen to Tim Burton.

Cooper famously struggled to convince anyone to let him make the film until David O Selznick agreed to give him and his creative partner Ernest B Schoedsack what they needed, and the result sold out the

Radio City Music Hall for ten shows a day for four days straight.

There's so much to love about Cooper's masterpiece, from the incredible sets to the sly wit of the script, but what continues to wow after all this time is the effects work. The humanity that O'Brien and his team brought to Kong is what makes him so special, and it's the result of groundbreaking (and back-breaking) work. Not only does the cinematography put Fay Wray's glorious damsel in distress right in the middle of the action; the animation makes Kong recognisably animalistic, but with a soul. He's got a personality all of his own.

The fight between Kong and the Tyrannosaurus Rex is absolutely thrilling, but the little touches, like Kong poking at the defeated dinosaur's jaw, make it real. Watching this giant being taken out of his natural habitat and paraded in front of the bright lights of New York City, specifically the blinding flash bulbs of the press, becomes increasingly affecting, leading to one of the defining monster movie endings. There's no triumph in Kong being defeated by humanity, nor relief; rather a sense that something terribly sad has happened, and that we are to blame.

It's an incredibly influential film, and still a wonderful experience.



The effects sequences were truly groundbreaking and inspiring.

FROM AN IDEA CONCEIVED BY  
EDGAR WALLACE AND MERIAN C. COOPER

# SON OF KONG

RELEASED: 22 December 1933

## THE CREW

Director: Ernest B Schoedsack

Starring: Robert Armstrong,  
Helen Mack, Frank Reicher

## PREPARE YOURSELF FOR...

A voyage back to Skull Island! Director Carl Denham has been disgraced after that little incident in New York, and he and the captain of The Venture are on the run from legions of lawyers. They're convinced to return to that infamous island by the rumours of treasure to be found there, but they also

end up meeting Kong's smaller, friendlier son...

## THE JOURNEY

*Son Of Kong* was made as a direct response to the success of its predecessor, and things moved so incredibly quickly that it was shot and released in the very same year. Robert Armstrong returned to star as Denham, and Schoedsack stepped back into the director's chair (although he was working solo this time after Cooper reportedly was put off by the lower budget). Writer Ruth Rose very reasonably decided

that it would be pointless to try and make something on the same scale, and dialled up the humour and fun instead.

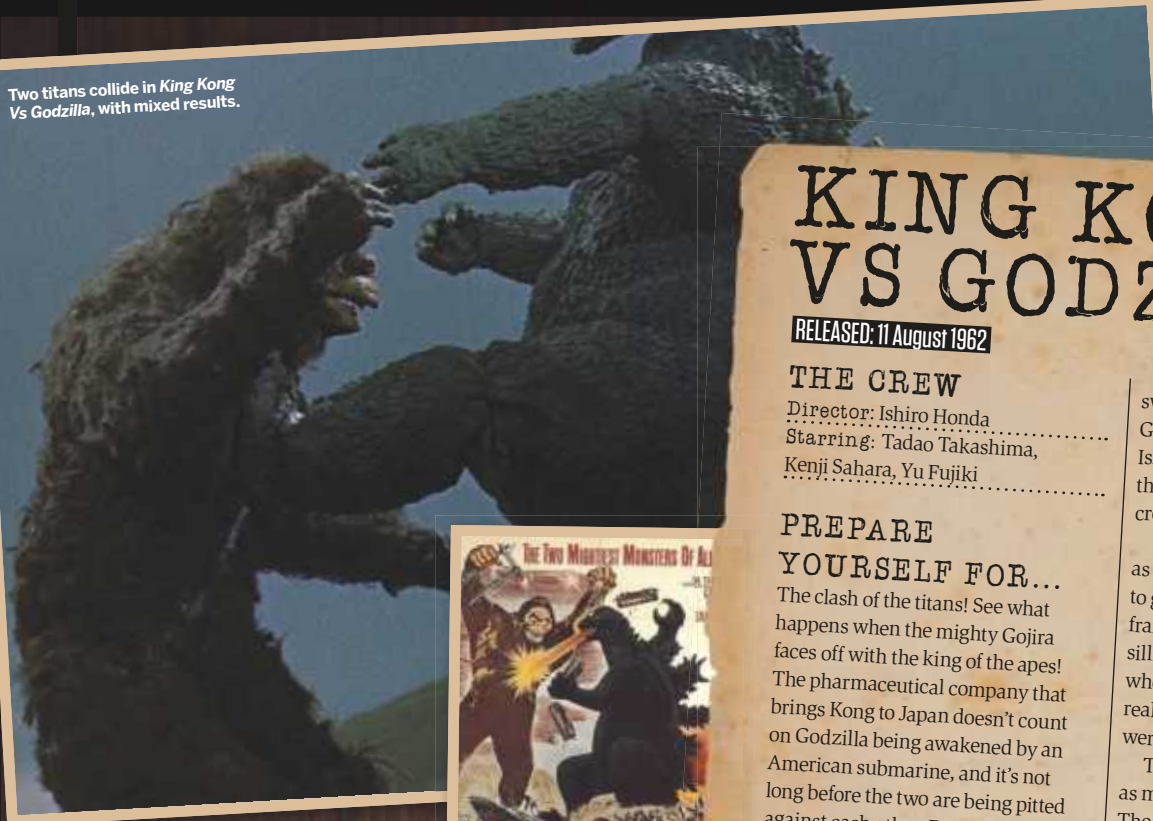
It seems unnecessary to point out that *Son Of Kong* doesn't live up to its movie father, and it's not particularly well regarded. It takes a very long time for the characters to make their way back to Skull Island, but there are some good zingers in Rose's script (Armstrong reportedly prefers this movie because of the added character development) and a surprisingly affecting ending. Still, this one is for completists.



*Son Of King* was a distinctly lighter affair, with a kinder little Kong.



Two titans collide in *King Kong Vs Godzilla*, with mixed results.



# KING KONG VS GODZILLA

RELEASED: 11 August 1962

## THE CREW

Director: Ishiro Honda  
Starring: Tadao Takashima,  
Kenji Sahara, Yu Fujiki

## PREPARE YOURSELF FOR...

The clash of the titans! See what happens when the mighty Gojira faces off with the king of the apes! The pharmaceutical company that brings Kong to Japan doesn't count on Godzilla being awakened by an American submarine, and it's not long before the two are being pitted against each other. But who will win?

## THE JOURNEY

The story behind *King Kong Vs Godzilla* is quite possibly more interesting than the finished product. It started life as a pitch developed by Willis O'Brien for *King Kong Meets Frankenstein*, with a Kong-sized Frankenstein's monster, but it was all too expensive. Eventually, the great Toho studio bought the script,

swapping the Creature out for Godzilla and brought in the great Ishiro Honda, the man who directed the original film with their flagship creature, to direct.

It's notable in Godzilla mythology as being part of an increased attempt to get children interested in the franchise, with a lighter tone and sillier action. It was the moment when Merian C Cooper began to realise that his rights to the character weren't as secure as he thought.

The film is about as daft and about as much fun as you might expect. The tone has obviously radically changed from the first film, and the men in rubber suits are out in force. Still, monster movie aficionados will get a kick out of watching these two giants collide, and there's an excitable energy to the whole thing that keeps it moving along quickly through some of the less convincing elements. That being said, the Kong suit is absolutely terrible, but he does fight a giant octopus, so you take what you can get.

**"MONSTER MOVIE AFICIONADOS WILL GET A KICK OUT OF WATCHING THESE TWO GIANTS COLLIDE"**

Robot Kong was a real thing that happened.



# KING KONG ESCAPES

RELEASED: 22 July 1967

## THE CREW

Director: Ishiro Honda  
Starring: Akira Takarada,  
Rhodes Reason, Mie Hama

## PREPARE YOURSELF FOR...

You thought King Kong fighting Godzilla was the ultimate monster battle? How about King Kong fighting a robot version of himself? Evil scientist Dr Who (no, not that one) has created a Mechani-Kong, but decides to kidnap the living, breathing version to retrieve a radioactive element from a glacier. It can only end with a fight on Tokyo Tower...

## THE JOURNEY

Toho brought back Honda for this deeply silly follow-up, which is mostly notable for the scrap between Kong and his robot self. There's a lot of over the top daftness to be had with the evil scientist played by Eisei Amamoto and his equally evil boss, the magnificently named Madame Piranha (Mie Hama), and the great Paul Frees, the Man Of A Thousand Voices, does some great dubbing work. It's a big mad B-movie, and as such it's pretty good fun.



From Willis O'Brien's stop-motion marvel to a man in a suit.



# KING KONG

RELEASED: 17 December 1976

## THE CREW

Director: John Guillermin  
Starring: Jeff Bridges,  
Jessica Lange, Charles Grodin

## PREPARE YOURSELF FOR...

Charles Grodin's Fred Wilson is hunting for oil rather than the perfect setting for his movie, while Jeff Bridges' leading man is now a palaeontologist. Jessica Lange takes the Fay Wray role as an actress who is found adrift at sea. Other than that, it's pretty similar.

## THE JOURNEY

Legendary movie mogul Dino De Laurentiis put together this remake that doesn't live up to the original. There was a long and complicated battle for the rights to the character that was eventually won by Universal, who agreed to let him make his film in exchange for a percentage of the profits, and the production was similarly tricky.

It seems as though the main culprit for this was director John Guillermin, who was known for his volcanic temper and clashed

repeatedly with his producers, who threatened to fire him.

The finished product doesn't have much to recommend. Lange's performance was panned, Rick Baker and Carlo Rambaldi's suit isn't as brilliant as it should have been, and the film received terrible reviews. It's difficult to pinpoint anything in particular as being the reason for its failure; it wants to be an epic throwback, but it's clunky and dull. However, *King Kong* 1976 was a huge financial success, which meant that a sequel was inevitable.



The 1976 *King Kong* has aged far worse than the original.

# KING KONG LIVES

RELEASED: 19 December 1986

## THE CREW

Director: John Guillermin  
Starring: Brian Kerwin,  
Linda Hamilton, John Ashton

## PREPARE YOURSELF FOR...

The ultimate resurrection! Kong wasn't dead; he was just in a coma! Dr Amy Franklin (Linda Hamilton) has been keeping him alive, and when a female gorilla of similar size is brought to the facility to provide blood for the operation to give Kong a mechanical heart, the two beasts fall in love and escape! The hunt is on!

## THE JOURNEY

Universal agreed to let De Laurentiis make a *Kong* sequel, but the budget was significantly lower when it finally came together a full decade after its predecessor. *King Kong Lives* was a bona fide flop, but it has gone on to garner a reputation as something of a trash classic, and with good reason. Is it a good film? No. But it's just too odd to be dismissed. It is, after all, a love story between two giant gorillas that devotes a good amount of its running time to their flirting, while the humans are basically there to get in the way.

It's all about love in the bizarre but adorable *King Kong Lives*.



# KING KONG

RELEASED: 5 December 2005

## THE CREW

Director: Peter Jackson  
Starring: Naomi Watts,  
Jack Black, Adrien Brody

## PREPARE YOURSELF FOR...

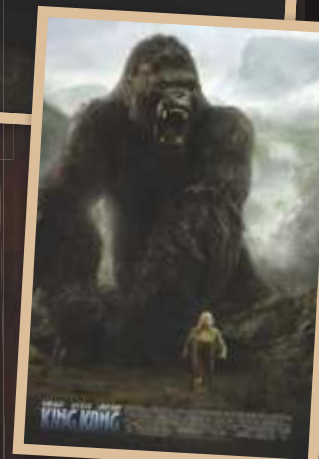
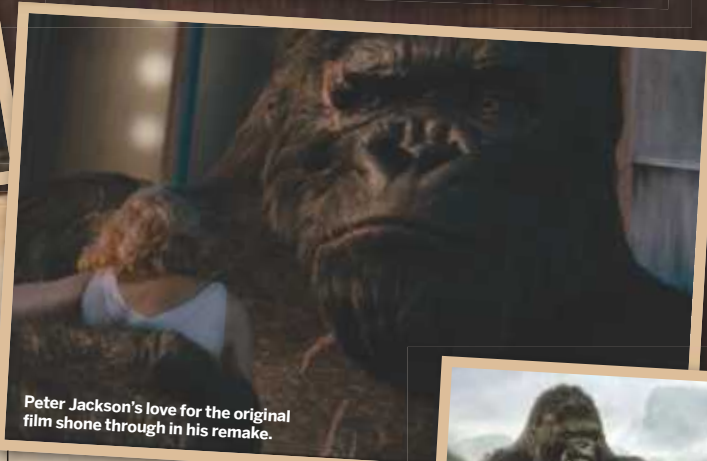
A remake that understands what the original film stood for! A journey into the heart of the unknown from Peter Jackson, fresh off his incredible success with *The Lord Of The Rings*! Get ready to see Kong brought to life with the miracle of motion capture, and the creatures of Skull Island as truly nightmarish creations!

## THE JOURNEY

It wasn't exactly surprising to learn that Peter Jackson was a huge fan of the original *King Kong*, as he'd already paid homage to it in *Braindead*, but his adoration and respect for Cooper's creation is in every frame of this remake. Although the effects are incredible (particularly the terrifying creatures lurking in the Skull Island swamp that swallow Andy Serkis' unfortunate chef), they don't distract from the fact that Jackson obviously loves the spirit of *King Kong* as much as he does the spectacle. And it really does show.

Peter Jackson's love for the original film shone through in his remake.

He's helped by an excellent cast who seem to be having a lot of fun channelling the sense of golden era Hollywood (Jack Black's driven Carl Denham was a pleasant surprise), and another brilliant mo-cap performance from Serkis, who makes Kong both a terrifying threat and an emotional, intelligent creature. It's undeniably overlong (187 minutes), but to simply describe it as the best *King Kong* remake does damn it with faint praise.





# A ROSE AMONGST THORNS

FAR-OFF PLACES, DARING SWORD FIGHTS, MAGIC SPELLS, A PRINCE IN DISGUISE – DISNEY'S LATEST LIVE-ACTION REMAKE *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* HAS EVERYTHING. WE SPOKE TO DIRECTOR BILL CONDON ABOUT THE NEW TAKE ON THE TALE AS OLD AS TIME...

WORDS POPPY-JAY PALMER

**W**HEN DISNEY'S *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* HIT CINEMAS IN 1991, IT INSTANTLY BECAME THE STUDIO'S MOST SUCCESSFUL ANIMATED

release. It's a timeless tale, after all: Belle spent her life reading, dreaming and hoping for adventure in the great wide somewhere. She eventually found what she was looking for, only in a different shell to what she was expecting. Add to that catchy songs, dance numbers and marvellous hand-drawn animation, and it really comes to life.

It's not hard to figure out why the upcoming *Beauty And The Beast* remake has been surrounded by hype since it was first announced three years ago. The film's teaser trailer set the record for most views in its first 24 hours, and then the first full-length trailer went and topped it a few months later. The hype is unstoppable.

Director Bill Condon, who worked on the likes of *Dreamgirls* and *Gods And Monsters*, speaks to us about what's coming up in his version of the classic tale – starring Emma Watson and Dan Stevens in the title roles – as well as the original's legacy.

"I saw [*Beauty And The Beast*] as an adult, but I loved it," Condon tells us. Like many fans, he saw it many times when it first came out. "There's a famous review in the *New York Times* by Frank Rich that said, 'I've just seen the best Broadway musical of the season.' That appealed to me most."

Condon believes that composer Alan Menken and lyricist Howard Ashman were partly responsible for its success. "They brought all this craft to the animated film," he says. "The musical genre had been pretty dead for a couple of decades. They brought it back in animated form because it was easier for people to accept that people could break out into singing and dancing. On that level it worked beautifully as a musical with a great score, and thematically it was always so resonant. It was beautiful, and it's a perfect movie."

As strange as it seems, the new *Beauty And The Beast* wasn't always going to be a musical. When Condon first got involved with the film, the bosses at Disney wanted to take an approach similar to those for the remakes of *Cinderella* and *The Jungle*

*Book* in that they planned on cutting the songs down and only featuring the essentials. But as a long-time fan of the 1991 film, Condon wasn't having it.

"I was adamant about the fact that music is what this version is about, to the point where I don't think there's one song in the original that shouldn't be there," he says. "So we used them all!"

The partnership of Menken and Ashman has roots buried deep in the heart of the Disney Renaissance period. The pair had previously worked together on the musical adaptations of Kurt Vonnegut's *God Bless You, Mr Rosewater*, and more memorably Roger Corman's *The Little Shop Of Horrors*. They made the move to Disney in 1989 for *The Little Mermaid*, and again for *Aladdin* and *Beauty And The Beast*.

Ashman sadly died in 1991, but Menken has been adding to the Disney songbook ever since, earning music-related credits on *Pocahontas*, *The Hunchback Of Notre Dame*, *Hercules*, *Home On The Range* and *Tangled*. He's also back for Condon's *Beauty And The Beast*, for which he wrote the score, as well as three new songs. ➤



# BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

A Rose Amongst Thorns





### THE STORY OF HOWARD ASHMAN

One man's impact on one of Disney's greatest feats



Composer Alan Menken is only one half of the team that brought us the music of *Beauty And The Beast* way back

in 1991. His writing partner was, of course, the late, great lyricist Howard Ashman. However, he ended up having a much bigger impact on the film than only providing the music, and not just because he was also serving as an executive producer.

Having already been working on Disney's *Aladdin*, Ashman rather reluctantly joined *Beauty And The Beast* after being called in while the film's production team was struggling. Ashman learnt that he had contracted the AIDS virus shortly before starting work on *Beauty And The Beast*, and so production was moved from London to New York, Ashman's home state, in order to accommodate him.

In order to get the film to work, Ashman completely retooled the script with Menken and some of the other filmmakers, adding humour in the form of the living objects that make up the household staff, and a proper villain in the form of the infamous Gaston.

As an openly gay man living with AIDS in the Nineties, Ashman was quite possibly drawing from experience while fleshing out the script: the Beast is a character afflicted with a magical curse he can't control, and locks himself away in a castle to avoid the townspeople, who judge him for how they see him on the surface. Towards the end of the film, Gaston and his angry mob refuse to back down until they kill the beast, despite never actually knowing him.

Sadly, Ashman died of AIDS-related complications eight months before the film's release, and so never saw the final product. He was 40. The film was dedicated to his memory, and Ashman and Menken's song 'Beauty And The Beast' won Best Original Song at the 64th Academy Awards.



The updated Belle (Emma Watson) is now an aspiring inventor.



The Beast (Dan Stevens) has some rage issues to sort through.



➤ "It's so thrilling to watch somebody who, 25 years later, he's got it in his DNA," Condon enthuses. "He sits down at the piano, and suddenly you're hearing new *Beauty And The Beast* music that fits in so perfectly to what he's written already. It's exciting to watch. Getting to know him and hearing the kind of French impressionist music that inspired the score in the first place... He got excited by the opportunity to expand on that idea with the new songs."

This is the essence of *Beauty And The Beast* that Condon has been trying to capture. He has taken an animated film and adapted it for live action, but he doesn't think of it as a remake.

"It's transferring it to almost a different medium," he says. "Everything that entails, including characters, is completely identifiable in human behaviour. Take, for example, Gaston (Luke Evans) and LeFou (Josh Gad), who are such wonderful but hugely comic exaggerations in the animated film. What comes with that is a 'filling out' of all the characters psychologically and giving them back stories."

**W**ITH ITS ENORMOUS, WORLDWIDE FAN BASE, CONVERTING BEAUTY AND THE BEAST FROM ANIMATION TO LIVE ACTION MORE THAN

25 years later was always going to be difficult. With most remakes of loved

classics, the aim is to shake things up a bit for variety while still remaining true to the source material.

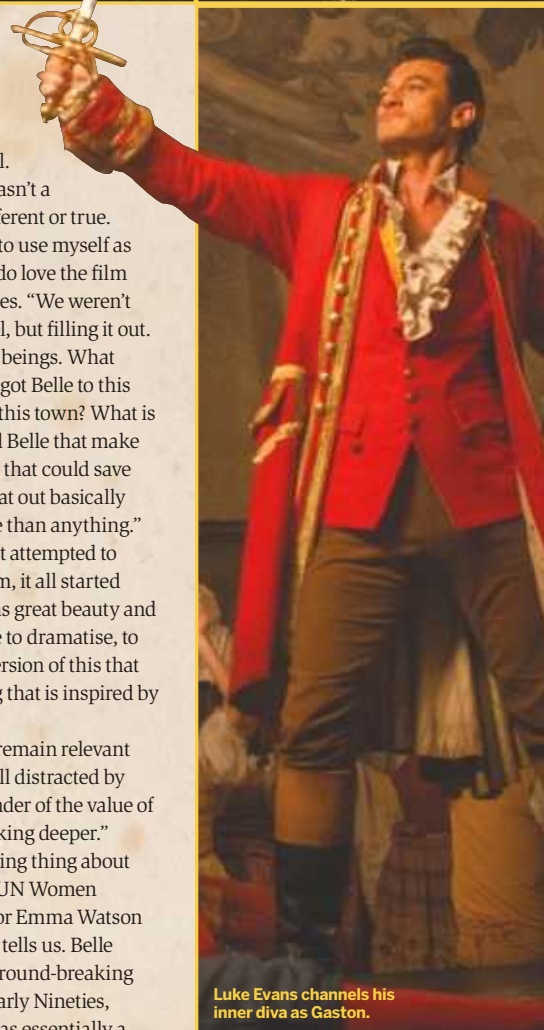
But Condon says it wasn't a question of being different or true.

"I ultimately have to use myself as the gauge, because I do love the film so much," he continues. "We weren't reinventing the wheel, but filling it out. These are 3D human beings. What got them here? What got Belle to this place, being stuck in this town? What is it about the Beast and Belle that make them the only people that could save each other? Filling that out basically was a challenge more than anything."

When Condon first attempted to approach the new film, it all started with the music. "It has great beauty and depth to it, being able to dramatise, to create a live-action version of this that lived up to the feeling that is inspired by that music," he says.

"Also, the themes remain relevant [decades on]. We're all distracted by bling, and it's a reminder of the value of inner beauty and looking deeper."

That was the thrilling thing about having feminist and UN Women Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson star as Belle, Condon tells us. Belle was something of a ground-breaking heroine back in the early Nineties, especially for what was essentially a



Luke Evans channels his inner diva as Gaston.



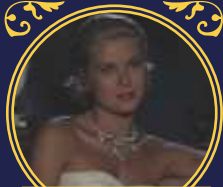
## A DREAM IS A WISH YOUR CASTING AGENT MAKES

We cast live-action princesses from the time the films were made



**JUDY GARLAND AS SNOW WHITE**  
(Snow White, 1937)

The triple threat had been acting long before her breakout role in 1939's *The Wizard Of Oz*. She would have lived up the classic tale and brought a little extra star quality.



**GRACE KELLY AS CINDERELLA**  
(Cinderella, 1950)

The future Princess of Monaco added flair and, um, grace to everything she did – acting, dancing, speaking, breathing – which makes her a perfect choice for Disney royalty.



**JANE FONDA AS AURORA**  
(Sleeping Beauty, 1959)

The *Barberella* star hasn't really had a heyday. Her life is her heyday, which is why Jane Fonda would have been marvellous as Aurora, and probably given her some personality, too.



**MOLLY RINGWALD AS ARIEL**  
(The Little Mermaid, 1989)

There are very few actresses as Eighties and redhead as *The Breakfast Club*'s Molly Ringwald, making her a perfect fit for the most Eighties and redhead princess.



children's film. "She didn't care about getting the guy first. She didn't want to be a princess. She wanted to explore and learn and read. So now it's 25 years later, and we've come a long way."

However, Belle's character is still continuing to change and grow. "In this movie, Belle not only wants to read, but she wants to help other women read too," says Condon. "She's taking on a bigger agenda in a way, so that reflects the journey of women across those years. All of that, it's making it more culturally attuned to where we are."

Of Watson's casting, Condon says, "I needed a partner, someone who was going to tell this 21st century feminist story, and it felt to me that she would be someone who is living it. It's what she has dedicated her life to. So that was sort of the extra icing on the cake. She's also a wonderful actress who can sing. She started out pre-*Harry Potter* in school as someone who wanted to perform, sing and dance, and she has a great love for this material and passion about it. All that stuff made her the obvious choice."

Similarly, Dan Stevens as the Beast was an easy choice for Condon, who got to know the actor while directing him in his Wikileaks film *The Fifth Estate*. "It wasn't a huge part, but I really enjoyed working with him," Condon says. "It made me start to follow him and all the interesting darker movies he's made since then. It just struck me what a great

actor he is. So again, it's taking someone who is a certain kind of romantic idol for some people. But knowing that he had these two great qualities, which were a wicked sense of humour and a darkness, which the Beast needs... You start talking to him, and it turns out he can sing, and it all adds up!"

**T**HE REST OF THE FILM'S CAST SEEMS PRACTICALLY PERFECT AS WELL, LIKE IAN MCKELLEN AS COGSWORTH, EWAN MCGREGOR AS LUMIERE AND EMMA

Thompson as Mrs Potts, to name just a few. But to be honest, the cast is only a small part of it when it comes to Disney remakes; the feelings that the story of

**"BEAUTY AND THE BEAST IS SOMETHING THAT LANDED IN THE NINETIES AND NEVER WENT AWAY"**  
BILL CONDON

*Beauty And The Beast* automatically invokes linger over the film, much like the welcoming aromas of soup du jour and hot hors d'oeuvres linger over a French feast. It was the same with Kenneth Branagh's *Cinderella* remake and Jon Favreau's *The Jungle Book*. However, it's still refreshing when the films attempt to take a different approach to those we've become used to.

"I thought what was so appealing about *Cinderella* was that they played so much with your expectations and they were coming at it from a different angle. [The thing with] *The Jungle Book* is partly that technology is finally at a point where you can do this. *The Jungle Book* was just so beautiful and impressive visually, and I think here too we have the capacity now to make you believe that this is an object sitting there that can speak to you and can sing and dance."

However, *Beauty And The Beast* also brings something extra. "*Cinderella* is decades ago and *The Jungle Book* is 50 years old, but *Beauty And The Beast* is something that sort of landed in the Nineties and never went away," explains Condon. "It was on stage by 1994, and it's still got five companies touring the world. It's something that's much more in everybody's minds. I think we have a more intimate connection to it, which made it a little scarier too, because everyone is protective of it and probably has an idea of how they would do it."

As the first animated film to ever be nominated for a Best Picture Academy Award (it lost out to *The Silence Of The Lambs*), the 1991 *Beauty And The Beast* casts a huge shadow. But it's a shadow that Condon and the stars can no doubt brighten with a little bit of live-action Disney magic. ☞

*Beauty And The Beast* will be released in cinemas on 17 March.



Most of the all-star cast is household decor.



# KEEPING TIME WITH COGSWORTH

## SIR IAN MCKELLEN TALKS BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, LORD OF THE RINGS, X-MEN AND MORE

WORDS WILL LAWRENCE

**WHILE MUCH OF THE AD CAMPAIGN FOR BEAUTY AND THE BEAST HAS CENTRED AROUND ITS TWO LEADS, IT ALSO BOASTS AN IMPRESSIVE**

supporting cast, with Ewan McGregor as Lumiere, Emma Thompson as Mrs Potts, Gugu Mbatha-Raw as Plumette, and – most remarkably – Sir Ian McKellen as Cogsworth.

It's names like McKellen's that have drawn such a huge interest to this live-action adaption. Not only does it have the legacy of the existing animation to uphold, but with the acting chops being plied into it, there is another layer of pressure. But for a stalwart like McKellen it won't be much of a problem. He's been an active film actor since 1964, with over 100 credits to his name, but that's just in film and television.

McKellen started life as a theatre actor alongside the likes of Derek Jacobi and director Trevor Nunn. While he might be better known these days as Gandalf or the older incarnation of Magneto, and for his social media escapades with fellow X-man – and firm friend – Sir Patrick Stewart and their bowler hats, he made his name treading the boards of Stratford-Upon-Avon.

While he has this wealth of experience, as we speak to former wizard and mutant, his enthusiasm for the *Beauty And The Beast* story becomes increasingly evident.

"It was the cheek of it that made me want to do it," he beams. "I thought, 'What on Earth?' How could you not do it if you were asked? And of course, with *Beauty* they had written this fantastic character. He is a clock, or a butler that gets turned into a clock!"

Although the new adaptation of *Beauty And The Beast* is a live-action film, a lot of the elements of the film have to be captured in CG animation – clocks and candelabras can't talk after all. "Although, in our film, the animation is used for the characters that the prince sees when he is under the

spell. The prince won't be animated. He will be a monster, a beast."

As is Disney tradition, the film concludes with a full-scale dance number. "I can't believe I got to sing and dance in a Disney movie!" he chimes. "I am so lucky. I'm thrilled that Bill Condon asked me. When he sends you a script, your heart lifts."

Condon has plenty of experience with on-screen singing and dancing courtesy of his work on 2006's *Dreamgirls*. He and McKellen are close friends, having forged a bond when they worked together on 1998's *Gods And Monsters*, McKellen starring as the troubled *Frankenstein* filmmaker James Whale.

"Bill and I became very good friends," McKellen recalls, "So if ever I was in Los Angeles, I would often stay with him and his partner. Then, when I started doing *The Lord Of The Rings*, I would almost always break the journey there and back with a visit."

The two also worked together on 2015's *Mr Holmes*, which saw McKellen take the lead as an aging Sherlock Holmes. "If Bill is in London he always gives me a call. He doesn't seem to have changed at all. He is still as nervous and as enthusiastic and friendly as he ever was, and he makes me laugh a lot. I didn't hesitate when he asked me to be in *Beauty And The Beast*."



Despite both being Shakespearean actors, McKellen and Stewart only met working on *X-Men*.



Their work together on *Gods And Monsters* proved a seminal moment for McKellen, his performance earning him the first of his two Oscar nominations and no doubt bringing him to the attention of Bryan Singer and Peter Jackson, who cast him in the *X-Men* and *The Lord Of The Rings* sagas, which debuted in 2000 and 2001.

That he is best known for his roles as Magneto and Gandalf gives McKellen little cause for concern. He is proud of both series. "With *X-Men*, Bryan Singer was always clear about what he wanted when he asked me to join. It is a gay metaphor. It is not just a fantasy story, not just putting on fancy costumes. It is about something important."

McKellen himself has been active in the face of LGBT rights campaigning since the Eighties, when he came out as gay in the face of the Section 28 Bill, so using his art to present these issues to the masses holds appeal for him as a co-founder of Stonewall, the LGBT rights lobby group.

"It is inevitable that fewer people would see me playing Macbeth than in the films that I have done," McKellen says. "Some people have seen *The Lord Of The Rings* 20 or 30 times, so one becomes part of their lives, or the performance does."

"And when I die it'll be 'Gandalf dies', of course. And that is fine, because I am not ashamed of *The Lord Of The Rings*." He recalls Alec Guinness, who starred as Obi-Wan Kenobi for George Lucas. "Alec hated being famous for having done *Star Wars*, but that was *Star Wars*," he laughs. "I did Tolkien!"

"No, seriously, there are very, very few plays or films that I have not thought were worth making. It would be awful to get stuck with a character that you didn't think was very good. I am not a snob at all. I mean, there are some people who think I am a *Coronation Street* actor. Well, what a great accolade to have!"





"I'M  
THRILLED  
THAT BILL  
CONDON  
ASKED ME.  
WHEN HE  
SENDS YOU  
A SCRIPT,  
YOUR HEART  
LIFTS"  
IAN MCKELLEN

## YOU SHALL NOT PASS!

Other genre roles you  
may have missed him in



### THE KEEP (1983)

In Michael Mann's unloved film, he plays a scientist forced out of his depth by a group of Nazis. It goes badly.



### LAST ACTION HERO (1993)

Used to playing formidable figures, McKellen outdoes himself here by playing the Grim Reaper himself.



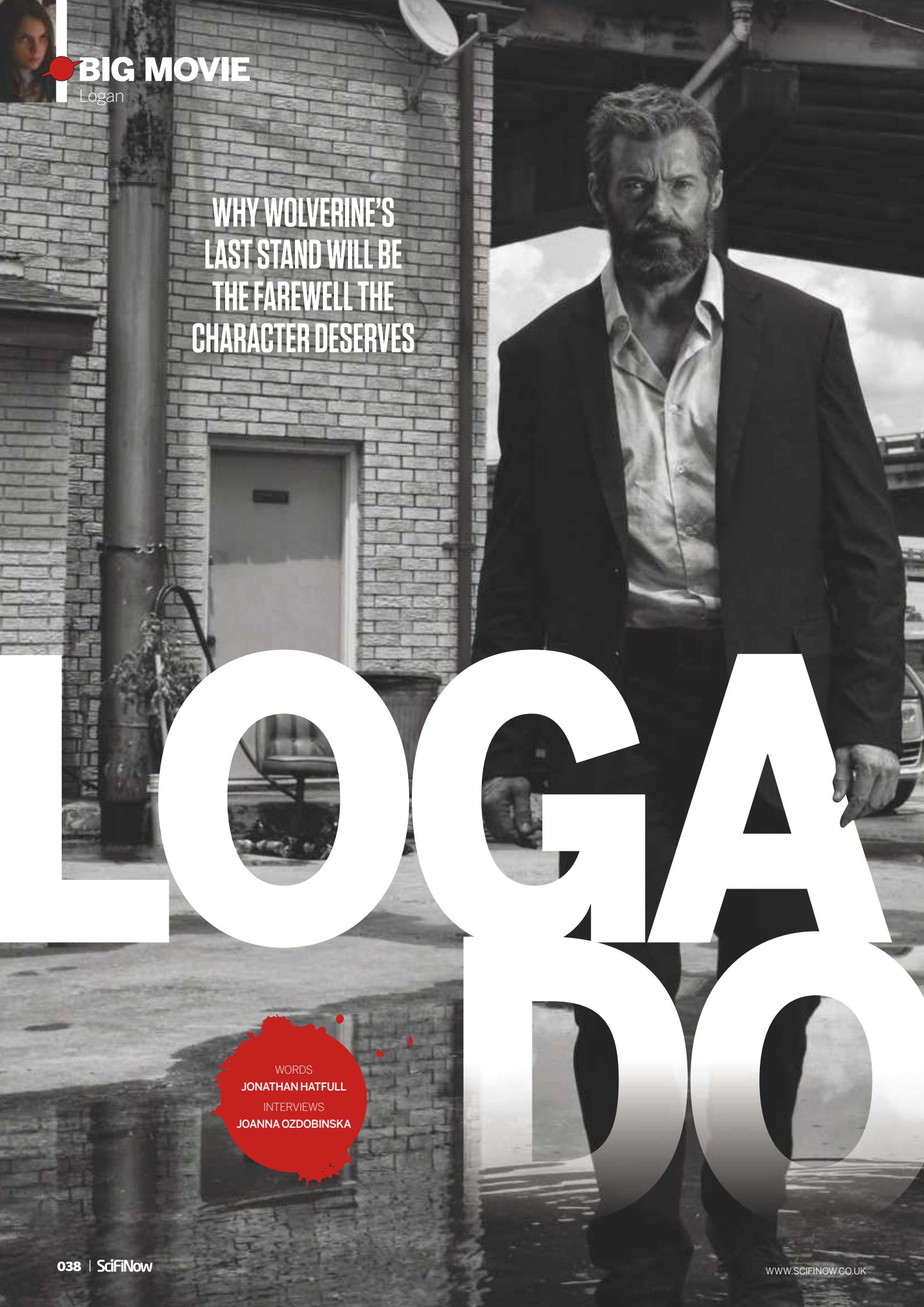
### THE SHADOW (1994)

McKellen plays Dr Reinhardt Lane, a nuclear scientist forced to use his powers for bad.



### THE GOLDEN COMPASS (2007)

The voice of Iorek Byrnison, a warrior polar bear with a hefty right paw. Don't get on his bad side.



**BIG MOVIE**  
Logan

WHY WOLVERINE'S  
LAST STAND WILL BE  
THE FAREWELL THE  
CHARACTER DESERVES

# LOGAN

WORDS  
JONATHAN HATFULL  
INTERVIEWS  
JOANNA OZDOBINSKA





**"WHEN THOSE  
COME OUT...  
DOES IT HURT?"**

**"EVERY TIME."**

**I**T HAS BEEN A LONG TIME, AND THOSE CLAWS HAVE SEEN A LOT OF ACTION. BACK IN 2000, HUGH JACKMAN BROUGHT WOLVERINE TO THE BIG SCREEN AND TOOK THE CHARACTER FROM FAN FAVOURITE TO GENRE ICON.

The quality of the films may have varied as much as the character's screen time (a solo movie here, a surprise cameo there), but Jackman's Logan has endured. Emerging at the forefront of the comic-book movie boom, he predates two Batmen, three Spider-Men and every single one of the Avengers. Only Wesley Snipes' Blade boasts a longer screen life, and that only counts if he ever makes good on those rumours the actor keeps starting. Jackman is bound to the character to such an extent that only Robert Downey Jr's "I am Iron Man" could challenge (and that's a challenge the *Iron Man* star loses, by the way). But everything comes to an end.

Jackman has confirmed that *Logan* will be the last time he steps into the adamantium skeleton of Wolverine (at least until Ryan Reynolds convinces him to do a Deadpool team-up film), somewhat adorably citing *Seinfeld*'s example of going out before people stop caring that you're still around. If you're announcing your own farewell then you had better make sure it's unforgettable, and if you have to say goodbye to a character like Wolverine, this is the way to do it.

**M**ARK MILLAR'S BLEAK, BRUTAL AND BRILLIANT OLD MAN LOGAN STORYLINE HAS GIVEN JAMES MANGOLD AND JACKMAN THE TEMPLATE TO TELL ONE LAST STORY, TO FINALLY BOTH GIVE THE

fans what they've been asking for and the actor the chance to show a side to the character we've never seen before. The gifted youngsters are gone, there are no more mutants being born, and Logan's no longer healing like he used to, if at all. Vulnerable, at the end of the world, and beaten. But while the X-Men may be long gone, the Wolverine is not alone.

"I wanted to make a movie about family," said director and co-writer James Mangold. "I wanted to make a movie about love. Logan is a character who has existed throughout all the *X-Men* pictures and the *Wolverine* movies and comic-books galore, pushing away relationships, pushing away intimacy. If this was going to be a last film for Hugh, I felt like we needed to push those issues to the fore."

The films have given us plenty of reasons to understand Logan's intimacy issues. The character's impossible love for Jean Grey (Famke Janssen) ➔

# NEWS

# BIG MOVIE

Logan

➤ has provided a consistent emotional anchor in films that are frequently unwieldy, and was much more effective than that doomed/fridged relationship with Silver Fox (Lynn Collins) in *Origins*. However, the most affecting pairings in these films have been the platonic ones.

There's the father-son relationship he shares with Charles Xavier (Patrick Stewart), beginning with the Professor getting into his head in the basement of the mansion and pledging to help him find the past he'd lost. There's the way he became Rogue's guardian and big brother, identifying another lost soul and discovering the heart he'd hidden away. It's these familial relationships that reveal the soul of Logan, pulling him back into a world he keeps trying to run from.

That world may be gone in *Logan*, but Mangold's film will force the character into a position of powerful emotional responsibility. Reluctantly or not, he'll have to step up and carry the burdens of both a son and a father.

"I came to the studio, and what I suggested was, 'What if we made essentially *Little Miss Sunshine* with Marvel characters and violence?'" said Mangold. "And believe it or not, they let me. I mean, you might not see that directly when you start watching this film, but it came from a desire to

## I WANTED TO MAKE A WOLVERINE MOVIE ABOUT FAMILY, AND ABOUT LOVE

JAMES MANGOLD

make a film about relationships – relationships as you'll see between Charles Xavier and Logan – and Laura, a new arrival into these movies."

**I F YOU'VE SEEN THE TRAILERS FOR LOGAN (IF YOU'RE LIKE US, YOU'LL HAVE WATCHED THEM OVER AND OVER AGAIN), YOU WILL UNDERSTAND WHY WE'RE SO EXCITED TO MEET LAURA,**

otherwise known as X-23. The young girl who is "very much like" Logan is played by Dafne Keen, who was found after an exhaustive worldwide search.

"I needed a Hispanic 11-year-old girl who was a great fighter, a brilliant actress, um – well, that's about it," remembered Mangold. "And that reduced the bandwidth of who we could consider for the role pretty severely. We searched around the world, and this

Laura (Dafne Keen) is one of the first new mutants to be seen for years.

Charles Xavier (Patrick Stewart) is 90, and suffering from Alzheimer's.

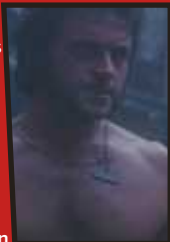
By this point, Logan's healing factor is starting to fail him.

## "SOMEONE HAS COME ALONG"

The moments that make Wolverine who he is

### BAR-FIGHT INTRO

Fans of the comics were forced to explain to *X-Men* newcomers that Wolverine wasn't actually the main character after this incredible introduction. Logan barely keeps himself in check during a brutal cage-fight, and when we finally see those claws extended in the subsequent argument... it's unforgettable.



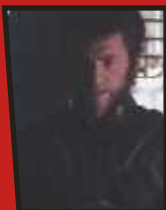
### "MY NAME IS LOGAN."

Having decided not to throw Rogue out of his truck, Logan gruffly bonds with the runaway. It's a brilliantly written scene that's perfectly performed by the two actors, with both their defences coming down just a little. When she finally asks if unsheathing his claws hurts, he simply replies, "Every time."



### "YOU'RE A DICK."

What can we say about this moment from the first *X-Men*? Although in fairness it should be noted that Cyclops' equally concise "Okay" response to this offered proof that Wolverine isn't Mystique helps to make this the perfect encapsulation of the relationship between Wolverine and Cyclops.



Dafne Keen stars as Laura – better known in the comics as X-23.



young woman, Dafne Keen, we found in Madrid, and is really a revelation."

This 11-year-old girl is the catalyst for the story. She's being hunted by the Reavers, a cartel of cyborg soldiers led by Donald Pierce. The cyborg supervillain is working on behalf of a scientist named Zander Rice (played by Richard E Grant). Rice is in the business of creating mutants, and he's determined to get his hands on Laura. The only thing standing between them is Logan, who's caring for the Alzheimer's-ridden Xavier somewhere in Texas.

There are a lot of comic-book movie keywords in that paragraph, but as the filmmakers keep saying, *Logan* isn't just another comic-book movie. When it was announced that the film would be given an R rating, many of us assumed that the success of *Deadpool* meant that we'd be seeing a lot more gore and F-bombs. However, what Mangold and company wanted to do was make a comic-book film for adults. This isn't an *X-Men* film that you can take your kids to.

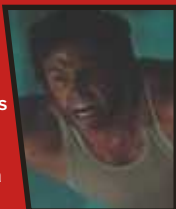




Logan's foes this time are the Reavers, led by Donald Pierce (Boyd Holbrook).

## MANSION ATTACK

It was the scene that fans were clamouring for: Wolverine going Berserker. As Stryker's soldiers storm the school, Wolverine makes sure Colossus is on evacuation duties before storming his way through the intruders in a Berserker rage.



## BROTHERLY LOVE

There's a lot wrong with *X-Men Origins: Wolverine*, but it did give us Liev Schreiber's excellent performance as Sabretooth. Watching the two actors sink their teeth into these roles and making the most of bone-crunching fight sequences make the film worthwhile.



## POISON ARROWS

After striking up a friendship with a bear, Wolverine finds that his friend has been poisoned. He heads off to track down the one responsible and punish him for not having "the wind or the balls" to put the animal out of its misery.



## "YOU AND I ARE GOING TO BE GREAT FRIENDS"

Logan's got a lot on his plate in *Days Of Future Past*, and when Hank McCoy refuses to let him in the mansion, there's no time to argue. A simple fist to the face to resolve the problem, and an almost-apology is textbook Wolverine.



"We made a movie that isn't worried about getting under the bar," explains Mangold. "It's real simple. If I was making a movie about a real bad-ass guy without any claws, this is what you'd see, without me worrying about what I can get past the ratings board. This is – in many ways; it's not only about the violence, though, or language. Essentially I think what you'll recognise is we made a movie for adults."

## WHILE A LOT OF COMIC-BOOK MOVIE PROMOS AND TEASERS THESE DAYS ARE ABOUT GIVING THE VIEWERS HINTS ABOUT WHICH CLASSIC STORYLINES OR DEEP-CUT CHARACTERS

will be making an appearance, everything about *Logan* has screamed "Old school western" from day one. Then again, that's not too much of a surprise coming from James Mangold. The filmmaker's back catalogue is steeped in his love of westerns, from the "one good man stands alone" *CopLand* to the actually-a-western *3:10 To Yuma*. Even as *The Wolverine* drew on classic samurai movies for the character's journey to Japan, we all know that's where Sergio

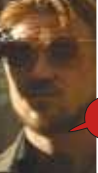
Leone's spaghetti westerns took their inspiration.

"It's a movie about comic-book characters, but Westerns were made for adults, gangster pictures were made for adults," says Mangold. "There's no reason that this genre can't be made – and has been in some cases in the past – for adults. And you know, in many ways I'd let you judge when you see it instead of saying more. But I think what you'll see is that from the script up, I tried very hard with my collaborators to build a world that feels like it's real, like these characters exist in our world instead of us catapulting our minds to some plastic universe they live in."

Fitting those characters into an adult world allows Mangold to make the most of his cast, specifically the great Sir Patrick Stewart. Xavier's deteriorating mental state will provide the film with much of its emotional weight, as Logan and Caliban (Stephen Merchant) try to provide for the ailing mutant mentor, but there's the also the danger that comes from a character that powerful losing control over his mind. ➤

One way or another, Hugh Jackman's final Wolverine story will be memorable.





➤ We've talked a lot about the R rating allowing for grown-up themes and emotions, but we should also note that it will finally allow fans to see the Berserker rage that they've been craving. We've had flashes of it here and there, perhaps most memorably in the mansion attack in X2, but Mangold and company want to make sure that we see the full effects of this character without restraints. "We felt like people had been dying to see this clawed character unleashed in terms of the physical action," he said. "And I think that is something else you're going to be confronted with fairly quickly when you watch this."

Whether we're ready to say goodbye to Wolverine or not, it's clear that the filmmakers have put everything into this film. Every Western hero needs a great last shot. Whether Logan goes out in a blaze of bullets like Butch and Sundance, slips in the saddle like Shane, or stands in the doorway like Ethan Edwards, we're sure it'll be memorable. ●

Logan will be released in cinemas on 3 March.

## DOC SAMSON'S SUPERHERO SUPPORT GROUP

Because being a hero can be incredibly rough

### SPIDER-MAN

Well, I was raised by my aunt and uncle after my parents were killed, and although they were great, I was bullied a lot. I thought everything would get better after a radioactive spider bite gave me superpowers, but Uncle Ben was gunned down in the street, and... it was kinda my fault (\**Amazing Fantasy* #15). I worked much harder at taking responsibility, but I still couldn't stop the death of Gwen Stacy (\**Amazing Spider-Man* #121), Aunt May keeps ending up in villains' crosshairs, I had a daughter that died during a super-confusing confusing clone saga (\**Sensational Spider-Man* #1-11), and Doc Octopus swapped bodies with me for a bit (\**Amazing Spider-Man* #698). That guy's crazy.

### JESSICA JONES

I was on my way to Disneyworld with my family when we crashed into a truck carrying radioactive chemicals, killing everyone and putting me in a coma, so that wasn't exactly the family vacation my folks had in mind (\**Alias* #22!). Thankfully, the Jones family took me in, and I actually got some powers out of the deal. Not exactly a fair exchange, but hey. Things were pretty good until I ran into the Purple Man (\**Alias* #25), who kept me under his psychic powers, making me do whatever he wanted and generally violating my mind. So yeah, I've got some baggage.

### LOGAN

Let's see, I killed my childhood friend by accident as a kid, so that got things off to a bad start (\**Wolverine* Vol 4 #11). Over the years, I've been mind-controlled by military figures, a whole buncha guys, actually. I've spent a lot of my life loving someone I could never be with, and I get people killed just by being around them. I even accidentally killed my own kids bub, that was my treat for getting out of Hell (\**Wolverine Goes To Hell*), and I had to put my own son down (\**Uncanny X-Force* #34). In one timeline I killed every man, woman and child in the X-Men mansion by accident (\**Old Man Logan*). I've been torn apart, chewed up, even crucified, and I had liquid molten adamantium injected into my body.







## ELEKTRA

You don't get to be this badass and be written by Frank Miller without enduring some serious trauma. My mother was murdered just before she gave birth to me (*\*Elektra: Root Of Evil #1*), so I studied martial arts from a very young age. Depending who you ask, I had a deeply traumatic childhood that may or may not have happened (*\*Elektra: Assassin #1*). Grown-up life didn't prove to be much easier, as my relationship with Matt Murdock was complicated by the murder of my father (*\*Daredevil #168*) and my decision to become an assassin. Sure, Matt and I fought plenty, but that's nothing compared to actually being killed by Bullseye (*\*Daredevil #181*). I mean sure, I came back...

“PEOPLE HAVE BEEN DYING TO SEE THIS CLAWED CHARACTER UNLEASHED”

JAMES MANGOLD

## PUNISHER

Life is pain. Can't do nothin' about that. I served my country in Vietnam. I'd done my part. All I wanted was to come home and be with my family. My precious family. But life ain't far. And the world ain't nice. My wife and two kids were murdered right in front of me (*\*Marvel Preview #2*), and I've spent the rest of my life taking out bad guys. Sure, bad things have happened to me since then, but you know what? Worse things have happened to other people, and that's gonna carry out as long as I'm still breathing.

## DAREDEVIL

I've made the best of things, there's no question about that. But I got off to a rough start. I was just another Hell's Kitchen kid, but when I was blinded by toxic chemicals, I saw the world a little differently. My dad took care of me until he was murdered for refusing to take a dive in a boxing match (*\*Daredevil #1*). Everything I know about fighting, I learned from him. And my martial arts mentor Stick. Let's see, I've seen my loved ones murdered (Oh hi, Elektra), I've had my secret identity revealed by drug-addicted ex-employees (*\*Daredevil #227* – we made up, it's fine now), I've been pushed to the edge over and over again, my wife went crazy (*Daredevil #104 Vol 2*), but I'm doing okay. It's mostly my Catholic guilt that brings me down.

SHOULD  
HUGH JACKMAN DO A  
DEADPOOL-LOGAN  
TEAM-UP?

NO, THAT'D  
RUIN LOGAN

29%

71%

YES! GENIUS!  
HILARIOUS!



# HEROES NO MORE

EVEN SUPERHEROES CAN'T LIVE FOREVER. WE LOOK AHEAD TO THEIR CLIMATIC STORYLINES...

WORDS  
STEVE WRIGHT



## OLD MAN LOGAN (2008-09)

WRITER: Mark Millar ARTIST: Steve McNiven

The inspiration for *Logan*, and one of the most memorable superhero end-of-days tales in recent history. Simply put, the villains finally realised their numerical advantage, and wiped out most of the heroes, carving the US into territories ruled by Red Skull, Doctor Doom, Magneto, Hulk et al, with Logan now a retired pacifist, who is dragged out on one last mission by a blind Hawkeye. Featuring a fittingly bleak aesthetic – the giant corpses of Loki and Hank Pym still litter the landscape – and a take on Wolverine that proved so popular he was recently resurrected in the *Secret Wars* crossover, this is one apocalypse we wished would never end.



## THE DEATH OF WOLVERINE (2014)

WRITER: Charles Soule  
ARTIST: Steve McNiven

With his healing powers failing and a bounty on head, Wolverine sets out to clear his slate once and for all. Notable for actually doing what the title says (to date, the 616 version of Logan remains dead), it nonetheless feels a tad anti-climatic, with Wolverine not going out at the hands of a classic villain, or in especially high-stakes fashion. Still, full marks for sticking to the mission statement.



## THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS (1986)

WRITER: Frank Miller ARTIST: Frank Miller

Whatever else you may think of Frank Miller nowadays, you can't dispute just how influential a story this was. Depicting a Batman whose attitude to crime is indicative of the impact that years of fighting superpowered scum would have on someone's psyche, and a sadly accurate representation of how the real world would react to such an individual, this is a Dark Knight who lived long enough to see himself become a villain.





## THE DEATH OF CAPTAIN MARVEL (1982)

**WRITERS:** Jim Starlin, Steve Englehart, Doug Moench **ARTIST:** Pat Broderick

It's a pattern that superheroes become more relatable in death – or the manner, thereof. Therefore, it comes to pass with Marr-Vell, who succumbs to the all-too human malaise of cancer. It's his reaction that gives the story its power. Marr-Vell accepts his limitations and allows himself to pass on, all the while friend and foe alike arrive to pay their respects. Again, that he has (for the most part) remained dead allows this story to remain poignant.



## SPIDER-MAN: REIGN (2008)

**WRITER:** Kaare Andrews **ARTISTS:** Kaare Andrews, Jose Villarrubia

Best remembered as *that* storyline in which we saw a lot more of an elderly Peter Parker than we'd like to, the New York of *Reign* is *V For Vendetta* meets *Old Man Logan*, an authoritarian metropolis in which superhumans have been outlawed, and Parker tries to lie low. It's less of a Spider-Man epilogue than it is a dark imagining of his final years, but worth picking up if only for the nightmarish incarnations of Spider-Man's rogue gallery.



## DAREDEVIL: END OF DAYS (2012)

**WRITERS:** Brian Michael Bendis, David W Mack **ARTISTS:** Klaus Janson, Alex Maleev

Described as a 'canon' approach to the demise of the Man Without Fear, this actually takes place in the days after his death, with Ben Urich attempting to uncover the meaning behind Matt Murdock's final words, 'Mapone'. Strangely satisfying despite not actually featuring a lot of the title character, we catch up with the likes of Bullseye, the Punisher, Elektra, Nick Fury and Black Widow as the impact and legacy of Daredevil becomes all the more apparent.



## RIP EARTH

Welcome to comics' greatest dystopias

### THE AGE OF APOCALYPSE

Created when Legion accidentally kills Charles Xavier, Apocalypse wakes up early to wiping subjugate mankind – wiping out large swathes of the world and earning the enmity of Magneto in the process.



### DAYS OF FUTURE PAST

Another nightmarish X-reality in which mutant-destroying Sentinels have run amok, enslaving mankind in the process. Like *Age Of Apocalypse*, there's no fixing this reality; there's only escaping it.



### EMPEROR JOKER

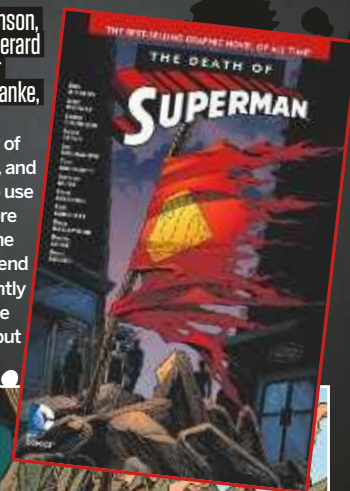
The Joker gains the reality-warping powers of Mr Mxyzptlk, offing the entire world bar Batman – who he keeps to repeatedly kill and resurrect – and Superman, the only one strong enough to resist his influence.



## THE DEATH OF SUPERMAN (1992)

**WRITERS:** Jerry Ordway, Dan Jurgens, Louise Simonson, Roger Stern, Karl Kesel, William Messner-Loebs, Gerard Jones **ARTISTS:** Jon Bogdanove, Dan Jurgens, Brett Breeding, Tom Grummett, Jackson Guice, Dennis Janke, Denis Rodier, Curt Swan, MD Bright

While this attracted critical disdain in a number of quarters, its reputation has improved with time, and it's fair to see why. One of the first storylines to use the death of a superhero as an excuse to explore the event's ramifications (while at the same time obviously never intending it to be a permanent end game) when Superman and Doomsday apparently destroy each other, others step up to replace the Man of Steel, setting the stage for a confusing but nonetheless memorable saga.



## FANTASTIC FOUR: THE END (2007)

**WRITER:** Alan Davis **ARTISTS:** Alan Davis, Mark Farmer

Less an ending and more like a new beginning, this instead focuses on bringing Marvel's first family back together rather than splitting them apart, and as a result breaks the trend that 'The End' storylines epitomised by actually being quite optimistic. Genuinely doing a great job of summing up why the Fantastic Four are still relevant, this is one final story that did its job well.



## HULK: THE END (2014)

**WRITER:** Peter David **ARTISTS:** Dale Keown, Joe Weems

The Hulk always said that he wanted to be left alone, and he gets his wish here – albeit in an irradiated, dead world in which he is regularly eaten by giant cockroaches, only to regenerate. As he wanders Earth in Bruce Banner form reliving his memories, philosophising on his fate, he truly – and tragically – comes to the realisation: "Hulk... strongest one there is. Hulk... only one there is... Hulk feels... cold."



## X-MEN: THE END (2013)

**WRITER:** Chris Claremont **ARTISTS:** Sean Chen, Greg Land, Gene Ha

One frustrating trait of 'The End' storylines has been their lack of success in accurately summarising what it was that made the characters great in the first place. Instead of revisiting classic *X-Men* storylines, *X-Men: The End's* final hurrah brings together the likes of the Shi'ar and Cassandra Nova – never classic *X-Men* staples, but they're prominent here. In attempting to wrap up pretty much every X-friend's narrative, ultimately this stretches itself way too thin.







**CULT CINEMA**

The Love Witch

ANNA BILLER TALKS TO  
US ABOUT BRINGING  
CLASSIC HOLLYWOOD  
STYLE TO GENRE CINEMA  
WITH THE LOVE WITCH

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

# Spellbound





WE DON'T SEE A LOT OF FILMS LIKE THE LOVE WITCH. IT'S SHOT, LIT AND DESIGNED TO LOOK LIKE A GOLDEN-ERA HOLLYWOOD FILM. BUT THERE'S

also substance below the surface, with one of the most beguiling and complex genre heroines in recent memory. It's the story of Elaine (Samantha Robinson), a beautiful witch who's determined to find love using every tool at her disposal, but her quest proves more difficult than she expected...

## A NEW TAKE ON OLD MAGIC



Elaine isn't like other witches we've seen on the big screen. She's powerful, seductive and driven, but also romantic and damaged. "Witches are a figure of great hysteria in terms of what they represent about men's fears, female power and female sexuality," director Anna Biller tells us. "I wanted to do a movie around the way women see themselves and the way other people see women." The result is a story from a perspective that we see all too rarely.

"Movies about femme fatales are usually made by men, and they usually really only have the point of view of the man," she continues. "The man is destroyed by her, lusts after her. We don't see the experiences of the female. They're pure evil, or they're just sirens, the young beautiful woman who lures you to your death by seducing you."

## ONE-WOMAN FILM CREW



Biller is not only credited as the film's writer and director; she's also the editor, composer, costume designer, production designer and art director. Biller tells us that this multi-tasking was partly born out of necessity. "A lot of it was that I initially made out a budget, I knew how much money I could get, and there was almost not enough money in the budget to make the film as it is without making all the things.

"There was absolutely zero pre-production budget to hire people to help me. So it was a choice about whether to leave it all out and have the movie be very simple and stark, or to make all these things what I wanted myself." The result was a pre-production process that lasted nearly seven years. "A lot of time was spent sewing, designing, sewing, rug-hooking and making props!" she laughs.

## FINDING THE WITCH



Without the right woman playing Elaine, *The Love Witch* simply wouldn't work, and Robinson gives a superb leading performance. "I didn't really know that she was right at first," remembers Biller. "But she gave a great dance audition, and I could see that she was very intelligent and very beautiful, so I had a meeting with her, and we talked about the script, and she was just so incredibly intelligent and such a serious actress, that I thought, 'Well, she can do anything that she sets her mind to!' We worked very closely, watching a lot of movies and discussing the character, and she really wanted to understand



Men prove to be a continual disappointment in *The Love Witch*.

## "MOVIES ABOUT FEMME FATALES USUALLY HAVE THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE MAN"

ANNA BILLER

everything about the character from the inside, all the character's motivations."

Elaine does some terrible things, but the film clearly wants to understand why. "I was trying to create a character that is sociopathic, but also sympathetic. She just did a really good job of playing the character with absolute conviction."

## STYLE NEVER GOES OUT OF FASHION

A lot has been made of the visuals of *The Love*



*Witch*, and it's easy to understand why. "It's incredibly beautiful, and it does feel like you're watching a lost classic. "I have a certain aesthetic that tends to come into play," Biller tells us. "I did want the world of the occult to be represented in terms of the colours and the feeling of magic, but the look of it comes more from my love of classic cinema, classic cinema lighting and set design, which I've studied for many years. I try to make things until they look good – good to my eye – and that ends up making them look very old-fashioned I think, because the lighting styles that I really enjoy are ones that aren't used anymore."



Samantha Robinson stars as the seductive, complicated titular witch Elaine.

## EYE OF THE BEHOLDER



*The Love Witch* has provoked different reactions from critics and audiences, and it's not as simple as 'love it or hate it.' Even the people who adore the film can't agree on why. "I did purposefully conduct an experiment, I put certain things in for males and for females, and it's playing out exactly as I thought it would," laughs Biller. "Most of the men are responding to the visual style, and to Samantha as a siren, very much as the men in the film respond to her, and the women are more getting engaged with the actual story. They're seeing it as a feminist examination of rape culture.

"A lot of men are entranced by it. They're also a bit bored by it, because I think a lot of men are having a hard time connecting emotionally to the character, because it's so much from a female point of view. So I think men don't actually understand the movie for the most part! But they still enjoy it."

## LABELS CAN BE DANGEROUS



If you've read a review of *The Love Witch*, you may well have seen it compared to exploitation horror movies from the Sixties and Seventies, but Biller tells us that she's not a fan of that genre and sees her film as something very different. "Some writers are saying it's subverting exploitation, but I don't think it's even in conversation with exploitation," she explains. "Not in terms of the aesthetics or story or anything. It's just that there's a female and she has sexuality.

"Exploitation is a very specific thing – it has to do with catering to a certain type of audience, and it also has to do with not being art. I was a little bit dismayed that people say I'm obsessed with those movies; I think it reflects their own tastes. I like that it's getting into genre festivals, because I think that gives it a wider audience, and maybe it exposes genre fans to other types of filmmaking." ◊

*The Love Witch* is in UK cinemas, VOD and Digital HD from 10 March.





# LIE BACK AND RELAX

GORE VERBINSKI'S *A CURE FOR WELLNESS* WILL PUT YOU OFF HEALTH SPAS FOR LIFE. WE SPOKE TO THE DIRECTOR AND STARS DANE DEHAAN AND JASON ISAACS ABOUT THEIR SLICE OF SLOW-BURNING HORROR...

WORDS ABIGAIL CHANDLER

IT'S NOT OFTEN THAT A FILM COMES ALONG YOU JUST CAN'T CATEGORISE – OR EVEN REALLY TALK ABOUT – WITHOUT RUINING IT. SO BEAR WITH US HERE. *A CURE FOR Wellness* is a film by Gore Verbinski, starring Dane DeHaan, Jason Isaacs and Mia Goth. It's set in a very strange health spa. It's a... horror?

DeHaan can't decide if it's a horror or a psychological thriller, but Isaacs thinks it's neither. "It's a creeper," he tells us when we catch up with him. "There's something very creepy and a feeling of dread that comes over you when you watch it. It's deeply uncomfortable." But it's not a horror.

*A Cure For Wellness* sees up-and-coming Wall Street shark Lockhart (DeHaan) being sent to retrieve his company's errant CEO from a wellness retreat in the Swiss Alps,

where Dr Volmer (Isaacs) offers his clients the cure – although for what isn't entirely clear. "I think modern life is a disease," Isaacs explains, "And I think I know how to help cure that." Verbinski can't avoid mentioning that classic horror twist: "But what if the cure is worse than the disease?"

Verbinski might be known as a director of family films now, but before *Pirates Of The Caribbean*, he first gained acclaim as the director who put people off VHS for life with *The Ring*. He's thrilled to be back in the creepy genre. "I think [horror is] an interesting genre, because it allows you to operate in a dream logic," he tells us. "Things occur in a logical manner, but not in the same way as in a waking state, particularly when you have a protagonist who's starting to lose his purchase on reality. And I think the sense of an untrustworthy narrative has an ability to cast a spell. You're slow-cooking an audience in a dark room, bringing to bear sound, image and composition as you try to cook them delicately, and I enjoy that."

Isaacs tells us that the film's success was in Verbinski's hands ➤



Much of the film was shot at Hohenzollern Castle in Germany.





“WHAT JAWS DID FOR A DAY  
AT THE BEACH, GORE WANTS  
TO DO FOR A DAY AT THE SPA”  
DANE DEHAAN



# BIG MOVIE

A Cure For Wellness

## HELLO, SINISTER JASON ISSACS

The star's creepiest roles

### LUCIUS MALFOY (HARRY POTTER)



Perhaps more weaselly than menacing, there's no doubting the elder Malfoy's

villain status. His treatment of house elves and silver-blond locks are a dead giveaway.

### HAP (THE OA)



You could argue that the twisted doc was just doing what he thought was

best for humanity, but that's no excuse for kidnapping people and forcibly flattening them.

### THE INQUISITOR (STAR WARS: REBELS)



When you need someone to bring evil English tones to your *Star Wars* villain,

you call Jason Isaacs and his silky-smooth voice. This merciless killer is stone cold.

### CAPTAIN HOOK (PETER PAN)



This definitely isn't our favourite take on JM Barrie's classic story, but we

love Isaacs' moustache-twirling take on everyone's favourite one-handed piratical villain.

### DEMARCO (ELEKTRA)



We're really only including this because we forgot that it happened. He's Jennifer

Garner's target at the start of the film, doling out exposition until she gets through his bodyguards. It's... not a good film, though.



Ambitious young executive Mr Lockhart (Dane DeHaan) ends up well out of his comfort zone.

➤ from day one. "[It is] clearly a piece that relied on the director's skill... it's one of those pieces that's about atmosphere, mood that only the camera and the talent of the man behind it can provide." He compares Verbinski to Ridley Scott, saying, "He arrived with very precise storyboards, and he varied very little from them. He had the whole thing in his head from the start... It was only when I started to see the trailers [that] I understand how much you need that from a director on a film like this."

DeHaan was similarly drawn in by Verbinski's vision, especially when he started naming *The Shining* and *Rosemary's Baby* as inspirations. "Those were very ambitious words, but exciting words, because those are the horror movies I like to watch," DeHaan says. "I thought if he wants to try to pull off something that ambitious and I get to be kind of the driving force in it, that would be a huge challenge for me."

"There is truth in the diagnosis," Verbinski says, "Especially for Lockhart. He has it in spades. The modern human condition." DeHaan researched the stresses of working at a major financial firm ahead of filming. "It's really crazy, the stuff a young person working for a financial firm is put through to almost haze them, make them prove that they want to be there and to rise to the top. Ultimately, the goal seems to be personal financial gain. Personal rise to power.

[Lockhart] is willing to do anything to rise to the top at his company. That's a specific kind of person, for sure, but in many ways a great everyman for today, for this kind of movie, where it's dealing with themes of 'Are you well? What is wellness and what is happiness, and how do people go about achieving that? And when does it become unhealthy?'"

## THE FILM EXAMINES OUR ATTITUDES TO HEALTH AT A TIME WHEN WE'RE ALL EXHAUSTED BY THE ROUGH AND TUMBLE OF MODERN LIFE AND

are seeking quick fixes, be it a diet, a new type of exercise or mindfulness technique. "I think this genre is elevated when it taps into some zeitgeist, some feeling that we might have, and I think society as a whole is ripe for diagnosis," Verbinski says.

"Everyone thinks there is an answer that will change things," Isaacs adds, "Because things are clearly not as they are meant to be. That's the sense we have in the privileged West, at least. It creates a longing and an abyss of the soul that is possibly a luxury of our late decadent era. Who knows?"

But as well as being what Isaacs calls "grotesquely satirical" about modern life, *A Cure For Wellness* is, first and foremost, "a cracking good yarn". That includes some remarkable scenery, tricky visual deceptions and impressive – but subtle – special effects. "Gore really



Mia Goth also stars as Hannah, a patient at the 'wellness spa'.



understands that world in a big way; he has done a lot of special effects,” DeHaan says. “He tried to make as much practical for me as possible, because I like to really do things, and so the more practical things, the better.”

DeHaan might later have had cause to regret the practical effects, having dislocated his arm filming a crash sequence. “I was in some sort of rotisserie car that was just being turned round and round, so I was flying around inside the car.” But that wasn’t the end of DeHaan’s suffering. “It was torture,” he laughs. “I spent weeks underwater in a tank. There was a good month and a half of shooting where I was going to work every day and getting tortured in some way or another. We did it as safely as we could, but it’s meant to be terrifying, and it was. I’m not saying it was terrible; it was fun. But it was torture.”

It sounds like the cast now need a spa trip to recover – if the film hadn’t put them off health spas for life. Verbinski went behind the scenes of real spas as research, which he found unnervingly eye-opening. “It’s like the black light in your hotel room,” he says. “What *Jaws*

did for a day at the beach, Gore wants to do for a day at the spa,” DeHaan adds.

It’s refreshing to walk into a film not knowing what to expect. *A Cure For Wellness* isn’t an adaptation, or based on a known property. Isaacs feels that adaptations, “Become weighed down with the fear of failing to live up to expectations. But if you tell a story that’s original, which is rarer and rarer nowadays, it has a chance to weave its magic and get into people’s imaginations in a different way. No one’s thinking, ‘Is this what I was hoping for?’ They just get taken on a journey. And Gore’s twisted brain certainly takes you on a journey.”

*A Cure For Wellness* will be out on 17 February.



# HEALTH TOURISM

Review Keyword Search ‘Doctor’

## DR MOREAU'S ANIMAL RESEARCH FACILITY, SOUTHERN PACIFIC

“Tropical creature comforts”

“Loved the tropical climate, although the locals were a bit touchy and there were screams in the night. The Doctor was a generous host, although he does ramble on a bit. We made the mistake of wandering off from the compound, and we did feel a little unsafe, but we have to say, the saying of the law ceremony is unmissable. We would have liked to see more of the animals, though, apparently they were all in surgery...”

★★★★★



## DR GENESSIER'S BED AND BREAKFAST, PARIS

“Face the day refreshed!”

“I was looking for a room near Paris on a limited budget, and was lucky enough to find this thanks to the very kind intervention of a woman named Louise. It’s out of the way, but surprisingly close to the city, making my commute a breeze. The owner of the house keeps to himself, and really the only thing is that he seems to be a dog lover and the barking did sometimes keep me awake. If you find that he’s looking at your face a lot, remember that he’s a plastic surgeon, and that’s just his business. Perfect for a short stay.”

★★★★★



“THERE WAS A MONTH AND A HALF WHEN I WAS GETTING TORTURED IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER”  
DANE DEHAAN

## DR FRANK N FURTER'S SWEET TRANSYLVANIAN CASTLE, OHIO

“It’s just a step to the left!”

“We came across this castle while looking for somewhere to wait out the storm, and we have to say, the hospitality was incredible. The owner, Dr Frank N Furter, was incredibly gracious, and although it was a bit of a culture shock at first, we found the best thing to do was to just say ‘Damn it, Janet,’ and embrace the experience. Unforgettable, although we should note that we are an open-minded couple, and we can see that the whole... experience may not be for everyone.”

★★★★★



## DR HEITER'S, SOMEWHERE IN GERMANY

“Just don’t”

“Awful. We asked to use the phone and it just got so weird, so fast. We got out of there before he could show us his sketches.”

★★★★★



THE

---

ANCIENT

---

AND MOST

---

NOBLE HOUSE

---

— OF —

---

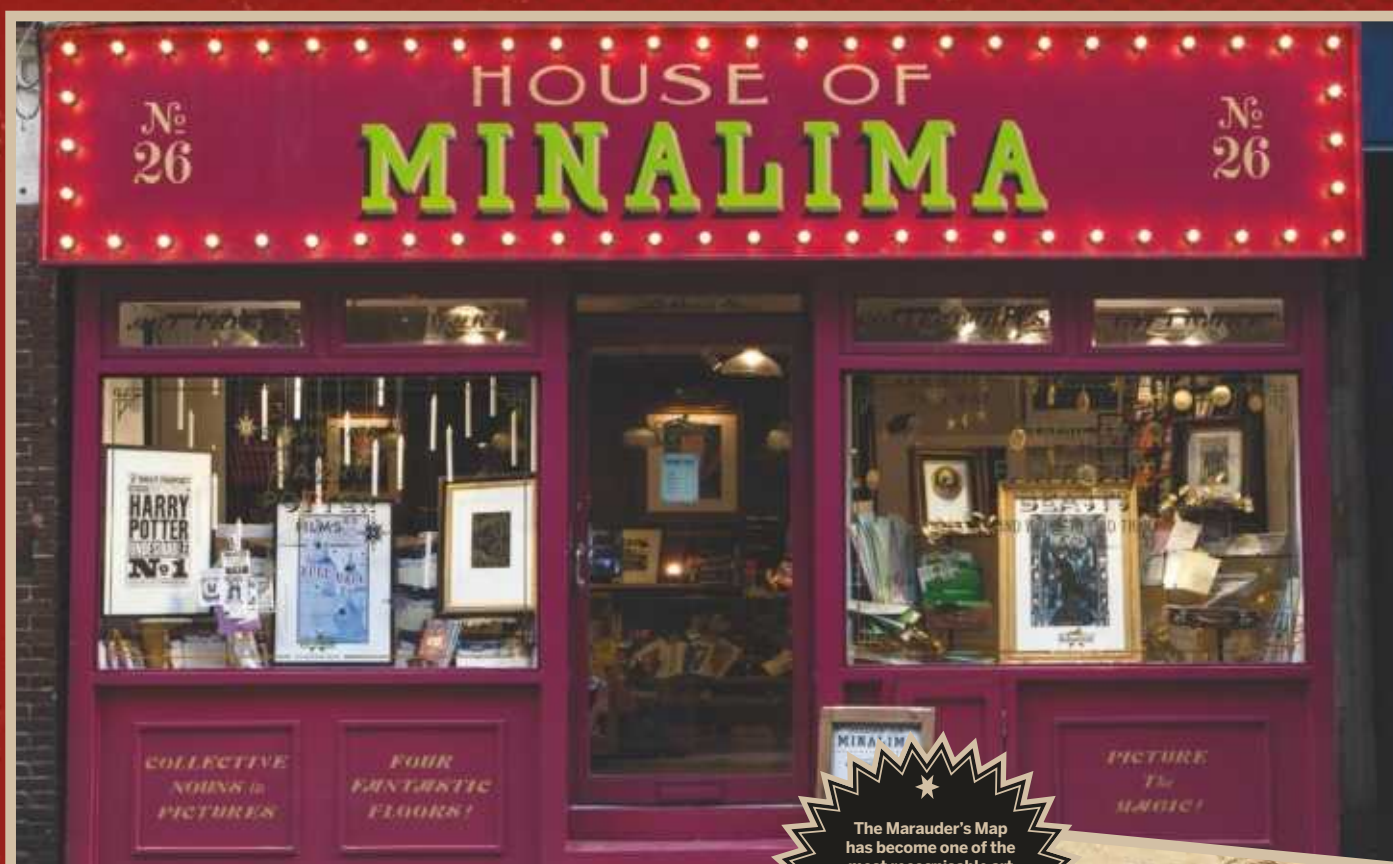
MINALIMA

---

We talk to Harry Potter and Fantastic Beasts graphic designer and one half of MinaLima, Miraphora Mina, about creating the magic...

WORDS POPPY-JAY PALMER





**F**OR A FANTASY SERIES, HARRY POTTER HAS ALWAYS BEEN VERY STYLISED. WITH FILMS CONTAINING THE LIKES OF DRAGONS AND MAGIC, YOU CAN USUALLY EXPECT SCROLLS AND RUNES TO FACTOR INTO THE graphic design side of things, but not much else. But the *Harry Potter* films, and now *Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them*, have always been insistent on pushing the boundaries. Everything from the packaging in Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes to the New Salem Philanthropic Society pamphlets to Dolores Umbridge's Educational Decree proclamations was created by designers Miraphora Mina and Eduardo Lima, together known professionally as MinaLima.

Fans have flocked to see their work at the House of MinaLima in Soho, London, while those on the continent have been able to view a special exhibition at the Arludik Gallery in Paris. For those who would prefer to see the art on their living room walls, MinaLima also has prints



The Marauder's Map has become one of the most recognisable art pieces from the films, and for good reason: it's a detailed piece that connects Harry to his past.

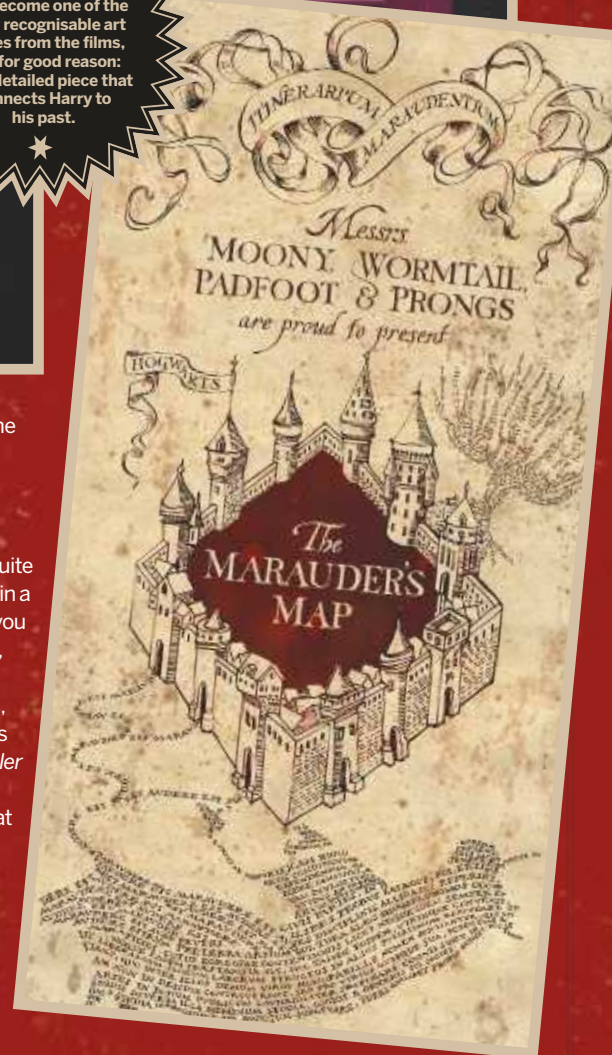
and more available to buy on its website. We spoke to Mina about iconic pieces, making the transition from *Potter* to *Beasts*, and more...

### How much freedom did you get while working on *Harry Potter*?

It's a common question we get, and we got quite a lot now that I think about it. You're working in a team, and you have to have everything that you design approved by the production designer, the director and sometimes the producers. But actually, in terms of conceiving the ideas, like coming up for the idea for the Marauder's Map or how the *Daily Prophet* and *The Quibbler* might look, that was left entirely up to us to come up with a concept. Then we'd share that and if it was approved in its concept stage when we'd develop it. It was wonderful to be given so much freedom to interpret what everyone else was doing with the book. They were interpreting it in their heads, and we had to try and visualise it. 🙌



The Undesirable No 1 posters marked a turning point for Harry, but are still a great addition to most walls.



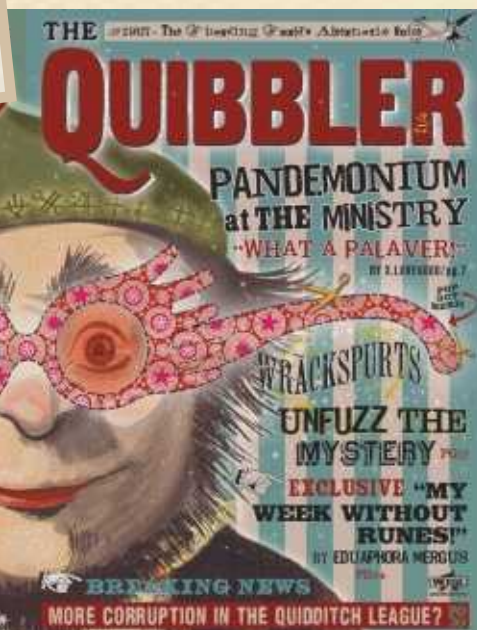




Harry's Hogwarts acceptance letters were some of the first of MinaLima's work we saw after making a grand entrance in their hundreds in *The Philosopher's Stone*.

**"WE WANTED TO KEEP THE ESSENCE AND THE PERSONALITY THAT WORKED FOR HARRY POTTER. ALTHOUGH FANTASTIC BEASTS IS A DIFFERENT STORY, EVERYONE WAS MINDFUL OF IT BEING CONNECTED"**

MIRAPHORA MINA



**What do you need to consider when designing a piece for the films?**

J.K. Rowling is very good at giving a suggestion as to what something might do, or what effect it causes, but she doesn't really say [things like], "The Marauder's Map is a multi-fold thing made out of lettering with pop-up staircases..." It's more about what it does, and we found that a lot when we were looking into the fiction to try and find information. It just wasn't there. Our principle task is to help tell the story in a very short time on screen.

We're always having to think, "Why does *Beedle The Bard* look like that? Because it needs to look precious." If we have to age something, we'll design it, make it, have it book bound, but we also have to age things. Again, that will be informed by what the story needs to tell the audience. Everything is underpinned by what the story needs to say and not by what we think would be a cool design.

**Where did you get inspiration for the art during early years of Harry Potter?**



## WEASLEYS' WIZARD WHEEZES

"The first thing we thought was, who has created this product or this item, who did it belong to, and why does it look like it does at this particular point in time?" says Mina of the designs for the Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes packaging. "In this case, we were designing different products that should have been designed by teenage boys who really just wanted to sell loads and loads of crap, basically! We had to step aside from being two adult designers designing a range of products and think, what are their motives? They need to sell as much stuff as possible, so the designs would be quick, throwaway and trashy. We looked at Seventies packaging designs, fireworks, things that were instant gratification kinds of products."

Rowling gave MinaLima a full breakdown of the Noble and Most Ancient House of Black.



Following the Wizarding World to both New York and the 1920s meant that the designing duo had to shake up their work to fit with the new time and place.



We're very intuitive, and everything we do is underpinned by doing research. One key design thing we wanted to have across the board, which is what J.K. Rowling does in the books as well, is to anchor everything in a reality and then shift it just a little bit into this new fantasy world. With the *Daily Prophet*, let's look at a newspaper and see what it looks like – what's the formula that they use to communicate their news? What is the content? We took all those elements and just shifted them into our special world, but everything definitely starts with the reality. We don't completely rewrite things. There's a reason the *Daily Prophets* aren't triangular or hexagonal; they need to feel like a newspaper that you might pick up yourself. Then, as you go in, you realise that it's actually a very special world.

### How did you find the experience of transitioning from the Potter films to *Fantastic Beasts*?

We wanted to keep the essence and the personality that worked for *Harry Potter*. Although *Fantastic Beasts* is a different story, everyone was mindful of it being connected. On the other hand, we were specifically in the Twenties, whereas on *Harry Potter* we dipped into all types of different styles. And there was a lot more muggle stuff in *Fantastic Beasts*, but it was the Twenties so it was fine!

### Was there much that you made for any of the films that didn't actually get shown onscreen?

Oh, loads! You get used to that part of how you work

and never get too attached to things. Of course, having House of MinaLima has given us an amazing opportunity to share every single piece of work that was actually made, which otherwise would have never happened. Stuff usually gets confined to a hard drive somewhere inside a container, so we don't get too hung up on that.

### What has the response to House of MinaLima been like?

We've have had about 200,000 visitors since we opened in June last year, which for a kind of quiet corner in Soho, we're delighted with. We've had some fantastic feedback from people. I think we underestimated how significant that part of the design is for the fans. That's what they take away with them when they think of the films, when they think of the universe of *Harry Potter*. It's a great honour to hear that from fans. Without them, we're nothing! However, I also like to think that a lot of our work doesn't scream and shout *Harry Potter*. We've had a strong response from the design fraternity as well. People who are graphic designers or interested in design might come to the work independently, without being a *Harry Potter* fan. ☞

You can purchase prints of MinaLima's designs at [store.minalima.com](http://store.minalima.com).









**IT JUST GOES TO SHOW: EVEN THE DARKEST SHOWS HAVE A BIT OF LIGHT SOMETIMES. AND IT HAS PROVED TO BE THE CASE WITH SEASON SEVEN OF THE WALKING DEAD.**

After eight episodes of unremitting misery, commencing with the deaths of Glenn (Steven Yeun) and Abraham (Michael Cudlitz), the mid-season finale showed the gang coming together once and for all, both due to recognising that they would never be safe while Negan (Jeffrey Dean Morgan) was around, and that his actions in Alexandria – murdering Spencer (Austin Nichols), ordering the death of Olivia (Ann Mahoney) and taking Eugene (Josh McDermitt) – had finally crossed a line.

More than anything else though, it was the reunion of Rick (Andrew

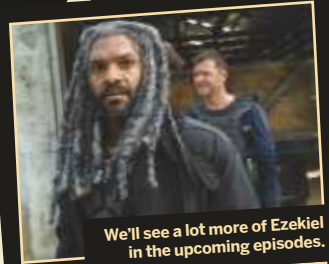
Lincoln) and Daryl (Norman Reedus) that gave us most cause for celebration, our subsequent flashbacks to Merle's death once again reminding us that when Daryl cries, we all cry with him – and so it came to pass with their embrace. Now they're back together, the Saviors had better watch out.

"It was one of the best hugs in television history!" affirms producer Gale Anne Hurd, who alongside creator Robert Kirkman, showrunner Scott M Gimple and fellow producers Greg Nicotero and David Alpert has played a huge part in turning *The Walking Dead* into the cultural phenomenon it has become. Even so, as we as viewers can all testify, it took a lot

WORDS  
STEVE  
WRIGHT

for the show to reach this point, where after half a season of subjugation, the fightback against the tyranny of the Saviors can finally begin.

"You have to earn that over the course of the half season; you have to earn the fact that they're going to now rise up," Hurd continues. "You couldn't start there; they had just been so roundly defeated, losing people who are near and dear. To see the two people who are probably most responsible for what happened: Rick, because he was overconfident in believing that they could take on Negan and the Saviors, and Daryl, who believes – whether it's true or not, it could very well be that Negan was ➤



We'll see a lot more of Ezekiel in the upcoming episodes.



**RICK AND CO ARE MAD AS HELL, AND THEY'RE NOT GOING TO TAKE IT ANYMORE. WE SPEAK TO PRODUCER GALE ANNE HURD ABOUT THE WALKING DEAD'S BLOODY FUTURE AS AMC'S FLAGSHIP SERIES RETURNS FOR THE SECOND HALF OF SEASON 7...**

# NEWS

# LAND OF THE DEAD

WE MARK THE BATTLELINES FOR THE WALKING DEAD'S BATTLE OF THE FOUR ARMIES...



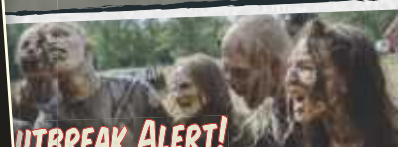
## SAVIORS

They have all the weapons, and they have the numbers. Then again, Carl and Jesus were able to casually sneak into their base, and there's division in the ranks, what with Dwight enabling Daryl's escape. And with everyone else mobilising against them, it looks like Negan has a fight on his hands.



## RICK'S GROUP

That cowardly Gregory will likely do what he can to prevent war from breaking out, although with half the gang having mobilised at the Hilltop, it's safe to say that he's getting ignored. Tactically it's probably the best defence point as well – if they have to choose a last stand then it'll be here.



## OUTBREAK ALERT!

WALKERS	1	2	3	4

## THE HILLTOP 5 TERRITORIES

BONUS 10



BONUS 10

## THE KINGDOM 8 TERRITORIES

BONUS 10

## ALEXANDRIA SAFE HOUSE 5 TERRITORIES

## EZEKIEL'S GROUP

Some of them are up for a fight, but King Ezekiel's going to take some persuading to break the 'peace' treaty he has so painstakingly maintained with the Saviors. Plus, can they bring Carol on board? She's trying to stay out of everyone's way currently, but we have a feeling that this won't remain the case.

## ALEXANDRIA DEFENCE

Most of the best fighters in Alexandria have decamped to the Hilltop, but least Father Gabriel's there, keeping on... who's over things. But hang on... who's that guy watching him from the bushes? Just what we need: another unknown quantity to enter the fray. Wonder what his game is...

	2	4	6	8	10	15	20	25	30
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



➤ always planning to kill two of them – but in Daryl's mind, he was responsible after Abraham was killed for standing up, which resulted in Glenn's death.

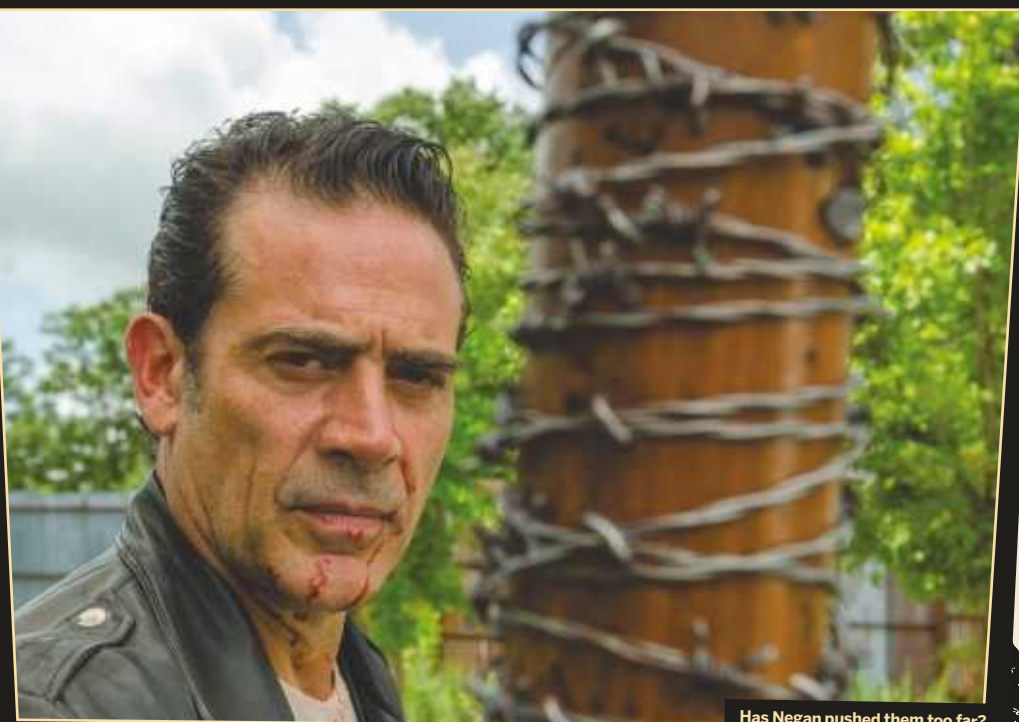
"You needed to get those two characters to the point where they're reunited, and there's no better teaming I think, and also the fact that so many people around them, like Michonne, Rosita and Maggie, are just not going to put up with it!"

Indeed, the culmination of episode eight and the start of nine seems to be representative of a journey for many of the characters. While Rick went out of his way to appease the Saviors, fearful of any further retribution against those he holds dear, others had different approaches: his own son Carl (Chandler Riggs) attempted to take the fight to Negan – and damn near succeeded – while Michonne (Danai Gurira) also went it alone, and Rosita (Christian Serratos) forced a reluctant Eugene to construct a bullet in the absence of any other ammo – with disastrous results.

Then you had other characters given their moments to shine: 'Go Getters' had Maggie (Lauren Cohan) and Sasha (Sonequa Martin-Green) coming to terms with their losses and planning their revenge, and 'Swear' gave us the first alone time with Tara (Alanna Masterson) that we have had in quite some time. For Hurd, this reconnection of sorts was an essential undertaking.

"We've got such a huge cast that it's important to make sure that we get to know them; that we reconnect with them, Tara especially – we hadn't seen her for a while. It's something we've done before – we've had episodes that were entirely about Daryl in previous seasons, and people going on missions, but we've also needed to establish the world of the Saviors and Negan's control of them. They're separate, and because they're separate we need to go to all of these different towns."

As per usual, the mid-season finale ended in bloodshed.



Has Negan pushed them too far?

**A**ND BOY DID WE GET TO KNOW THE SAVIORS, BOTH THROUGH CARL'S TOUR, AND VIA DARYL'S CONFINEMENT. A PLACE WHERE NEGAN

lives like a king and rules with an iron fist, dispensing justice with red-hot irons and having his pick of the best there is. Then again, he earned it.

Above all else, Jeffrey Dean Morgan has almost single-handedly made *The Walking Dead* worth watching again – whether the show did the right thing in staggering the climatic death scene in Season Six to the opening of Season Seven is another matter. Suave, smiling and utterly psychotic, Negan's 2016's most memorable (fictional) villain.

When asked her thoughts on Morgan, Hurd is unequivocal in her response: "I cannot imagine anyone else bringing Negan to life. It's because he makes it look almost effortless and he inhabits the character so well, you don't realise quite how difficult it is to

**"WE'VE GOT SUCH A HUGE CAST THAT IT'S IMPORTANT TO MAKE SURE THAT WE GET TO KNOW THEM"**  
GALE ANNE HURD



The next episode definitely needs more of Jesus's flying kicks.

make a character who's so much larger than life and evil charming. He's clearly a match for our survivors."

*The Walking Dead* has never been beholden to any kind of formula that other shows swear by, but it's hard to deny that the show has been better value whenever there has been an antagonist of sorts, whether it's Jon Bernthal's ruthlessly pragmatic Shane, or David Morrissey's power-hungry Governor. Even so, Hurd rejects the possibility that the show has missed having this kind of focal point.

"I think what's great about the comic book that we're able to embrace in the show is you don't want the same thing over and over again. It's not like we're doing a procedural show where we follow a particular template, so we've already got the big bad, and we solve an issue by the end of the season. There is not that kind of formula, nor is there for the comic book. That's what, I think, keeps it fresh and interesting.

"And we like the fact that people are so interested, that they care enough about the show to be happy, to be sad, to be upset, to be angry, because the truth is if it wasn't having an impact then people would feel nothing."

Speaking of the comic book, one notable aspect of the last season has been its repeated tendency to mimic or homage classic scenes. Already we've seen Negan's blood-splattered introduction, his condescending comments to Rick as he ransacks Alexandria, his forcing of Carl to remove his eyepatch and subsequent apology, and the brutal murder of ➤







With everyone back together, it looks like all-out war for the second half of Season Seven.



➤ Spencer, among other things. With plenty more source material to draw upon, we can expect this to continue to be the case – especially since the showrunner's a fan.

"That's very much Scott Gimple as he's conceived of the stories that we're going to be telling. There are certain things that he feels very strongly in consultation with Robert Kirkman should literally be comic frames brought to life, and comic panels brought to life in the frame on the TV, so that's really where the inspiration comes from. To get it right is a lot more difficult than people think, and it's a great tribute to Greg Nicotero and his fantastic team on the effects."

**"THEY'RE ANGRY, THEY'RE SET ON REVENGE, AND THEY'RE NOT GOING TO TAKE IT ANYMORE!"**  
GALE ANNE HURD

IT'S A SAD FACT, HOWEVER, THAT YOU CAN'T INCLUDE EVERYTHING. SO, DESPITE HIS PROMINENCE IN THE TRAILERS FOR SEASON SEVEN, WE ONLY ACTUALLY GOT to see Khary Payton's Ezekiel in once episode. As good as he was, it didn't quite do justice to what was supposed to be the introduction of a major new

character – hell, some of Negan's lieutenants, and even bloody Gregory all got more screen time. Happily, that will be remedied.

"[Ezekiel] will have a bigger role," confirms Hurd when pressed on the future of the Kingdom's dreadlocked monarch. "He's a complex character, because he's someone who has created a world of seeming safety for the Kingdom dwellers, but he's also not telling them the entire truth either."

And it's not just Ezekiel – Hurd promises that everyone will have their moment to shine. "By the end of the season, we will have reconnected with everyone, and understand what everyone's perspectives are."

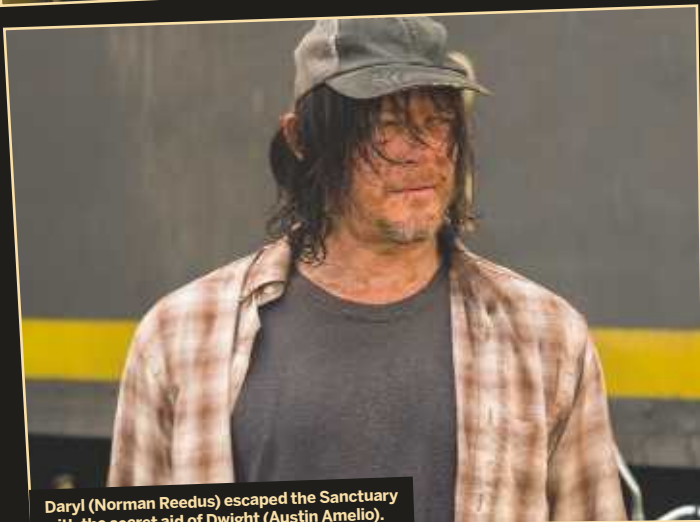
As much as *The Walking Dead* stubbornly clings onto its capacity to frustrate us, it is somehow still compelling in a way we can't quite comprehend. For every episode where, to be frank, not a lot happens, there are still those infamous 'water cooler' moments, those things we just can't

get out of our heads. That there will be more instances like this goes without saying, and while Hurd won't go into exact detail about the joint Alexandrian, Hilltop and Kingdom fightback against the Saviors, she promises that there is far more to come. There will be blood, with Sasha our pick for a demise (considering that

actress Sonequa Martin-Green is down for a lead role in *Star Trek: Discovery*), but she will not be the only one.

"The teaser poster for 7B – 'Rise Up' – really does communicate a great deal. They're angry, they're set on revenge, and they're not going to take it anymore!"

*The Walking Dead*: Season Seven will return to Fox on 13 February.



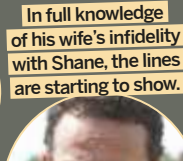
Daryl (Norman Reedus) escaped the Sanctuary with the secret aid of Dwight (Austin Amelio).

## FACES OF RICK

How Sheriff Grimes has evolved through the seasons



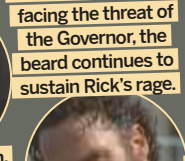
Fresh-faced and clean-shaven, Rick is still shocked by everything he's seen.



In full knowledge of his wife's infidelity with Shane, the lines are starting to show.



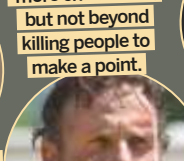
After Lori's death, and with the beard continuing to grow, Rick has been to hell and back.



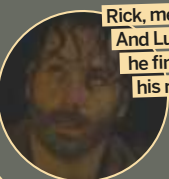
Safe behind bars yet facing the threat of the Governor, the beard continues to sustain Rick's rage.



At peak beard, Rick is basically feral at this point. Anyone who crosses him now is essentially dead.



Having finally had a shave, he's a bit more chilled now, but not beyond killing people to make a point.



Rick, meet Negan. And Lucille. Has he finally met his match?



Uh-oh – looks like he's been pushed too far. And we all know what happens after that...



# SciFiNow Reviews

Our thoughts on the pick of the entertainment releases out this month



## SPLIT 62

"AN EXTRAORDINARY SHOWCASE OF MCAVOY'S SKILLS AS A PERFORMER"



**Read all the latest reviews**  
visit [www.scifinow.co.uk](http://www.scifinow.co.uk)

**CINEMA** Add your thoughts regarding the latest blockbuster theatrical releases on the SciFiNow website.

**DVD AND BLU-RAY** Discover our opinions on the latest film and television releases and add your own comments.

**TOP 10s** Read our lists relating to our favourite genre shows, and give your thoughts on whether we were right.

**AWARD EXPLAINED** THE 'MUST SEE NOW' AWARD GOES TO REVIEWS THAT SCORE FOUR OR FIVE...

SciFiNow  
**Must see now!**

### 62 CINEMA Theatrical releases

- 62 Split
- 63 Passengers
- 63 The White King
- 64 The Bye Bye Man
- 64 The Transfiguration
- 65 Assassin's Creed



63

### 66 HOME/FILM Films on DVD, Blu-ray and more

- 66 Spectral
- 66 Blair Witch
- 66 Doctor Strange
- 67 The Girl With All The Gifts
- 67 Under The Shadow
- 67 Metropolis
- 68 iBoy
- 69 Train To Busan
- 69 We Go On
- 69 John Carpenter's Vampires/Ghosts Of Mars

### 70 HOME/TV TV shows on DVD, Blu-ray and more

- 70 Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency: Season One
- 70 The OA
- 71 The Man In The High Castle: Season Two
- 71 Trollhunters
- 72 Van Helsing
- 72 Lemony Snicket's A Series Of Unfortunate Events

## FILM INFO

### Released

Out now

### Certificate

15

### Director

M Night Shyamalan

### Screenwriter

M Night Shyamalan

### Cast

James McAvoy, Anna

Taylor-Joy, Haley Lu

Richardson

### Distributor

Universal Pictures

### Running Time

117 mins



# SPLIT

## Multiple McAvoy

Since bursting onto the scene with *The Sixth Sense*, making its director graduate of the class of 1999, that year when Hollywood and American cinema gave us loads of amazing films, M Night Shyamalan has had a very bumpy career. Yet such was the clout of his third and fourth movies (he made two forgotten indie dramas before hitting the big time), he has rode out critical derision like a gnarly surfer dude, and not given two hoots.

Why? Because while critics have routinely eviscerated his work – sometimes fairly – his films have either scraped back enough money not to affect his position too much, or done booming business. Even *The Last Airbender* – hello, six per cent *Rotten Tomatoes* score – doubled its costly budget at the box office.

What's the big surprise, then? As it turns out, *Split* is easily Shyamalan's strongest movie since *Unbreakable* back in 2000. In some ways, it's as if the director has gone back to basics or rediscovered what it was that made him such a breakout name. Shyamalan might have gotten too hopped up on the 'New Hitchcock' tag that was

banded around way back when, but *Split* represents the director's A-game, and showcases his talent for fantastical storytelling grounded in the everyday.

The big twist here is that he has not only made a top movie; it's satisfying on all fronts. From James McAvoy's multiple personas – he's playing a guy with dissociative identity disorder – to the clever plot structuring and the genuine thrill at not knowing where the story is going.

Kevin (McAvoy) kidnaps young women. One day in a car park, he takes three teenaged girls and locks them up in a desolate room. What he wants from them is initially unclear, but one frightened victim is taken away and returns crying, saying the kidnapper wanted to watch her dance naked.

The trio are further weirded out when 'Kevin' returns seemingly dressed as a woman named Patricia, speaking in an English accent and being all firm but fair. Then they meet Hedwig, a nine-year-old with a lisp who loves dancing to hip-hop and takes a shine to Casey (Anya Taylor-Joy), who he asks, in one very creepy scene, if he can kiss her. Oh, and there's Dennis,



the dominant voice/personality, and he talks to the girls about them being 'sacred food' for 'The Beast'.

McAvoy excels in the lead role. Whether he's playing the bashful Hedwig or camp fashionista Barry, he is mesmerising. This is an extraordinary showcase of his skills. Furthermore, the film doesn't make light of mental illness or use it as a crass narrative device. The subtext of *Split* is incredibly poignant and bravely drawn.

That it's also a gripping thriller in the finest Hollywood tradition, with shifting timelines, revelations and a very surprising third act, also demonstrates that Shyamalan is a master craftsman who maybe just needed to reignite the creative light within him once again. Whatever it is that led to him writing and directing *Split*, he complements the project by casting the perfect actor for the lead.

It goes well beyond Eddie Murphy putting on fat suits, Peter Sellers doing his comedy shtick for Kubrick or Alec Guinness dragging up in *Kind Hearts And Coronets*. McAvoy essentially raises the bar to new lofty heights.

### Martyn Conterio

★★★★★

### OR STAY IN AND WATCH...



**Unbreakable**  
Shyamalan's best work to date. His take on superheroes is grounded, realistic and compelling.

## QUESTIONS THAT HAVE BEEN ANSWERED

### Do we get to see all 24 personalities?

No. That would take up far too much screen time. Instead, we get dominant personalities and ones that fit the plot. Other personalities are alluded to.

### How believable is the portrayal of Dissociative Identity Disorder?

Chill your boots, it's just a movie. That said, it's not taking the mickey. It's very respectful.

## QUESTIONS THAT HAVEN'T BEEN ANSWERED

### Any major surprises?

Yes, but that would be telling. Shyamalan has a major surprise for the audience at the very end.

### Does Shyamalan make a cameo appearance?

Shyamalan continues to insert himself into his movies with Tarantino-esque cameos. Neither of them can act.



**Must see now!**





## PASSENGERS

Pretty on the outside, ugly on the inside

**Details** 12A // 116 mins // Out now **Director** Morten Tyldum  
**Screenwriter** Jon Spaihts **Cast** Jennifer Lawrence, Chris Pratt, Michael Sheen, Laurence Fishburne **Distributor** Sony Pictures



**Passengers takes the idea that humans were not designed to be solitary beings and**

begins in a similar manner to Duncan Jones's *Moon*, or more recently *The Martian*, with Chris Pratt as engineer Jim Preston, following in the footsteps of the brilliant Sam Rockwell and Matt Damon as lone men lost in space. Unfortunately, this romantic sci-fi adventure featuring two of Hollywood's biggest stars ends in disaster thanks to a creepy plot point.

When Jim's hibernation pod on the Starship Avalon malfunctions on his way to a new planet 30 years into what was supposed to be a 120-year stasis, he freaks out, but soon learns to keep himself occupied.

Watching a playful Pratt wander around his grand surroundings, playing basketball, getting drunk and conversing with a bartender android (Michael Sheen) is endearing, and he sells this part of the film with his natural charisma.



However after one year alone he's desperately depressed and in need of some company. When he comes across sleeping beauty and writer Aurora (Jennifer Lawrence), he feels a strong desire to satisfy his appetite by waking her.

To wake Aurora would be to strip her of her freedom of choice and sentence her to a lonely existence. Jim thinks long and hard about whether to make this decision by cyber-stalking her, imagining he knows this woman through her written words and filmed interviews.

From this point on it's hard to buy into a sweeping romance, and though the film does acknowledge that Jim has done a terrible thing, it fails to have the conviction to see that narrative through. Instead, it opts for an icky conclusion that sees a woman fall for a man who has robbed her of a promising future.

Jon Spaihts' screenplay touches upon interesting ideas that parallel modern world issues, but it loses its way with a fatal error of judgement. It was just a lot of unfulfilled potential.

**Katherine McLaughlin**

★★★★

**OR STAY IN AND WATCH...**



**Moon**  
Sam Rockwell stars as a man lost in space in this emotionally intelligent feature.

## THE WHITE KING

It's called fascism, look it up

**Details** 12 // 86 mins // 13 January **Directors** Alex Helfrecht, Jörg Tittel  
**Screenwriters** Alex Helfrecht, Jörg Tittel **Cast** Lorenzo Allchurch, Jonathan Pryce, Agyness Deyn, Fiona Shaw **Distributor** Signature Entertainment



**The White King,**

based on György Dragomán's novel of the same name, may be set in a dystopian

future, but it's unlike those we've grown to know over the last couple of years. The whole thing not only feels like something that could happen, but also like something that could happen very soon. On the surface the setting is idyllic, with the beautiful Hungarian countryside as the film's backdrop. But as with all dystopian futures, it soon transpires that not everything is as it seems.

There are films that do 'sinister fascist future' a lot better, but *The White King* gives the sub-genre a refreshing new angle. We see events unfold through the eyes of a young boy named Djata, who has grown up under a totalitarian state called the Homeland, and has never known anything else. Djata isn't as clued up on the state's politics as the adults around him, but he knows enough for the audience to feel corruption leaking into his innocent, 12-year-old world. It's quite upsetting to watch.

The story starts with Djata playing checkers with his father as they lounge on a riverbank, accompanied by his mother, on the gloriously sunny day. But they're being watched; high-tech CCTV cameras follow their movements from long stalks, and a monumental



statue of a man with a pitchfork stands over the valley from a hilltop in the background. A state-owned truck crashes the party, and it's not long before Djata's father is saying goodbye to his family and being taken away by government agents to places unknown.

From there, the film follows Djata's pre-teen years as he deals with bullies – both young and grown up – and attempts to find out the real reason his father has been absent for a portion of his childhood.

The cast of politically diverse and divisive characters offer a very human look at both sides of the mechanics of a dictatorship, from the people constantly being affected by it to the people making it happen. Although it's clear which side the film sympathises with, it's somehow still insightful on both ends.

**Poppy-Jay Palmer**

★★★★

**OR STAY IN AND WATCH...**



**V For Vendetta**  
A young woman gets involved with a masked vigilante set on revenge against the government.



# THE BYE BYE MAN

Put it out of your mind

**Details** 15 // 96 mins // Out now **Director** Stacy Title **Screenwriter** Jonathan Penner **Cast** Douglas Smith, Lucien Laviscount, Cressida Bonas, Carrie-Anne Moss, Doug Jones **Distributor** Entertainment Film



**The rules are** simple in Stacy Title's long-delayed chiller: don't think it, don't say it. If that sounds familiar,

there's a lot about *The Bye Bye Man* that does. The whole film feels like a mid-Noughties horror that has been found in a vault at New Line or Dimension: a tagline-friendly hook, a hooded bogeyman, ropery CGI, a clunky script and an implausibly cavernous off-campus house. We've got a soft spot for that kind of thing, but only up to a point.

Elliot (Douglas Smith) is the unfortunate student who moves into the aforementioned big old creepy place with his saintly girlfriend Sasha (Cressida Bonas) and best friend John (Lucien Laviscount) to get away from the hell of campus dorms, but when he discovers the name 'The Bye Bye Man' scratched into an old nightstand, he opens the door for an unstoppable evil.

The film kicks things off with a brutal (and self-aware) prologue before jumping into the present and straight into the usual sequence of noises in the night, slamming doors, ill-advised séances and rummaging through newspaper archives. Title works hard at creating a chilly atmosphere in the house, and the scorched-earth policy of the curse and its potential vanquishing does lead to some enjoyably horrid moments. Just not enough of them.



The sequences that work – and there *are* sequences that work really quite well – are few and far between, and the film really doesn't make the most of its villain's ability to get in your head. It's impossible not to think about the movies that *The Bye Bye Man* is aping (it can't just be Whannell's presence that made us think of James Wan) and is inferior to (*The Babadook*, *It Follows*), and the script does the cast no favours by giving them such dull characters.

To call it a disaster would be unfair, as there is some spooky, cheesy fun to be had, but the plotting is somehow both slow and rushed, the writing is poor, and the performances aren't great. We wouldn't recommend it, but aficionados of January horrors will know that we've been through much worse than this.

**Jonathan Hatfull**

★★★★★

**OR STAY IN AND WATCH...**



**Dead Silence**  
James Wan and Leigh Whannell's sophomore effort isn't great, but it's got a lot of creepy dolls



# THE TRANSFIGURATION

Bites off more than it can chew

**Details** TBC // 97 mins // 21 April **Director** Michael O'Shea **Screenwriter** Michael O'Shea **Cast** Eric Ruffin, Chloe Levine, Larry Fessenden **Distributor** Soda Pictures



**A lonely teenage** boy named Milo living in Queens, New York bonds with the physically abused

Sophie over vampires. She's a fan of *Twilight* and *True Blood*, but he'd rather be watching *Let The Right One In*. Tomas Alfredson's vampire flick is a big influence on this low-budget indie from first-time filmmaker Michael O'Shea, who explores themes of grief, despair and poverty.

Milo's obsession with vampires leads him to think he is one, and after the death of his mother he disappears into his imagination. He's a daywalker who doesn't stalk his prey, instead taking any opportune moment to feed. We first meet him sucking on the neck of a rich businessman in a toilet stall. The noises emanating from the stall suggest that he's engaged in sexual activity, and as he slips the cash out of the dead man's wallet, the suggestion of this deed is perhaps what led to his death.

O'Shea addresses assumptions about kids living in poverty-stricken neighbourhoods concerning cash, drugs and guns, with Milo biting back on the stereotypes. O'Shea also touches upon racial tension, with the relationship between a black boy and white girl turning heads.

Newcomer Eric Ruffin takes the lead role of Milo, and his performance is all blank stares and detachment. O'Shea's direction doesn't quite push Ruffin into being as convincing as he should be.

However, it's easy to buy into the relationship between Milo and Sophie thanks to Chloe Levine turning in such a confident performance. O'Shea sketches Milo and Sophie's reality as grim and unforgiving, yet he also gives them hope.

*The Transfiguration* is a film that's interested in exploring the community and economy of Queens, and in that instance this horror realism rings true, but O'Shea bites off more than he can chew by shoehorning in a few too many issues.

**Katherine McLaughlin**

★★★★★

**OR STAY IN AND WATCH...**



**Let The Right One In**  
The vampire novel adaptation that is a visceral experience.





## FILM INFO

**Released**  
Out now

**Certificate**  
12A

**Director**  
Justin Kurzel

**Screenwriters**  
Michael Lesslie, Adam Cooper, Bill Collage

**Cast**  
Michael Fassbender, Marion Cotillard, Jeremy Irons, Charlotte Rampling

**Distributor**  
20th Century Fox

**Running Time**  
115 mins



## THINGS YOU MAY OR MAY NOT KNOW

The film was shot over 90 days on location in Malta, Spain and on the 007 Stage at Pinewood Studios.

Michael Fassbender performed many of his own stunts, and even took Parkour lessons.

Renowned free runner, stuntman and gymnast Damien Walters performed a leap of faith for real by orchestrating a 125-foot free fall in the desert in Almería, Spain. It is the first time a stunt like this has been performed in 35 years.

The *Assassin's Creed* videogame series has sold over 93 million copies as of June 2015. The first game in the series that Justin Kurzel played was *Unity*.

The historical sequences set in 15th century Spain were shot in Spanish dialect to add to the authenticity, according to Kurzel.



## ASSASSIN'S CREED

**Ambitious and erratic**

**When it was** announced in 2014 that Justin Kurzel was to direct an adaptation of Ubisoft's thrilling videogame that married real history with fantasy, it suddenly became a very exciting prospect. His debut feature, *Snowtown*, which told the true story of the bodies-in-barrels murders, was stomach-churningly good. His second film was a visceral, visually daring and haunting adaption of *Macbeth* starring Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard, who also feature as the two leads in *Assassin's Creed*.

The decision for Kurzel to direct made sense. His knack for knockout violence and conjuring an atmosphere of menace are apparent, and he brings a nightmarish dread and startling beauty to the action sequences set in 1492 at the time of the Spanish Inquisition. However, the framing story, set in the modern day, suffers from an over-egged Dan Brown-style conspiracy narrative, and doesn't allow room for the more interesting aspects of the film to flourish.

A brand new character called Cal Lynch (Fassbender) leads the viewer through the modern day. We first meet him in 1986 as a young boy doing dazzling BMX bike tricks in

the dusty bowl of Baja, California. Kurzel neatly points to the safety net that is bestowed upon Cal exposing the artifice that he will experience in the Animus regression machine in the future, and his unconscious training for the all-important leap of faith.

As Cal makes his way home on his bike, stunning aerial shots of the landscape adorn the screen, but what he witnesses when he arrives there is brutal and disturbing. His mother Mary (Essie Davis) is sat upright at the kitchen table with droplets of blood delicately dangling from a necklace. She has shockingly been slain by her husband Joseph, and that image sticks with Cal.

The fine particles of this event are suggestively lit by cinematographer Adam Arkapaw (*True Detective*) to convey the grimy film of damage that coats Cal for the rest of his life. We meet Cal 30 years later on Death Row awaiting lethal injection, but he is secretly taken to the Abstergo facility, which acts as a front for the Knights Templar, who the assassins have been at war with for hundreds of years.

It's a real shame that this level of psychological enquiry regarding memory and PTSD is not further investigated, with instead a cringe-inducing and tacky sequence involving Fassbender singing Patsy Cline's 'Crazy' opted for to tackle his anguish. It's painful to watch, and is an indicator of the lack of nuance that dominates the latter half of the film.

The modern-day setting takes a steep tumble downhill, with Jeremy



Irons playing a one-note villain as the head of evil corporation Abstergo. He's also father to inquisitive scientist Sofia (Marion Cotillard).

Sofia leads the trials on Cal, placing him in the Animus to regress and become his ancestor Aguilar so she can locate the Apple of Eden, which holds the key to man's free will. Her motivations to eradicate violence provide an intriguing line of philosophical discussion, but this is never satisfactorily explored.

The contrast in energy levels between the two time periods proves to be a draining experience, with clunky one-liners severely clashing up against the excitement and fast-paced momentum of the ambitious and exhilarating roof-top parkour sequences of the past.

The stealth and style of the assassins of 1492 in comparison to the charging brigade in 2016, who drop what are supposed to be subtle clues like bombs, sadly do not elegantly fuse together.

**Katherine McLaughlin**

★★★★★

**OR STAY IN AND WATCH...**



**The Passion Of Joan of Arc**  
Based on the actual record of the trial of Joan of Arc.

# SPECTRAL

## Ghost hunters

**Details** 15 // 107 mins // 2016 // NETFLIX // **Released** Out now **Director** Nic Mathieu  
**Cast** James Badge Dale, Max Martini, Emily Mortimer **Distributor** Netflix



**Shot back in** 2015, it has taken a while for supernatural-attack thriller *Spectral* to reach the screen, with the rights shifting from Universal to Netflix during this time. It quickly becomes clear why there wasn't much confidence from the studio on this one, but look a bit closer and there's a certain charm to be found.

Setting out its stall as an Earthbound *Aliens*, the US military are brought into Moldova upon the discovery of ghostly, humanoid apparitions that possess the power to kill with a single touch. After quickly seeing most of their unit massacred, DARPA researcher Mark Clyne (James Badge Dale) and CIA officer Fran Maddison (Emily Mortimer) find themselves on the frontline of a battle for survival that threatens to embroil the rest of the world.

*Spectral* is the kind of film that's easy to make fun of for its flaws –

the soldiers charging headlong into unknown territory, continuing to fire their weapons long past the point where they're clearly ineffective – but to do so would be self-defeating. It rarely tries to reinvent the wheel, going from beginning to middle to ending with little frills and an earnest outlook all the while, and as such it remains consistent throughout. It's not especially memorable as a result, but it's hard to really dislike it.

If anything, you are left wishing director Nic Mathieu had taken more risks. With the likes of Dale and Mortimer alongside consistent heads like Bruce Greenwood, the capacity to achieve this is there, which makes it all the more disappointing come the climatic revelation. Suffice to say, you get the feeling that a more confident filmmaker could have mined this story for more thematically rich and interesting plot points.



As it is, *Spectral* is a perfectly serviceable fight-'em-up, featuring honest-to-God protagonists and an adversary to point their ludicrously oversized weapons at. When something's this earnestly delivered we'd almost feel demanding to ask anymore of it.

**Steve Wright**

★★★★★

**IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...**



**Oblivion**

Far more interesting than it was initially given credit for, Tom Cruise nails it once again.

# BLAIR WITCH

## Suicide forest

**Details** 15 // 89 mins // 2016 // DVD // **Released** 16 January  
**Director** Adam Wingard **Cast** James Allen McCune, Callie Hernandez, Brandon Scott, Valorie Curry, Corbin Reid, Wes Robinson  
**Distributor** Lionsgate Home Entertainment



**Despite receiving** mainly negative reviews upon its release, we're going to nail our colours to the mast in our support of Adam Wingard and Simon Barrett's surprise sequel to *The Blair Witch Project*.

To be honest, we can't quite work out what people's issues with it are. Sure, it abandons a lot of the original's slow-burning scares in favour of more outright shocks and a side helping of body horror, but did everyone really want the exact same film over again? Maybe they did, but that's neither here nor there. It might be slightly different in its execution, but for our money it was still one of the most outright terrifying movies of 2016.



Ultimately, the drawn-out ending and some truly stupid decisions from its lead characters that serve the story more than they do any kind of credibility to the individuals themselves mar things slightly, but not enough that you should avoid it. Do yourself a favour: if you were put off by its low Rotten Tomatoes percentage, give this a go anyway.

**Steve Wright**

★★★★★

**Must see now!**

# DOCTOR STRANGE

## Magic managed

**Details** 12 // 115 mins // 2016 // DVD // **Released** Out now  
**Director** Scott Derrickson **Cast** Benedict Cumberbatch, Rachel McAdams, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Tilda Swinton, Mads Mikkelsen, Benedict Wong  
**Distributor** Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment



**Is Marvel really** good at creating a shared cinematic space for its characters, or is it just really good in relation to DC? It's a question that can be debated on and on, but in *Doctor Strange* it can boast another solid addition to its roster.

It's a perverse beast, truth be told. Visually it's far and away one of the most breathtaking films of the decade, but peel that away and there's not a huge amount to take away from it. Benedict Cumberbatch is fine in the lead role (despite the ill-fitting American accent), and the supporting cast have varying degrees of success (Tilda Swinton and Benedict Wong stand out, while accomplished actors like

Rachel McAdams, Chiwetel Ejiofor and Mads Mikkelsen's are less fleshed-out), but beyond Marvel's trademark wit, there isn't much that's noteworthy about it.

Like *Ant-Man* before, it's decent enough on first-time viewing, but in retrospect it just seems like a combination of filler fun while at the same time introducing a future addition to the Avengers roster.

**Steve Wright**

★★★★★





# THE GIRL WITH ALL THE GIFTS

Children of the dead

Sci-Fi Now  
Must see now!

**Details** 15 // 111 mins // 2016 // **DVD** // **Released** Out now  
**Directors** Colm McCarthy **Cast** Sennia Nanua, Gemma Arterton, Paddy Considine, Glenn Close **Distributor** Warner Home Video



**A masterclass** in how to make a big studio-backed project look like

an indie production. *The Girl With All The Gifts* came out of nowhere to become one of the best films of 2016, and it loses none of its power on the small screen.

With author MR Carey on board as screenwriter, it's no surprise that this rings true to the atmosphere of the novel in its singular depiction of the monstrosity and innocence of childhood, set against the backdrop of the zombie apocalypse. You're never quite sure whether to accept Melanie (Sennia Nanua) as aggressor or victim, but ultimately not



left in any doubt that the film will keep you guessing until the very end.

Backed up by a trio of game adult leads in Gemma Arterton, Paddy Considine and Glenn Close, and you have another worthy addition the British post-apocalyptic canon. *The Girl With All The Gifts* lingers in the memory long after it's over.

**Steve Wright**

★★★★★

# UNDER THE SHADOW

Fear factor

**Details** 15 // 84 mins // 2016 // **DVD** • **NETFLIX** // **Released** Out now  
**Director** Babak Anvari **Cast** Narges Rashidi, Avin Manshadi, Bobby Naderi, Ray Haratian, Arash Marandi **Distributor** Signature Entertainment



**One of our** favourite films of last year, *Under The Shadow* plunges

its characters from one nightmare into another. It's just as well that it's now available to watch on Netflix – talk about the perfect late Christmas present.

Taking place among the nightmarish backdrop of the Iran-Iraq War, Shideh (Narges Rashidi) has just seen her medical aspirations go up in smoke, and must contend with a terrified child and a husband who has gone off to fight.

But as it turns out, these are the least of her worries. Pedalling the unspoken fears of the setting alongside the nightmarish nature of

Iran's repressive regime and the unexplained goings on, what has been achieved by director Babak Anvari here is a feat indeed.

Both for its intricately carved-together plot and welcomingly even-handed depiction of Iranian life away from the kind of portrayal that we're used to seeing, *Under The Shadow* is nothing less than a triumph.

**Steve Wright**

★★★★★



Sci-Fi Now  
Must see now!

# METROPOLIS

Another world

**Details** PG // 110 mins // 2001 // **DVD** // **Released** 13 March **Director** Rintaro **Cast** Yuka Imoto, Kei Kobayashi, Koki Okada **Distributor** Eureka



**Not to be mistaken** for Fritz Lang's expressionist 1927 classic (although this version is based on the 1949 anime

that was inspired by the original *Metropolis*), Osamu Tezuka's memorable 2001 hit is available once again on Blu-ray.

The similarities with this and Lang's masterpiece are obvious: Duke Red is a more malevolent Fredersen, Dr Laughton this world's Rotwang, the carefree Kenichi and psychotic Rock two sides of the same Frederson coin, and Tima an ersatz Maria, far more innocent and ultimately more vulnerable than her inspiration.

The setting seems more advanced too: while this *Metropolis* is also an intimidating behemoth of classic architecture and foreboding skyscrapers, this world is more like a *Nineteen Eighty-Four* prototype,

its citizens unleashing their two minutes of hate against the robot population.

The story itself is more *Akira* than cinema noir though, as Rock pursues Tima and Kenichi through the city, obsessed with preserving his fragile birthright as Metropolis's heir apparent. While he wears his heart (or what's left of it) on his sleeve, the strength of the screenplay is mainly in what's not said. Mining the anime form for possibilities, you could be forgiven for not realising they existed. Director Rintaro wields his camera with a carefree zest, constantly conscious of the scale of the setting, and never letting the viewer forget it. All the while, the New Orleans jazz-style soundtrack jarringly grounds the story in reality, if not a specific period – thus a sense of timelessness is achieved.

While this isn't as accessible as Tezuka's other works, his reverence for all life – artificial or otherwise –



Sci-Fi Now  
Must see now!



that is at the forefront of works like *Astro Boy* and *Star System* is apparent, and help keep us engaged during all the goings-on, building all the way up to the city-shattering ending.

Essentially, think of this as Fritz Lang for beginners – which is in no way a bad thing.

**Steve Wright**

★★★★★

**IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...**



**Metropolis (1927)** If you haven't seen it, you really should – an education just as much as it is an experience.

# iBOY

## Gnarly brainwaves

**Details** 15 // 90 mins // 2017 // **NETFLIX** // **Released** Out now **Director** Adam Randall  
**Cast** Bill Milner, Maisie Williams, Miranda Richardson, Rory Kinnear, Charley Palmer Rothwell **Distributor** Netflix



**When Tom's (Bill Milner)** high-school crush Lucy (Maisie Williams) is assaulted in her home, he finds himself staring down the barrel of a gun. A shameful fight-or-flight response leaves Tom in the hospital with a head injury, and it's not long before he realises that pieces of his broken phone had accidentally found themselves embedded into his brain, with no chance of removal.

It's not all bad though; after his accident, it transpires that Tom has developed the power to control technology with his mind. Not wanting Lucy's mysterious attackers to get away with it, Tom uses his newfound powers to exact revenge.

For a film about a teenage boy gaining powers from the shards

of his mobile phone, *iBoy* can be surprisingly dark. At times it feels like a cute teen romance as we watch Tom and Lucy's friendship strengthen after going through the respective traumatic experiences at the same time, but of course the traumatic events came in the form of being shot and sexually assaulted respectively.

*iBoy* has its pacing down to a T. Its three acts are knitted together with just enough action and character study to keep you near the edge of your seat.

Milner is solid as the film's lead, playing Tom with an air of 'everyday guy just trying to do what's right'. Williams, however, stands out as Lucy, a young woman and rape survivor struggling to work through her trauma and pick herself up again.



However, these positives aren't really enough to make *iBoy* feel like much more than another teen sci-fi. It's a thrill ride up to a point, but there are many films that do what it's doing better and with more heart.

**Poppy-Jay Palmer**

★★★★★

**IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...**



**The Matrix**  
 A computer hacker questions the nature of his reality when things start to go tits up.

"EXHILARATING... A VICIOUSLY ENTERTAINING RIDE"  
 SCIFINOW

# TRAIN TO BUSAN

★★★★★  
 THE GUARDIAN

★★★★★  
 EMPIRE

ON DVD & BLU-RAY  
 FEB 27<sup>TH</sup>

Available at  
**amazon.co.uk**

Free Super Saver Delivery and Unlimited One-Day Delivery with Amazon Prime are available on eligible orders. Terms and Conditions apply. See Amazon.co.uk for details. Amazon, the Amazon logo and Amazon.co.uk are registered trademarks of Amazon EU SARL or its affiliates.





# TRAIN TO BUSAN

Non-stop

**Details** 15 // 118 mins // 2016 // **DVD** // **Released** 20 February

**Director** Yeon Sang-ho **Cast** Gong Yoo, Kim Su-an, Jung Yu-mi, Ma Dong-seok **Distributor** Studiocanal


**Korean action horror** *Train To Busan* has been unstoppable,

charging into the hearts of genre fans and a lot of 'Best of 2016' lists. It's certainly a highly entertaining, moving and topical movie, and despite being a little overlong, you're definitely going to want to catch up with this.

White-collar exec Seok-Woo (Gong Yoo) agrees to take his young daughter Soo-an (the brilliant Kim Su-an) from Seoul to Busan to reconnect with her mother. Just as the train leaves the station, a zombie outbreak begins, and the passengers must fight for their lives.

Writer-director Yeon Sang-ho (*The King Of Pigs*) is best known for his animation work, but he mounts a series of



SCREEN! Must see now!

impressive and inventive action sequences while drawing excellent performances from his cast. There are genuinely affecting moments amid the carnage, and he's up front with his social message without distracting from the film's crowd-pleasing duties.

It might not be the horror film of the year, but if you're a genre fan then you can't afford to miss it.

**Jonathan Hatfull**

★★★★★

# WE GO ON

Life after death?

**Details** 15 // 90 mins // 2016 // **DVD** // **Released** Out now

**Directors** Jesse Holland, Andy Mitton **Cast** Clark Freeman, Annette O'Toole, Giovanna Zacarias, John Glover **Distributor** Shudder


**This slow-burn horror** from co-directors (and writers) Jesse Holland and Andy Mitton picked up some good buzz from genre festivals before making its UK debut on Shudder, and deservedly so.

Clark Freeman gives a compelling performance as Miles, a man scared of pretty much everything who uses a sudden windfall to offer a reward to anyone who can prove that there's life after death. Accompanied by his protective mother, Charlotte (Annette O'Toole), he meets a series of people who claim to speak to the dead, but will he find what he's looking for?

Holland and Mitton take their time developing Clark's character and his relationship

with his mother, creating a duo that's very watchable, relatable and easy to like, aided by the two excellent leading performances (O'Toole is particularly good).

We're fully invested by the time the film pulls the rug out from under us, and although the final third is slightly less sure of itself (it veers from very scary to slightly overwrought), it's a confident and affecting chiller that's worth seeking out.

**Jonathan Hatfull**

★★★★★



# JOHN CARPENTER'S VAMPIRES/GHOSTS OF MARS

Ghosts of greatness

**Details** 18 // 108/98 mins // 1998/2001 // **DVD** // **Released** Out now **Director**
**John Carpenter** **Cast** James Woods, Daniel Baldwin, Sheryl Lee, Natasha Henstridge, Ice Cube, Jason Statham **Distributor** Powerhouse Films


**Latter-period**

**John Carpenter** tends to get a bad rep, but by the time we reach *Vampires* (★★★★★) and

*Ghosts Of Mars* (★★★★★), we are only seeing flashes of greatness.

*Vampires* hit cinemas in 1998, and gave Carpenter what is, to date, his final box-office success. It feels like the filmmaker's having a lot of fun, indulging in his love of westerns with hard-bitten heroes, desert sunsets, showdowns and chases.

The first 15 minutes are a stylish delight, but things slow right down once Jack and co hit the road. The world of Vatican-sponsored monster

killers is full of great potential, but ultimately under-explored, and although it's often funny, the snarling pessimism frequently crosses into mean-spiritedness and misogyny.

*Ghosts Of Mars* is far more of a hot mess, but more entertaining for it. Natasha Henstridge's squad of Mars cops find transferring feared felon Desolation Williams (Ice Cube) from a remote mining colony hindered by all the locals having turned into possessed monsters.

There are notes of classic Carpenter, but the script is truly awful, leaving its interesting cast (Jason Statham, Clea DuVall, Pam Grier) to describe what's going on. The structure is repetitive, the



dialogue is bad, and the action set pieces completely lacking in any of the director's classic style. It's oddly watchable in spite of – or perhaps because of – all of this, a half-baked idea with weird, interesting little moments that should have stayed an *Escape From New York* sequel.

**Jonathan Hatfull**

★★★★★

**IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...**



**Prince Of Darkness**  
Carpenter's 1987 supernatural siege movie is arguably his most underrated film.

Season One

# DIRK GENTLY'S HOLISTIC DETECTIVE AGENCY

Back to square one

**Details** 15 // 700 mins // **NETFLIX** // 30 January **Creator** Max Landis  
**Cast** Samuel Barnett, Elijah Wood, Hannah Marks, Fiona Dourif, Jade Eshete  
**Distributor** BBC America/Netflix



**Adapting Douglas Adams** isn't easy, and to his credit, Max Landis takes the bull by the horns.

There's an obvious love of the source material, but the results are mixed.

Todd Brotzman (Elijah Wood) isn't living his best life when he's fired from his job as a hotel bellboy after discovering a crime scene, and he's deeply confused after catching a glimpse of his doppelganger. When a chatty British oddball named Dirk Gently (Samuel Barnett) tries to recruit him as his assistant in solving this mystery, Todd is forced to face the fact that there is more going on in the universe.

What makes Landis a good fit for this is that both he and Adams tend to be working with approximately 7 billion different ideas at any one time,

and the first few episodes work beautifully. It's an avalanche of characters, possible storylines and big performances. There's great chemistry between Wood and Barnett, although the latter isn't given the opportunity to explore the character beyond relentless bubblyness until later.

Some characters feel underwritten, but there's great work from the ensemble, particularly Hannah Marks as Todd's sister, and Neil Brown Jr and Richard Schiff as baffled cops. The clear standout is Fiona Dourif's 'holistic assassin' Bart Curlish, who goes on a brilliant journey of self-discovery with her kidnap victim (Mpho Koaho).

Plots quickly intertwine in a chaotic fashion, and while the patchiness can frustrate, it does come together in a satisfyingly odd conclusion and the emotional payoff feels earned. It's messy but fun, and we're glad that it's got a second season.

**Jonathan Hatfull**

★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



**Search Party**  
 Alia Shawkat leads this slacker mystery that we can't recommend highly enough.



# THE OA

Movement coach

**Details** 18 // 400 mins // **DVD** // Out now **Creators** Zal Batmanglij, Brit Marling  
**Cast** Brit Marling, Patrick Gibson, Phyllis Smith, Jason Isaacs, Emory Cohen, Alice Krige, Scott Wilson **Distributor** Netflix



**If you've seen** Brit Marling's previous genre work *Another Earth* and *Sound Of My Voice*, you'll have some

idea of what to expect from her latest collaboration with her co-writer and director Zal Batmanglij. *The OA* sees the duo take an ambitious step into long-format storytelling while retaining their authorial voice to create something that's bold, moving and thrilling in its confidence and sheer unpredictability.

Marling plays Prairie, who abruptly reappears after being missing for seven years. She has also inexplicably regained her sight, and calls herself The OA. Her parents (Alice Krige and Scott Wilson) bring her home, but she won't say what happened to her, until she meets a troubled teenage boy named Steve Winchell (Patrick Gibson). She convinces him to bring four others to a house in her neighbourhood, and that is where she begins to tell her incredible story.

This is very much a Marling-Batmanglij project. There's that incredible depth of feeling, beautiful cinematography and music, and that fascinating way they present an earnest lack of cynical self-awareness while wrong-footing the viewer at every turn. It can soar, and it can bring you back down to Earth with a thump. There are moments that will be divisive, but those who will love it will really love it.



SEE NOW  
 Must see now!

Divided into chapters of differing lengths, the show plays with format and structure with contagious excitement. Marling is fearlessly open one moment, and totally unreadable the next, and there's a superb ensemble cast backing him up, with great turns from Phyllis Smith, Emory Cohen and Jason Isaacs. The really striking performances, however, come from the group of younger actors. Gibson gives the stunning breakout performance, but Brandon Perea, Ian Alexander and Brendan Meyer are all excellent.

*The OA* won't be for everyone, but it's so exciting to see a show that is so bold and broad in its scope and so emotional and nimble in its writing. We hope that Batmanglij and Marling get the chance to return to this tale.

**Jonathan Hatfull**

★★★★★

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



**Sense8**  
 The Wachowskis' ambitious and fantastic series should definitely be your next stop.



Series One




**Season Two**

# THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE

Let the Reich one in

**Details** 15 // 552 mins // **amazon** // Out now **Creator** Frank Spotnitz  
**Cast** Alexa Davalos, Rupert Evans, Luke Kleintank, DJ Qualls, Joel de la Fuente, Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa, Rufus Sewell, Bella Heathcote **Distributor** Amazon



**While the first season of *The Man in the High Castle* was a worthwhile investment for those**

who didn't lose patience with the at times galactically slow pace, there was always a bit of doubt surrounding its future considering the lack of a) source material, and b) a showrunner. In spite of these hurdles, Season Two manages to be even better than what came before it.

Even if the ending of Season One was frustratingly open-ended, it offered clear storyline directions for its leads: Juliana (Alexa Davalos) is on the run after trading her safety for Joe's (Luke Kleintank), who himself embarks on a voyage of discovery in more than one way this season. All the while, Frank (Rupert Evans) continues his spiral into radicalisation after Ed (DJ Qualls) takes the fall for the shooting, with Kido (Joel de la Fuente) in his crosshairs, and Tagomi (Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa)

takes more journeys into the unknown in the wake of last season's finale revelation.

The rules of who to root for become blurred. John Smith (Rufus Sewell) is a monster, but when his family become victims of the same barbaric rules he helped implement, you can't help but feel a pang of sympathy for him. Likewise, as Frank's actions increasingly start to resemble those of his Nazi counterparts, you get an idea of how far he has fallen.

All throughout, the show expands its own mythology, offering small glimpses of the wider world while telling a decent story. It may not be the one people were expecting, but the surprises are the best part. Despite last season indicating his imminent demise, Qualls is a fresh breath of relative innocence in a world gone to hell, and Davalos continues to get the best story arcs.

Despite everything, not only is *The Man in the High Castle* still here, it's still excellent viewing. Let it continue to defy the odds.

**Steve Wright**

★★★★★

**IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...**



**11.22.63**  
 James Franco goes back in time to prevent JFK's assassination. It doesn't go to plan.



# TROLLHUNTERS

Under the bridge

**Details** PG // 598 mins // **NETFLIX** // Out now **Creator** Guillermo del Toro  
**Cast** Anton Yelchin, Charlie Saxton, Lexi Medrano, Jonathan Hyde, Kelsey Grammer, Amy Landecker, Steven Yeun **Distributor** Netflix



**It has always** been clear that Guillermo del Toro has an affinity with monsters, but less apparent whether he could showcase this in a kid-friendly setting – as great as *Pan's Labyrinth*, *Cronos* etc are, they aren't exactly suitable for all. Now we've seen *Trollhunters*, we can confirm that his range has officially been expanded.

Drawing from Del Toro's YA book series he co-penned with Daniel Krauss, it sees a boy named Jim (Anton Yelchin, adding extra poignancy in one of his last ever roles) become the first human to be assigned the mantle of 'Trollhunter', setting the scene for del Toro to showcase all the things we take away from his work: monsters with inner lives, visually stunning settings, and a complete lack of pretension in doing so.

Even more amazingly, it all works. If you were wondering what a dialled-down del Toro would look like, then the answer is something akin to the Amblin-era small towns inhabited by a quintessentially Spielberg-esque populace. Almost every character and story point will be familiar to fans of *ET*, *The Goonies* et al: the confidant best friend, Tobias (Charlie Saxton), the seemingly unattainable love interest, Claire (Lexi Medrano), the absent father figure, the overworked mother (Amy Landecker), and the school bully (Steven Yeun).



But what makes it all stand out are the added elements, like the transparently not-what-he-seems teacher (Jonathan Hyde) and the surprisingly affecting story embarked on by overlooked troll Draal (Matthew Waterson). Throw in some references that will sail way over the heads of its target audience (there's actually a gnome called 'Gnome Chompsky'), and you have something that's constantly and consistently surprising. Wherever you think it's all going, prepare to have your expectations bucked in spectacular fashion.

It stands as testament that even at 26 episodes long, *Trollhunters* never feels like it's overstaying its welcome. With a second season likely, we couldn't be more excited at the prospect.

**Steve Wright**

★★★★★

**IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...**



**Star Wars: Rebels**  
 Depicting dark subject matter for a young audience, this isn't just for fans of the saga.





Season One



# A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS

Don't look away

**Details** PG // 390 mins // **NETFLIX** // Out now **Creators** Mark Hudis, Barry Sonnenfeld **Cast** Neil Patrick Harris, Patrick Warburton, Malina Weissman, Louis Hynes, K Todd Freeman, Joan Cusack, Aasif Mandvi **Distributor** Netflix



**If you enjoyed** the *Series Of Unfortunate Events* books, Netflix's new series is a dream,

bringing to life the characters and stories in a way that the disappointing 2004 film version should be jealous of. If you're not at all familiar with them then you're still in for a brilliant treat.

The series' opening song suggests you look away to save yourself the unpleasantness that is waiting on the other side of the title card, but that's obviously the last thing you should do. Don't look away, not for a second.

Every scene in this charming and dismal series contains so much detail that it's sometimes hard to decide what you should be paying attention to. There's a lot to miss, but in this case that's a good thing seeing as most viewers are likely to want to revisit the series at least a couple more times anyway. Everything



from throwaway phrases to stunning sets and costumes obviously have been carefully considered, which elevates the show from a family adventure to thrilling, binge-worthy TV.

The cast is always a delight, with the likes of Joan Cusack, Catherine O'Hara and Alfre Woodard appearing for a couple of episodes each. The lead, Neil Patrick Harris, is both marvellous and vile as the villainous Count Olaf.

One of the biggest highlights of the series is the way the story is narrated. Patrick Warburton joins us at the start as Lemony Snicket, the man recounting the misfortunes of the Baudelaire children, explaining events in a way that is often hilarious.

Although the lives of the Baudelaire children are thoroughly depressing, the show is far from it and acts as a perfect antidote to gritty long-form stories we've become used to. Gritty can be wonderful, but sometimes you need a break.

**Poppy-Jay Palmer**

★★★★★

**IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...**



**Pushing Daisies**  
Things go wrong for a pie maker with the power to bring things back to life.

# VAN HELSING Oh hel no

**Details** 18 // 557 mins // **NETFLIX** // Out now **Creator** Neil LaBute **Cast** Kelly Overton, Jonathan Scarfe, Christopher Heyerdahl, David Cubbit, Rukiya Bernard, Trezzo Mahoro, Tim Guinee **Distributor** Netflix



**Van Helsing's premise** is intriguing: in 2019, a descendent of Bram Stoker's famed vampire hunter

Abraham Van Helsing, Vanessa, is resurrected from a coma in a post-apocalyptic world in which villainous vampires rise from their underground homes to plague the surface of Earth. Soon after, she takes on the responsibility of leading a resistance group with the hopes of reaching the bloodsucking menaces and defeating them for good.

However, the intrigue quickly ends halfway through the first episode, which does a stellar job of setting the scene and then shutting that shit right down with the arrival of an extremely boring *Walking Dead*-style group of survivors.

Over the course of 13 episodes, the series packs in a lot of plot but very little to actually care about. It takes buckets of effort just to learn the characters names. There are some you'll probably only ever know as 'the blonde one' and 'that other dick there'. It's not badly acted, but most of the character's personalities are almost identical to one another, making most exchanges pointless and tedious. 40 minutes feels like three hours in *Van Helsing* time.

Occasionally, episodes will end on chilling plot twists, but the payout isn't good enough to make up for the hours of dull survivor drama in between. Besides, plot twists don't



really have any value when you don't care about anything else that has happened beforehand.

For a sci-fi show that features a badass female lead, *Van Helsing* isn't all that progressive. It sometimes even feels regressive. Axel (Jonathan Scarfe), the unofficial boss man of the group of survivors, is quite a confusing character. He's clearly supposed to be 'one of the good ones', and yet he still makes sexist and homophobic comments. What are we supposed to take from that?

Basically, the show is a boring mess. It's not a grower either, so if you do dare to add it to your Netflix list and don't like it after the first ten minutes, you might as well turn it off and go and do something else – anything else – instead.

**Poppy-Jay Palmer**

★★★★★

**IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...**

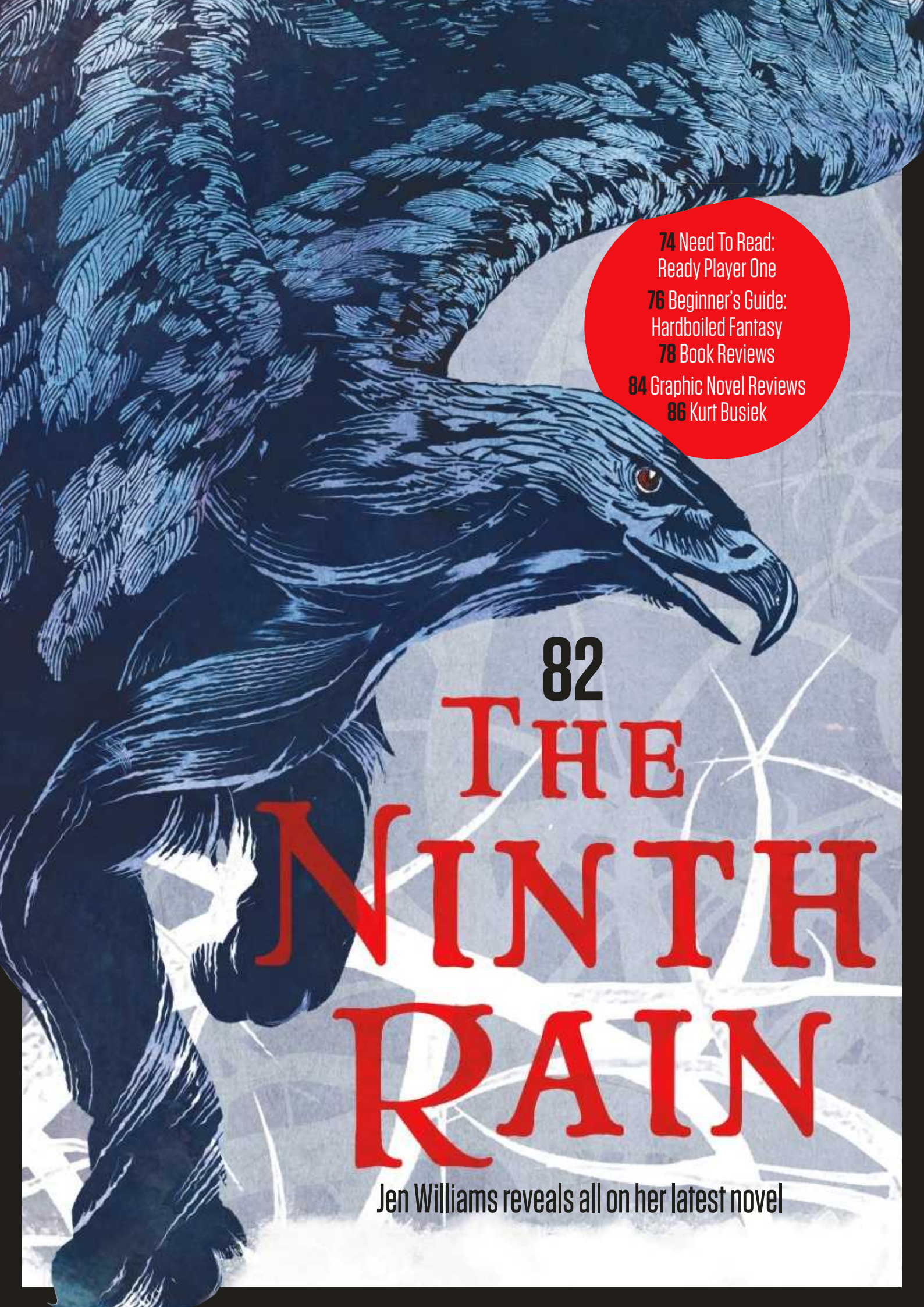


**The Walking Dead**  
With zombies instead of vampire cults, TWD and *Van Helsing* could be cousins.



Season One





- 74 Need To Read:  
Ready Player One
- 76 Beginner's Guide:  
Hardboiled Fantasy
- 78 Book Reviews
- 84 Graphic Novel Reviews
- 86 Kurt Busiek

82

# THE NINTH RAIN

Jen Williams reveals all on her latest novel





## Ready Player One

Author: Ernest Cline  
Published: 2011  
Publisher: Arrow

The year is 2044, and Earth has been devastated by war, global warming and overpopulation, leaving most living in poverty. To escape this harsh reality, many spend their every waking hour in a virtual universe called OASIS, with young Wade Watts being one such individual. One day, when he stumbles across an Easter egg left by the late founder of the world, his life changes in ways he would never have expected.



© Dan Winters

# Need to Read Ready Player One

Why Ernest Cline's debut novel deserves to be a modern classic

WORDS STEVE WRIGHT

**Classic science fiction** isn't necessarily timeless. Much as the likes of HG Wells' *The War Of The Worlds* and John Wyndham's *Day Of The Triffids* are clearly rooted in the time in which they were written due to the relative antiquity of their settings, so too will *Ready Player One* one day be outdated thanks to the litany of pop-culture references that adorn its pages.

Then again, we doubt that author Ernest Cline is too bothered by this, as his debut novel is so transparently a love letter to pop culture of the 20th century that it was always destined to inhabit its own time capsule. Born in 1972, he was five when *Star Wars* was first released in cinemas, and grew up during the evolution of videogames, from arcade time-consumers like *Pong* and *Pac-Man* all the way through to online worlds like *EverQuest* and *Warcraft* and the advent of VR.

*Star Trek*, Tolkien, *Indiana Jones*, *Gundam*, *WarGames*, Terry Brooks – these represent just a small smattering of the sci-fi staples referenced within its pages. Barely a paragraph goes by when young protagonist Wade Watts – or 'Parzival', to give him his name within OASIS, the sprawling MMORPG he spends most of his time within – isn't either encountering assorted pop culture homages or spouting them himself.

*Ready Player One* isn't just a medley of movie and TV titbits though – in essence, its storyline can be viewed as a futuristic

*Charlie And The Chocolate Factory*. The overcrowded, spoilt Earth that Wade lives in is a tough reality. But while Charlie Bucket at least had his kindly relatives, Wade only has his abusive aunt and her thuggish boyfriend for company. It's little wonder that he chooses to escape into OASIS to get away from this nightmarish reality.

But even here, he's fighting against the odds. A tech whiz and pop culture oracle, you still need money to thrive in this world, which he has little of. In the meantime he's happy to spend time with

TV. First off, it's the sheer volume of cult celluloid that Wade consumes that makes it possible for him to participate – remember, when you're caught watching *The Holy Grail* for the 100th time, it's research. Take that, mum.

Secondly, although Wade is smart, he's no superman. He only gets to where he is because of the help of his friends. As the story demonstrates, he's far from infallible. Like the rest of us, he gets stuck, he gets distracted, and he loses his way. The important thing is that he finds it again despite encountering some

“BEYOND ITS ENCHANTING SHEEN, READY PLAYER ONE CAN BE ENJOYED ON SO MANY LEVELS”

his virtual friends: cohort Aech, object of his affections Art3mis, and fellow gunters Daito and Shoto.

What are gunters, we hear you asking? They are the names given to those hunting for the Easter Egg – *Ready Player One*'s Golden Ticket – left within the game by its late founder, James Halliday, with the finder being gifted control over OASIS. With the quest having been ongoing for five years by the time the story begins, interest in it has waned – until Wade locates the first clue.

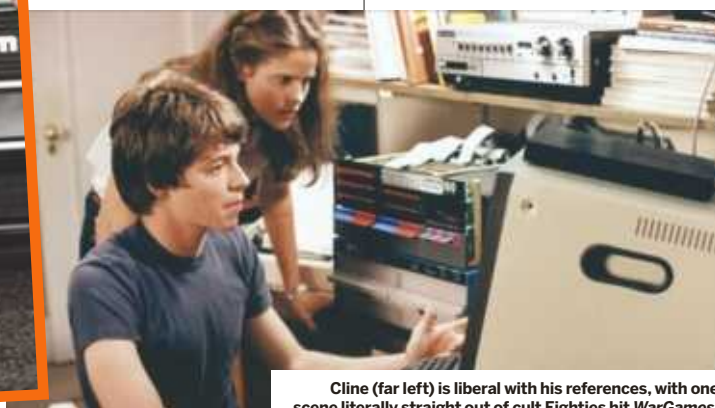
Putting aside how compulsive it is, the story provides hope to any geeks out there who might be worried that their family are right when they tell them that they're wasting their life away watching

seriously dark places – an important message in these times.

Finally, although it's the limitless possibilities of technology that provide the entire foundation for the story, its application serves as the further basis for a cautionary tale of sorts – or encouragement. While we are warned against living our lives through another ultimately unreal world, at the same time OASIS represents a place where people can discover their true selves. Ironically, as we discover when Wade and co meet each in other in real life for the first time, they aren't so different after all.

Beyond its enchanting sheen, *Ready Player One* can be enjoyed on so many levels. Either you'll be counting the references and locked into its enrapturing race-against-time narrative – complete with evil corporations – or you'll be pondering the many parables it encompasses. The ideas of online identity, anonymity and more are sprinkled throughout – there if you want to find them, anonymous if you don't.

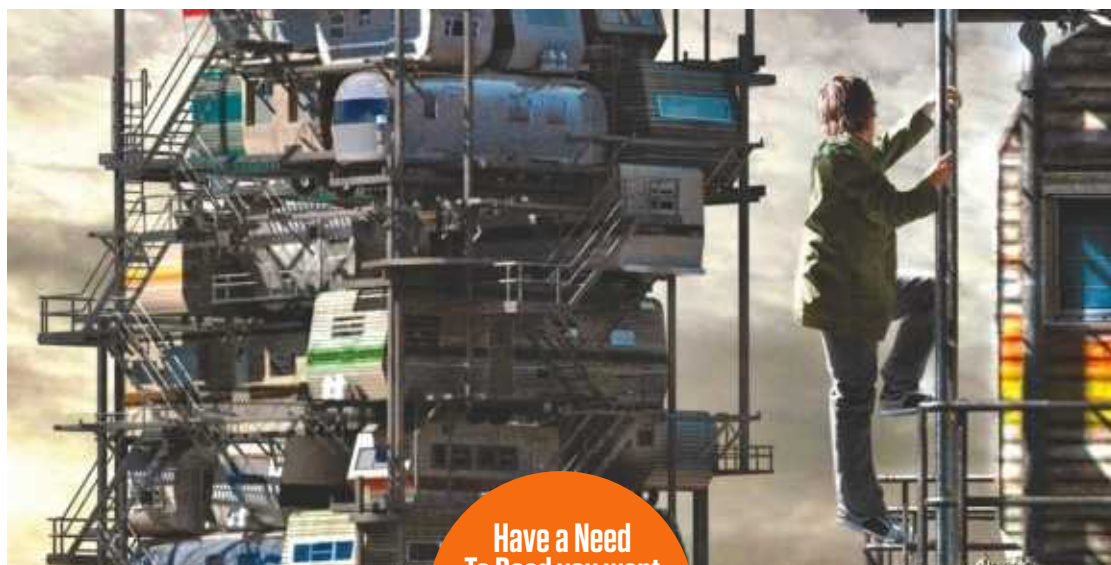
So in other words, make sure you pick up *Ready Player One*, the most relevant novel of the 21st century to date.



Cline (far left) is liberal with his references, with one scene literally straight out of cult Eighties hit *WarGames*.

*Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline is available to buy now, published by Arrow.





Have a Need  
To Read you want  
us to tackle?

Let us know on Twitter or Facebook  
#NeedToRead #BookClub



The history of videogames is encompassed, from *Donkey Kong* all the way through to *EverQuest* (right) and VR (below).



Tye Sheridan will play Wade 'Parzival' Watts in Steven Spielberg's film adaptation.

© Cage Skidmore



© Rob Boudon

© Maurizio Pesce

## Continue?

Once you respawn, try these for size

### Armada (2015)



Cline's second novel doesn't quite hit the heights of *Ready Player One*, but it's fun enough.

Showing a young boy being hand-picked to help defend Earth from an alien menace that are suspiciously similar to those seen in a popular videogame. It keeps you guessing right until the end.

### Seveneves (2015)



While *Snow Crash* is Neal Stephenson's best novel, we're recommending this one, in part

because Cline does. Like in *Ready Player One*, the world is in dire straits following the unexplained destruction of the Moon, but unlike in the former, mankind actually decides to do something about it.

### Neuromancer (1984)



An obvious choice, perhaps, but it was an inspiration for Cline, and it shows. The sheer level of prescience

on display from author William Gibson – who wrote this up on an old typewriter – remains astonishing on every level.

### Scott Pilgrim (2004)



The neon-bright, Sega-homaging Edgar Wright film adaptation is a fair reflection of the source material,

which is just as beholden to videogames of yore as *Ready Player One* is to everything else. In fact, it's probably essential that you have some knowledge of gaming to be able to enjoy this one.

### Heroes Die (1998)



Matthew Stover's novel is an interesting one, presenting a post-apocalyptic Earth in which

actors are sent into a recently discovered parallel universe called Otherworld to serve as entertainment. It's just as bizarre as it sounds, and all the better for it.

Which sub-genre  
do you want us to  
tackle next?

Let us know on Twitter  
or Facebook #BookClub



## Hardboiled fantasy tropes



### Noir hero

You can't have a hardboiled fantasy without at least channelling a bit of Humphrey Bogart. We're talking about being late on rent, but keeping just enough money aside for booze, and always in need of one good job. A couple of good friends but more bad ones, dumb enough to get in trouble, smart enough to survive it.



### Dry sense of humour

The world our hardboiled heroes move through is usually pretty grim or downbeat, and it would be a struggle to get through even they weren't always ready with a biting one-liner. This will often come through in the 'ain't life grand' narration, or in a snarling retort that earns them a punch in the face.



### Big cities

There are obviously exceptions, but for the most part, hardboiled fantasy will take place in an urban metropolis. London, New York, Johannesburg – anywhere a good murky mystery can be set.

## A Beginner's Guide To

# Hardboiled fantasy

Bringing the noir heroes and labyrinthine plots of classic Thirties and Forties pulp novels kicking and screaming into genre, here's where to start with hardboiled fantasy

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

**E**verybody loves a hardboiled hero: perpetually at the end of their rope, in need of a stiff drink, a good night's sleep and a decent pay cheque, and one step away from either solving an impossible case or getting a bullet in their back. The world is against them, but the truly great ones will know how to get through the complex maze of lies, deceit and general skulduggery. In hardboiled fantasy, mobsters, damsels in distress and Hollywood powerplays become vampires, demons and the possible end of the world.

We're living in a bit of a golden age for hardboiled noir fantasy, but if we're being completely honest, we've been living there for some time now. For decades, authors have been blending the gritty roughness, dry humour and bleak worldview of classic detective fiction with supernatural elements, and putting their own unique spin on it.

Isaac Asimov's *The Caves Of Steel* may not be the first example of the genre, but the combination of detective genre tropes and sci-fi

setting is generally credited with setting the template, while authors like Jim Butcher and Laurell K Hamilton found huge success with their supernatural series centred on hard-bitten heroes.

Some fit very neatly into the classic mould, like Richard Kadrey's *Sandman Slim* series, which follows an escapee from Hell as he navigates the equally tricky world of LA, or Mike Carey's *Felix Castor* novels, in which the long-suffering

exorcist tries to earn a crust while being pulled into ever more deadly battles between the forces of darkness. It's a surprisingly elastic sub-genre, however, allowing authors like Lauren Beukes and China Miéville to stretch the tropes into weirder settings like *Zoo City* and *The City And The City*. You can see echoes of Sam Spade and Philip Marlowe in Adam Sternbergh's *Shovel Ready*, Richard K Morgan's *Altered Carbon* and Jeff VanderMeer's *Finch*.

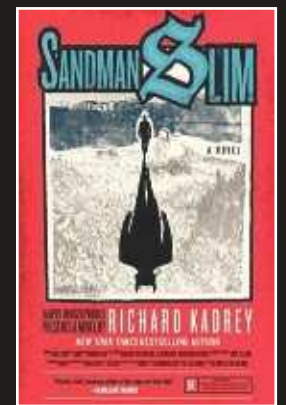
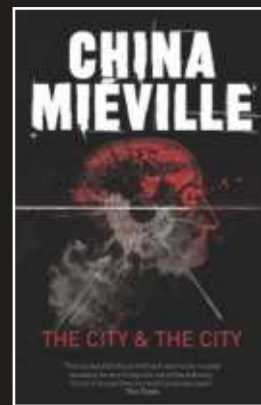
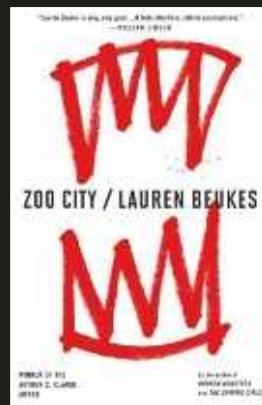
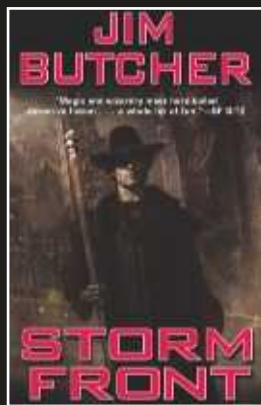
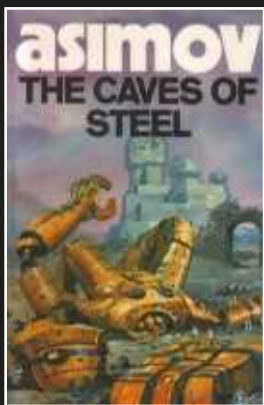


Joss Whedon channelled hardboiled fantasy in *Buffy* spin-off, *Angel*.





Life is grim for hardboiled fantasy heroes, like Harry in *Angel Heart*.



## Buddy cops

Robo-bigotry in space

**THE CAVES OF STEEL**  
Author: Isaac Asimov  
Publisher: HarperCollins  
Published: 1954  
Price: £8.99  
Credited as the first major work of hardboiled genre fiction, Asimov's first robot novel pairs a human detective with a 'humaniform' robot to investigate a murder. With tension between human spacers and robots at breaking point, Elijah Bailey and R Daneel Olivaw must see through the lies and the politics to uncover the rotten truth at the heart of this mystery. Asimov would go on to use the duo over again, and while it's not exactly noir, there's more than a whiff of pulp detective fiction in it.

“Stone cold sci-fi detective classic. The Radio 4 adaptation was also superb and is due a repeat... #BookClub” @SciFiPlayer

## Magic detective

Wizard/investigator

**STORM FRONT**  
Author: Jim Butcher  
Publisher: Orbit  
Published: 2000  
Price: £8.99  
Jim Butcher's long-running *Dresden Files* began with this 2000 mystery, which pitches listed-in-the-phonebook professional wizard Harry Dresden into a heap of trouble involving magicians, vampires, cops and the mob that begins as a missing person case. The duster-wearing private investigator has appeared in 15 novels and various shorts, comics and a TV series. Along with Laurell K Hamilton's Anita Blake, he remains one of the most popular supernatural detectives.

“Absolutely FANTASTIC! I love the Dresden Files! #BookClub” @LizMarshall

## Jo-burg magic

Popstars and animalling

**ZOO CITY**  
Author: Lauren Beukes  
Publisher: Mulholland Books  
Published: 2010  
Price: £7.99  
Beukes' second novel – after 2008's *Moxyland* – follows Zinzi, an ex-journalist who now makes a living finding things and people, and who is hired to track down the sister half of a famous brother-and-sister pop double act. So far, so detective noir. However, this is in an alternate Johannesburg where criminals are supernaturally attached to animals, known as 'animalling'. Beukes' brilliant blend of genres is just one of the reasons why we love *Zoo City*.

“Zoo City was fascinating and obviously written by someone who understood what it is to live in a divided society. #BookClub” @GeekChocolate

## Forbidden zones

Genres without borders

**THE CITY AND THE CITY**  
Author: China Miéville  
Publisher: Pan  
Published: 2009  
Price: £8.99  
Miéville has always been drawn to the world of urban fantasy, creating sprawling metropolises filled with strange and wonderful things in his Bas-lag books. *The City And The City* is slightly more straightforward. It's set in an Eastern European city that shares the same geographical space as its twin, but is divided by a mysterious zone with rigid rules. A murder takes a detective across the border and into the midst of a mystery beyond his comprehension.

“I thought it was fascinating, but he could write a shopping list and I'd love it. #BookClub” @TheCorvidArcher

## City of angels

From hell to Hollywood

**SANDMAN SLIM**  
Author: Richard Kadrey  
Publisher: Harper Voyager  
Published: 2009  
Price: £9.99  
Richard Kadrey's *Sandman Slim* series is fantastically entertaining, with a brilliantly pissed-off hardboiled hero at its centre. James Stark is a dead magician who escapes Hell with some improved healing abilities and a newfound gift for ass-kicking after fighting as a gladiator in the pit. He quickly finds work as an investigator, hired muscle, and even the devil's bodyguard at one point, while navigating the sordid, seedy mess of Hollywood.

“Finally got round to reading *Sandman Slim* – only problem is I have run out of *Sandman Slim* and want more!! #BookClub” @sfbook

## Your Top 5 Space exploration

CHOOSE YOUR TOP FIVE  
@SCIFINOW ON TWITTER



### 1. Gateway

"Maybe Gateway by Frederik Pohl? That's the one that sticks in my mind for making space seem bleakest/scariest! #BookClub" @cjlines



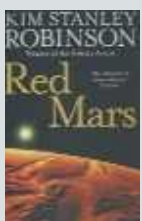
### 2. Voyage

"Stephen Baxter's Voyage. Testament to humanity's ingenuity as well its ability for self-sabotage, but still hopeful. #BookClub" @beckygracelea



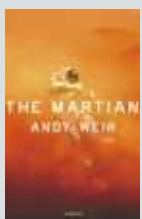
### 3. 2001

"It always comes back around to Arthur C. Clarke. Several of his books focused on this, but 2001 was the most profound. #BookClub" @ParsonsFiction



### 4. Mars Trilogy

"The Mars trilogy by Kim Stanley Robinson. @Hayley Elise



### 5. The Martian

"I like how Mark Watney has to overcome all the obstacles of Mars alone and has good humour throughout. #BookClub"

@PasmineJalmer

**Details** Author: Jaroslav Kalfar Publisher: Sceptre Price: £16.99 Released: 16 March

# SPACEMAN OF BOHEMIA

## Lost (and found) in space

**A man being** propelled into the unknown is forced to confront himself in Jaroslav Kalfar's incredible debut novel. *Spaceman Of Bohemia* blends personal and political history with sci-fi elements to create something that feels both epic and grounded. It's witty, it's strange, it's moving and it's very, very difficult to put down.

The story begins in 2018, with Czech astronaut Jakub Prochazka hurtling through the Earth's atmosphere into space to retrieve samples from a mysterious new gas cloud. Alone for weeks, Jakub remembers when his world was turned upside down by the Velvet Revolution, as his Communist informer/torturer father died in an accident shortly

before he was due to stand trial.

Growing up with his grandparents, Jakub struggles to come to terms with his inherited guilt.

His time in space is made even more complicated when his wife, Lenka, decides to cut off contact, at which point a presence in his spaceship makes its presence known: a curious alien creature, who may or may not be there.

Despite its frequently fantastic scope and sci-fi elements, it's remarkable how grounded *Spaceman Of Bohemia* feels, from the farmhouse, where his grandfather butchers animals and combats the locals' increasingly brazen

attempts to drive them out, to the cramped confines of the JanHus1, which seems to have more creature comforts than future-tech (Nutella is beautifully important).

Jakub is very good company. He's morose, with good reason, but there's a deadpan sense of humour that roots the bigger moments and helps to prevent the emotionally heavier flashback from becoming overly grim. His interactions with his possibly imaginary, hazelnut-loving alien companion are very funny, and increasingly affecting as the bond between them grows.

In fact, Kalfar achieves an impressive balancing act all through the novel, particularly in the more self-reflective moments, as Jakub remembers the shock of his parents' death and the raging blend of emotions that came with being confronted with what his father did for a living. One of the novel's most memorable characters is a man who was tortured by Jakub's father and has come to make life difficult for his remaining family members, but who admits to not knowing exactly what he wants out of them.

These ideas that events must logically follow each other, that the crimes of the previous generation are inherited and must somehow be paid off, are examined thoughtfully and with great sensitivity. How much does Jakub owe his place in the stars to the fact that he spent his life working desperately hard to claim a different place in the world to the one his father left him with? And was going the right decision in the first place? Did he have the right to leave Lenka behind and expect everything to stay just as it was?

Painting its intimate character study on a large canvas, Kalfar takes us into the past, into the cosmos, but tells a human story that is powerful, funny and surprising. We urge you to read it.

**Jonathan Hatfull**

★★★★★



### IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

**A Man Lies Dreaming**  
Lavie Tidhar  
Hitler's working as a bitter PI in a Nazi-run London in this fierce, audacious alternate history.







**Details** Authors: Kim Stanley Robinson Publisher: Orbit Price: £22.79 Released: 14 March

# NEW YORK 2140

## The Submerged Apple

**Good stories about** New York always have a certain grandeur about them, and the best elevate the narrative and characters to the mythical heights of its subject.

In *New York 2140*, Kim Stanley Robinson's latest vision of the future, the Big Apple has been submerged by waves of catastrophic climate change, heralding a new world order and a transformed way of living.

## "ROBINSON SEAMLESSLY BINDS TOGETHER CHARACTERS AND NARRATIVE STRANDS"

One thing that hasn't changed, though, is politics and human nature, so as we jump between the various viewpoints of the many different characters in Robinson's big, big story, we see that despite history trying its absolute worst to teach us a lesson, it may not be enough to better us or change the way we conduct ourselves.

A highlight of *New York 2140* is the way Robinson seamlessly binds together a large number of characters and narrative strands, lending each one a distinct and immediately recognisable voice, vocabulary and rhythm, which makes for an immensely enjoyable reading experience. The character gallery is vividly varied, fittingly bringing together people, names, mannerisms and cultural references from across the globe. In addition, the prose itself frequently soars, especially when

Robinson lets loose in first-person, raving and ranting about the city, its history, vision, future, pros and cons, giving it a true 'New York' personality.

However, the future vision projected throughout the story, while certainly serving to illustrate humanity's notorious lack of willingness to change, largely fails to awe. Apart from the increased levels of seawater, it never feels like we're looking at a world more than 20 years from now, let alone 120. But it's a small, insignificant flaw in what is frequently a Grand, Very New York story.

**Erlingur Einarsson**

★★★★★

### IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

**Leaves Of Grass**  
**Walt Whitman**  
Whitman's presence is felt in *New York 2140*, and his poetry collection celebrates NY like nothing before or since.



## YOUR READS

### What you lot have been reading this month



"Just finished @FantasticBeasts screenplay, better than cursed child. Now reading George Lucas: A Life by @brianjayjones, excellent. #BookClub" @indianamulder



"Reading Night School, the new Jack Reacher. Love a flashback story if it means more Neagley! Next up, new @davidjmoody #BookClub" @GaryRenton2



"Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children by Ransom Riggs, pretty good so far! #BookClub" @BeardedWhovian



"Foundation series!! Loving it, after 30 years it's as good as I remember!! #BookClub" @RichardDeakin1



"I'm in the middle of The Princess Diarist. What a legend. #BookClub" @LegoHannibal



"Just finished the second Expanse book, Caliban's War – really great and need to get the next one from the library now! #BookClub" @strickers79



"I just finished Madd Adam by Margaret Atwood. Absolutely brilliant book. Was tearing up by the end. #BookClub" @Pussinabox



"Currently reading Lair by James Herbert, not for the faint-hearted! #BookClub" @philbooty

Tell us what you're reading on Twitter or Facebook

**Details** Author: Tim Lebbon Publisher: Titan Price: £7.99 Released: 21 March

# RELICS

## Diamond in the rough

**Tim Lebbon writes** about loss and strange goings-on with a perceptive eye and great relish in the first book of a new trilogy about a freelance relic hunter.

Set in London in the present day, Lebbon uses the concrete landscape, disused buildings and underground tunnels as the backdrop to navigate how brutal and anonymous living in the big city can be. But with his main characters, Lebbon builds a warmer mood as he navigates the lengths some will go to in the name of devotion.

Angela and Vince are in a loving relationship. She spends her days at home studying criminal behaviour and writing her doctorate, occasionally meeting with her best friend Lucy for lunch, and casually messaging Vince throughout the day. When he doesn't return

home after work, Angela begins an exhaustive search to find him, only to discover he has been keeping huge secrets.

The way Lebbon writes about the fear of losing a loved one and the uncertainty of how well you know the person you are sleeping next to keeps you reading, as does the strength of the characterisation. Angela is shaded in so thoroughly that you can almost feel her pain at Vince's deceit, yet she is also hopeful that he will be able to explain the things she uncovers.

The fantastic blend of reality and fantasy, violence and affection and a strong sense of place ensures that *Relics* remains exciting without being too fanciful.

**Katherine McLaughlin**

★★★★★



### IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

**A Madness Of Angels**  
**Kate Griffin**  
The first book in the Matthew Swift series of novels by Kate Griffin, set in a magical London.



**60 SECONDS WITH**



## CASSANDRA KHAW

**How would you describe the Rupert Wong stories to a newcomer?**

Gory, I guess, would be the very first word I'd use. *The Rupert Wong* series is about a technically immortal ex-Triad member who doesn't know when to keep his mouth shut, despite the fact that he lives in a world fetid with omnipotent beings. He suffers for it.

Also, the *Rupert Wong* stories are equal parts food porn and gore – lots of gore.

**The new book takes Rupert to London. Was that always something you had in mind?** Not actually, no. My day job causes me to travel a lot, and over the last six years or so I've been pretty much everywhere. Whenever I find myself living somewhere for an extended period of time, my work starts cohering around the specific location. South London just so happened to be where I found myself and consequently, Rupert. And at the time, my first thought was, "Poseidon needs to own a chippy in Croydon."

**Hammers On Bone is a bit of a genre mash-up. Is that how these stories come to you?**

My default is horror. When I set out to be a writer, I'd expected to be an urban fantasist or someone who engaged in second-world fantasies a lot. As it turns out, I write horror all the time. Sometimes it's subtle, sometimes it's not.

With *Hammers On Bone*, it began with me going, "I wonder if I can write a hardboiled detective story!" I went down a few paragraphs, delighted with myself, and bamf! The tentacles showed up.

*Rupert Wong And The Ends Of The Earth* is available from 17 February, published by Abbadon Books.



**Details** Author: Jen Williams Publisher: Headline Price: £14.99 Released: 23 February

## THE NINTH RAIN Williams reigns

**Kickstarting a new trilogy.** Jen Williams' *The Ninth Rain* finds us in a place ravaged by war and fearful of potential conflict on the horizon.

Ebora, a city long since left to decay by the world around it, used to be a fearsome stronghold, and some conspire to see it succeed once more. In the midst of it all are Vintage, a lady explorer; Tormalin, a hard-drinking Eboran in exile; and Noon, a runaway witch, who are initially questing for ancient artefacts, but instead find themselves caught up in something bigger.

Williams trusts the reader to keep up with the political landscape of her world, whether it's in the decaying city of Ebora or the dank corridors of the Winnowry, dropping enough detail without straying into reams of exposition. The underlying mythology of the world is cleverly woven into the

plot with a real weight to it, not only in the artefacts that Vintage hunts down, but in the legends told and memories of characters.

These individuals populating Williams' landscape are similarly well-formed, each with their own scars and varying levels of optimism. Vintage, Tormalin and Noon are the kind of entertaining misfits you can't help but take to your heart. One of its strengths is the way their dynamic develops organically throughout the narrative. Vintage is a particular highlight; she's inquisitive and fiercely loyal, and has a wicked sense of humour.

*The Ninth Rain* is a fast-paced and vibrant fantasy romp through a new world, full of people you want to spend time with and enemies you'd happily run from. It's an exciting start to the *Winnowing Flame* trilogy, and certainly worth your time.

**Becky Lea**

★★★★★

**SciFiNow Must read now!**



**IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...**

**The Folly Of The World**  
**Jesse Bullington**  
A conman, a thug, and a half-feral girl set off in search of sunken treasure. What could go wrong?

**Details** Author: Katie Khan Publisher: Doubleday Price: £12.99 Released: Out Now

## HOLD BACK THE STARS Nothing on Earth could tear them apart

**Carys and Max** live in a world where love is banned. Daring to defy their society, they fall in love under the watchful eye of Europa. But when they become stranded in space with only 90 minutes of air left, what truths

will they discover about themselves and their world?

A debut novel from Katie Khan, this story is an unique take on the usual dystopic fictions littering the shelves. At first glance the world seems idyllic, with each member of society contributing in the name of themselves, not government nor religion.

Every three years, each citizen of Europa rotates to a new country to discourage romantic relationships and continue to better themselves to become the ideal citizen. Only when they have established themselves as productive society members are the allowed to seek a partner and have children.

Max is complete in his devotion to the system, and unwavering in his belief that he is part of a utopia – that is, until he falls in love. Carys demonstrates how love can change the most vigorous perspective, and the progression of the story shows us

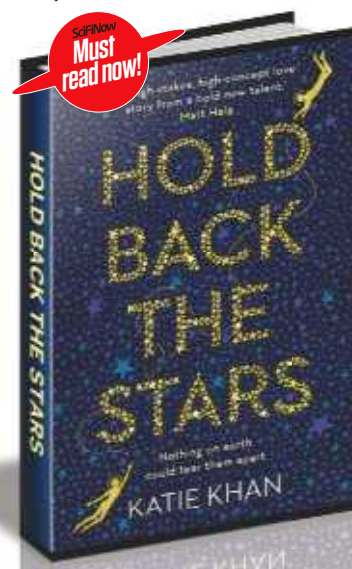
the tragic consequences when society dictates who you can love and when.

The chapters fly between their current perils to flashbacks of how their relationship began. It creates a great pace, and there is a real sense of intimacy in the slower moments when we know what is to come.

When the couple are facing the prospect of death, the conversations and arguments they have seem very real. Neither of them always say the right thing, they don't handle the situation with grace and dignity, and they become desperate. They are undeniably human, with human emotions, and that is part of what makes this book a worthy read, which will keep you up past bed time.

**Amy Martin**

★★★★★



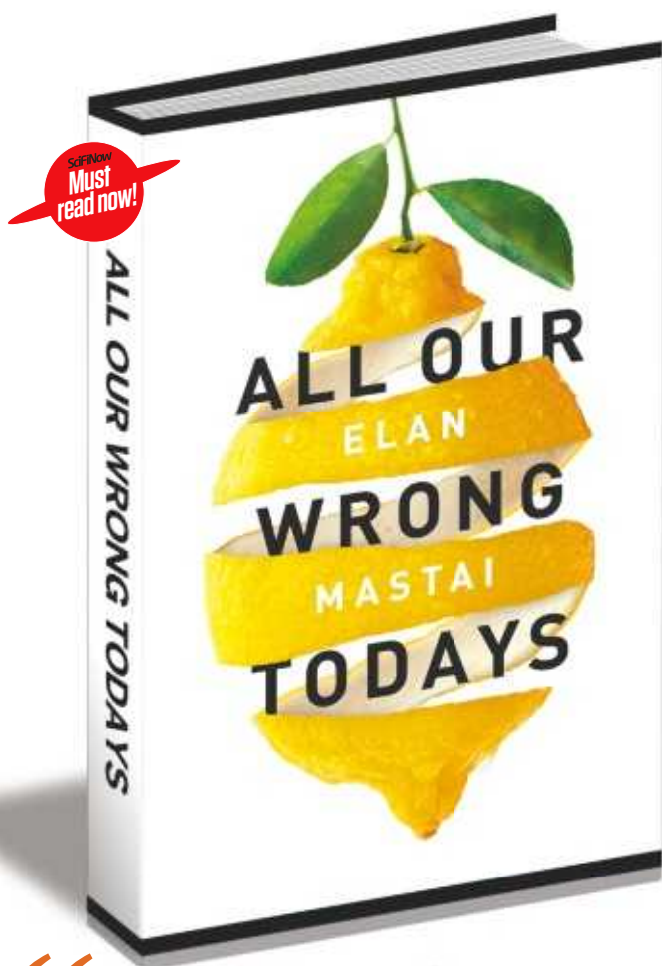
**SciFiNow Must read now!**



**IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...**

**The Fault In Our Stars**  
**John Green**  
Two young cancer patients struggle to find a place to fit in, caught between life and death.





**Details** Author: Elan Mastai Publisher: Michael Joseph  
Price: £14.99 Released: Out now

## ALL OUR WRONG TODAYS

**Back to the future we should've had**

**We were supposed** to have jet packs by 1966. And flying cars, and medical scanners, and food synthesisers, and all the rest of that stuff from Sixties sci-fi. It wasn't meant to be fiction. It should have been real. So why isn't it? Because Tom Barren climbed into a time machine and messed everything up.

*All Our Wrong Todays* sees Tom stranded in a version of 2016 he barely recognises. Following an accident in his timeline, he ignores protocol and travels back to the moment when a famous scientist (in his reality, anyway) switches on the experimental machine that changes the world.

The Goettreider Engine supplies clean, endless energy that powers a world of plenty, and also generates a special kind of radiation that makes time travel possible. Thanks to Tom, though, the experiment never happened, and therefore – well, the 2016 we just lived through.

It's all very clever, but it's also not really the point. Because as well as being an intelligent sci-fi story, it's also

a love story, and kind of a monomyth, and also just an incredibly relatable, insightful story about being in your 30s, feeling like you haven't achieved anything, and figuring out what's next.

The chapters are short, and the prose compulsively readable, so it's one of those books that deserves to be called unputdownable – in an entirely positive way. Being easy to read doesn't mean something was easy to write, after all, and *All Our Wrong Todays* is elaborately constructed and incredibly emotionally intelligent; it's a story with super high stakes that genuinely makes you feel every part of Tom's awful predicament.

This is Elan Mastai's first novel, but let's hope we're living in the timeline where it's not his last.

**Sarah Dobbs**

★★★★★



**IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...**

**Girlfriend In A Coma**  
**Douglas Coupland**  
A Smiths-inspired story about the end of the world, and a girl who never wanted to be awake for it.

“AS WELL AS BEING AN INTELLIGENT SCI-FI STORY, IT'S ALSO A LOVE STORY, AND KIND OF A MONOMYTH”

**Details** Author: China Miéville Publisher: Picador Price: £14.99 Released: 23 February

## THE LAST DAYS OF NEW PARIS

**Manifest resistance**

**Paris is not** as we know it in China Miéville's alternate history/fantasy mash-up, a celebration of the vital power of art and a fascinating SF tale all at once.

In 1950, Surrealist survivor Thibaut fights for his life among the Nazis, the roaming 'manifs' conjured from the imagination of Surrealist artists and the demons that the Nazis summoned from hell to combat them. Meanwhile, in 1941, an American scientist is about to uncover the means for a world-changing event.

From the opening image of a woman riding Leonora Carrington's 'The Amateur Of Velocipedes' away from Nazi troops on Parisian streets, Miéville conjures a fascinating cityscape filled with the impossible

creations of the Surrealists, made beautiful, terrifying and unknowable by simply existing.

The pulpy thrills of Nazis trying to corral demons and the *Casablanca*-esque manoeuvring of spies, agents and atheist resistance fighters are beautifully blended with an affecting emotional sincerity.

Miéville's fascination is contagious, and we would have happily spent much longer than 200 pages in this strange Paris.

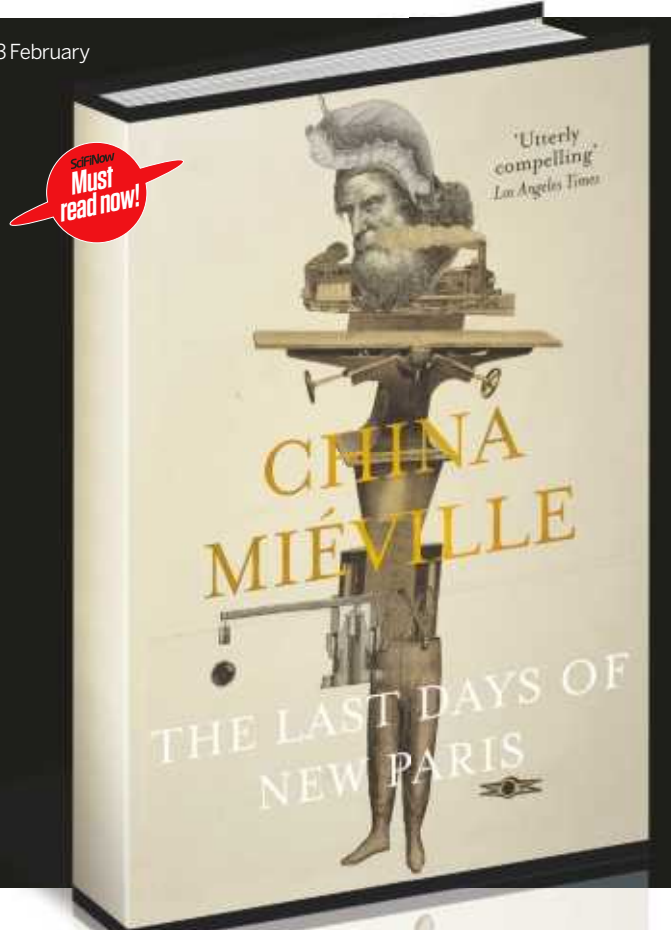
**Jonathan Hatfull**

★★★★★



**IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...**

**The House Of Shattered Wings**  
**Aliette De Bodard**  
Fallen angels vie for supremacy in a monster-ridden Paris in de Bodard's superb urban fantasy.





# The Eve Of Destruction

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

We talk to Jen Williams about following up her acclaimed Copper Cat trilogy and stepping into a world full of witches, monsters and menace

Jen Williams' Copper Cat trilogy was an absolute joy, an action-packed fantasy adventure with unforgettable characters, pirates and dragons. Now, the author is tackling a different world with her latest novel, *The Ninth Rain*.

The once mighty Eboran race is dying out, poisoned by their blood-drinking habits and abandoned by the mighty tree god that helped them to repel each successive invasion by the monstrous Jure'lia. Pleasure-seeking Eboran Tormalin decides to abandon the kingdom and go out into the world, where Lady Vincenza 'Vintage' De Grazon gives him a job as a bodyguard. She's determined to study the remains of the Jure'lian monsters and find a reason for the ever-expanding darkness in the country, and with the help of Noon, a young witch on the run from her jailers, they'll realise that these old monsters aren't as dead as they think.

We spoke to the author about jumping into a new trilogy, Studio Ghibli, witches and flying bats...

**When did you start thinking about the Winoing Flame trilogy?**

I started thinking about the new trilogy about halfway through writing *The Iron Ghost*. The second Copper Cat book was the hardest book I'd written up until that point, and as usual when I'm struggling with something, other projects started to look very attractive. Luckily, I behaved myself and finished the book I was supposed to be writing, but that was the point where I started making notes in a separate notebook.

I knew at the time that I wanted to write about witches and an ancient city that had been abandoned, but probably not much more than that. I do love writing fantasy, particularly fantasy

with lots of characters and lots of history, and that does tend to lend itself to more than one book!

**Which element of this new series came to you first?**

It's always the characters with me. I always want to have a group who the readers can really connect with and get behind, so I initially spend a lot of time working out what the group dynamic will be, and how these people will get on with each other (or not, as the case may be). Tormalin was the first to make a fully formed appearance, followed closely by Vintage. I knew I wanted to have a scholar in the group early on, but I couldn't get a fix on them until I saw her as an older woman with a crossbow at her hip. Once I had that image in my head, Vintage's voice was very clear.

**What is the process of putting together a trio of characters like?**

The relationships between characters, and how those relationships change, are always the touchstones of a book for me. I knew straight away that Tormalin was overly confident, vain and quite sarcastic, and when Vintage came along I knew immediately that she obviously wouldn't put up with his nonsense. Their relationship has an interesting dynamic, because technically Tor is much, much older, but Vintage is, no pun intended, much more mature. Noon, the young witch who escapes from the Winoingry at the beginning of *The Ninth Rain*, is volatile, uncertain of herself and dangerous in a number of ways. Vintage sees someone who needs a bit of looking after, but Noon's relationship with Tormalin is much more antagonistic.

**When did you know that characters would be riding around on giant bats?**

Sometimes I do things for very shallow reasons, and very early on in the planning process I had an image of a young woman riding on the back of a giant bat. I just found it visually so pleasing that I decided to include it somewhere, and as the Winoingry formed in my head, it made sense that their sinister agents should have such a striking mode of transport.

**Was it difficult leaving the world of Copper Cat behind?**

It was certainly difficult to let Wydrin, Frith and Sebastian go, but I had always been very keen to give them their welcome and end up becoming shadows of their former selves make me sad – and with *The Silver Tide*, I felt like I'd brought their stories to a close in a way that made me happy. There's always a chance I'll return to the world of Ede, but I suspect it would be to explore the stories of new characters.

**Were there any specific influences on this new trilogy? There's definitely a hint of Studio Ghibli's films...**

Their films are certainly a big influence, both consciously and unconsciously. *Princess Mononoke*, with its strange wild gods and giant animals, definitely has its fingerprints on the Winoingry trilogy. The way Robin Hobb handles her world-building in the *Liveship Traders* books was something I thought about a lot – I love how the history of her world is an active force her characters' lives.

*The Ninth Rain* by Jen Williams will be available to buy on 23 February.



## The Best Witch

Jen Williams tells us why Nanny Ogg is the greatest

"Nanny Ogg, always. It's a close thing, because I love Terry Pratchett's *Witches* novels, and Granny Weatherwax is easily a hero of mine, but Nanny Ogg practically feels like a relative – although of course I wouldn't want to be one of her put-upon daughters-in-law. Wydrin Threefellows, the central hero of the Copper Cat novels, has more than a touch of Gytha Ogg in her DNA, particularly the young, hell-raising Gytha Ogg. What a legend."







“TECHNICALLY TOR  
IS MUCH, MUCH  
OLDER, BUT VINTAGE  
IS, NO PUN INTENDED,  
MUCH MORE MATURE”



**Details** Writer: Brian Michael Bendis **Artists:** David Marquez, Justin Ponsor  
**Publisher:** Marvel **Price:** £11.89 **Released:** 15 February

# CIVIL WAR II

## Round two

Marvel's first *Civil War* crossover was proof that superhero comics don't always need solely comprise bashing and smashing – although some is still perfectly fine. Crafting a conflict that gave that 'with great power comes great accountability' quote real weight, it remains one of its best storylines in recent years.

*Civil War II* attempts to replicate this formula, although instead the source of conflict is a recently powered-up Inhuman called Ulysses, who can predict and project the future, allowing the Avengers to pre-emptively deal with the threats he foreshadows, much to the misgivings of Iron Man. When his pal War Machine is killed during one mission, he breaks ranks finally, positioning himself across the divide against Captain Marvel – which becomes even more blurry when the apparently innocent likes of Bruce Banner and Miles Morales are implicated in Ulysses' visions.

Initially, the *Minority Report*-esque premise is an intriguing one – given the chance to stop crime even taking place, many people would take it up – although how would you feel if you were the one being hunted as a consequence? Both sides present their disputes well initially, with equal weight being assigned to veterans Captain America, Black Panther and Hawkeye alongside newbies like Nova and Kamala Khan. In light of their recent MCU appearances, Doctor Strange and the Guardians of the Galaxy have prominent roles too.

However, the further the story progresses, the more quickly it runs into narrative dead ends. A number of big names are bumped off to give the story weight, which works on the story investment front, but Iron Man and Captain Marvel's arguments just go round and round in circles, and the reason for all the subsequent battles increasingly nonsensical. While the original *Civil War*'s battles were organic in their build-up and unforgettable in their execution, it all feels less thought-out here, trademark Bendis quips aside.

Then there's the ending. The final issue has to rank as one of the most lacklustre in comic-book history – especially as it has all the makings of

something truly memorable, with the two protagonists scrapping on the steps of Washington. But instead, we bear witness to something so rushed and nonsensical that it makes you question exactly what the point of everything before it was. Moreover, the closing revelation makes even less sense. If nothing else, Marvel's line-wide crossover events have always been adept at establishing the new status quo, but here we're genuinely hard-pressed to ascertain exactly what the new world order is, or why.

If the final three issues could have matched the wit and wonder of the first five then we would be recommending this highly. As it turns out, all of Bendis's on-point writing can't disguise what looks like a remarkably ill thought-out story. Aside from the various deaths and incapacitations (which, let's face it, will be retconned at some point in the near future), it's hard to see what the legacy of *Civil War II* will be.

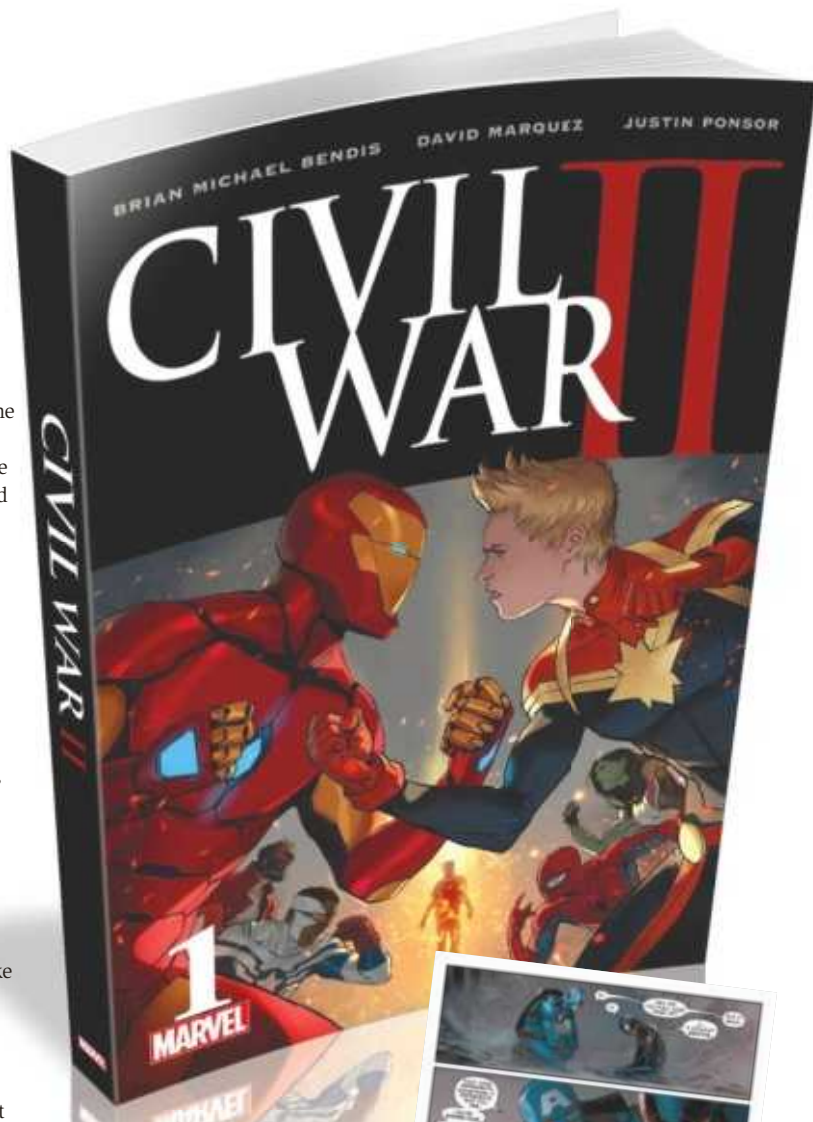
**Steve Wright**

★★★★★



### IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

**Infinity Gauntlet**  
**Jim Starlin, George Perez, Ron Lim**  
 Earth's finest heroes band together to take on Thanos.







**Details** Writer: Frédéric Brrémaud Artist: Federico Bertolucci  
Publisher: Magnetic Press Price: £15.99 Released: Out now

## LOVE: THE DINOSAUR

Life, uh... finds a way

The fourth volume of the French bandes dessinée series steps outside the world of contemporary wildlife by some several million years.

The primordial swamps of the Cretaceous Period provide the setting for the dramas and dilemmas of a small dinosaur trying to make it through the

day, as those around him eat or are eaten in the lavishly painted pages. Entirely wordless, this is a masterclass in the storytelling power of sequential art, and a uniquely accessible comic for all readers. Panel transitions are seamless, with the small dino providing a welcome linking thread throughout.

Gore is kept to a minimum, making it friendly for younger dinosaur fans, and Bertolucci infuses genuine natural behaviour with Disney-esque expression and reactions.

This does lack the emotional punch of previous instalments, but at the very least, this is a beautiful work of art, and is sure to please the most nitpicky of dinosaur aficionados.

**Laura Sneddon**

★★★★★



**Details** Writer: Rick Remender Artists: Jerome Opeña, Matt Hollingsworth Publisher: Image Price: £8.99 Released: 21 February

## SEVEN TO ETERNITY

Old school pulp fiction

Image Comics has long dominated sci-fi and fantasy, and a new series from the same writing desk as the incredible *Black Science* and *Deadly Class* came with a sense of hype.

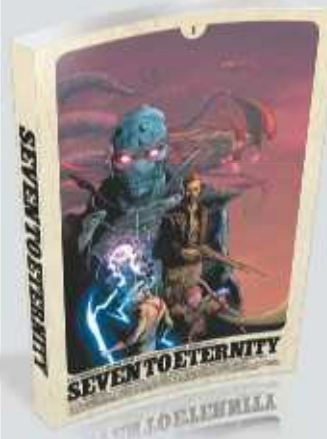
Alas, this doesn't hit the same dizzy heights as those

long-running comics. Even so, *Seven To Eternity* does hold great potential, not least due to the pulp-style art and colouring. Based heavily in the themes of family, redemption and the unseemly reality of weighty moral decisions, Jerome Opeña lets his imagination fly loose, conjuring up all manner of beast and background for the kingdom of Zhal.

Adam Osidis travels from exile to the seat of power in order to save his family when fate catches up with his father, and Rick Remender dances between past and present to weave a larger tale. Adam's own daughter is perhaps the most intriguing character introduced, but is frustratingly underused.

**Laura Sneddon**

★★★★★



**Details** Writer: Rob Davis Artist: Rob Davis Publisher: SelfMadeHero  
Price: £12.99 Released: Out now

## THE CAN OPENER'S DAUGHTER

Welcome to the woodland

The British Comic Award-winning and Eisner Award-nominated *The Motherless Oven* landed in 2014 to great acclaim.

This, then, is the sequel to that surreal and unique dark tale, a world in which parents don't make children; children make parents. Scarper Lee's father is wind-powered with a sail, his mother is a Bakelite hair dryer, and Scarper knows his upcoming deathday – only his is in three weeks, and on that adventure he asks, "Who the hell is Vera Pike?"

Vera Pike is the Can Opener's Daughter, and this is her story. Daughter too of the Weather Clock, the omnipotent, ruthless and megalomaniacal Prime Minister of Chance, Vera is sent to St Sylvia's School of Bleak Prospects and Suicide, where classmates know little of her true importance. Meanwhile, she hunts for Scarper with his friend Castro Smith, determined to outlive their deathdays, and desperately trying to convince her father that her unhinged mother must be stopped.

Rendered in monochrome, Davis weaves his new tale around the skeleton of the last, picking up on class differences and to modern day politics. There is great detail here, hidden on almost every page that ensures a second read is quite inevitable.



While much of this landscape is set up in the first graphic novel, Davis has ensured the second is easily read as a standalone, no doubt enticing new readers to furrow backwards once hooked on the macabre goings on. He takes the trope of young troubled teenager twice over as they struggle to understand their place in the world, and places those narratives in a world that is upside down and back to front, making for a compelling work that will stay in the reader's memory.

**Laura Sneddon**

★★★★★



**IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...**

**Through The Woods**  
Emily Carroll

Ramp up the horror with this spine-tingling collection from the master of macabre.







**BOOK CLUB**

Interview

**“SHE’S A HERO ON PAR  
WITH SUPERMAN,  
AND SHE’S  
UNAPOLOGETICALLY  
FEMALE”**

WORDS LAURA SNEDDON

**The Marvels author on his love  
for DC’s Amazonian Warrior**

# Kurt Busiek’s Legend Of Wonder Woman





In his fourth decade of comics work spanning the greatest of superheroes, his own award-winning *Astro City*, and his latest hit *Autumnlands*, we sat down with prolific writer Kurt Busiek to discuss one of his favourite heroes – Wonder Woman.

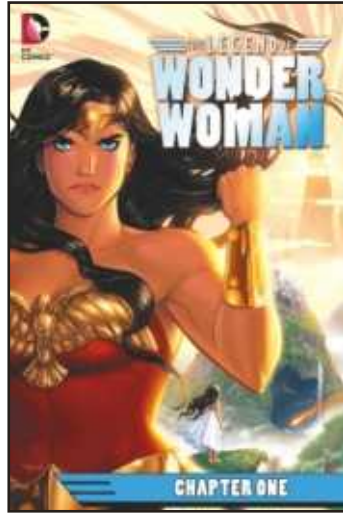
*The Legend Of Wonder Woman*, a recently resurrected fan favourite by Renae de Liz, was first published back in 1986, co-written by Busiek with the legendary underground artist Trina Robbins – a real return to her original feminist roots. It has skipped over chapters in Diana's history... until now!

### What originally attracted you to write on Wonder Woman?

I think the surface appeal of Wonder Woman is the mythological setting – it's the easy context that makes her clearly different from Superman, who's all about sci-fi, or Batman, who's a crime character. She's a hero of myth, drawing on the Greco-Roman pantheon, and as a big fan of mythology, that was very appealing to me.

My first *Wonder Woman* job was a fill-in that Irv Novick drew, I was trying to sell DC a plot – I'd pitched a story where Wonder Woman had to travel into the Legion's time, and we got to see what Paradise Island was like, but I wasn't allowed to use the Legion, so I reworked it to guest-star a Green Lantern of the future, and when I was told I couldn't use a Green Lantern either, I ended up doing a story of WW travelling to the future.

After that, I worked on another fill-in with Richard [Howell], so we got to build a story around things we both liked about the character – Richard focusing on Wonder Woman as a role model and friend to Etta Candy, and me trying to bring some of the grandeur of Kirby's Thor to WW's mythic underpinnings. That story didn't get finished, but since it guest-starred



Superman, we were able to rework it and make it a *Superman* fill-in guest-starring Wonder Woman years later.

When I got to write *The Legend Of Wonder Woman*, with Trina Robbins doing the art, we had some room to flesh out a story. Since Trina was a fan of Fifties WW, we used a couple of villains she liked from that era, and I brought in a rotten little girl named Susie so Wonder Woman would have someone to inspire, to change her life, so we could deal not only with fantasy-adventure, but also Wonder Woman as an inspiring figure for girls, which was her original purpose.

A huge part of her appeal, for me, is that she's not a science-based superhero, but a classic mythic hero like Hercules or Theseus, so that whole larger world of myth is around her. But she's a woman, in a context in which women were more often jealous gods, angry sorceresses or dalliances for Zeus, and here she gets to be the hero. And not only the hero, but an inspiring hero with a message for others – "Every woman can be a wonder woman" was the slogan back in Marston's era. So

she's to some degree like Superman, Captain America and Thor all rolled into one. Where the early Marvel heroines tended to obsess about romance and shopping, and feel faint whenever they used their powers, Wonder Woman didn't take any crap. She was both unapologetically a hero who could handle things herself, and also unapologetically a female hero, who had something to say about what women's roles could be.

She's an important character to me – particularly since there's a lot to her history that's been forgotten that would be cool in a modern context; weird fantasy worlds of butterfly empresses, ice-people, exotic kingdoms, genie pals and mer-boy playmates.

### Why do you think she is so important in both comics and pop culture?

Her influence and stature waxes and wanes – she hit like dynamite in the 'Rosie the Riveter' era, when women were stepping out of the kitchen and doing what had previously been 'men's work', then becomes a character more about exotic settings and faraway lands when the war ends. In the Sixties, her series becomes about building a legend, what with Wonder Girl and Wonder Tot.

Then as women's liberation becomes a rising social issue, that powers her as well, both in the Mike Sekowsky run that takes away her superhero trappings to tell stories about a woman who's a hero, and then as a symbol for *Ms Magazine*, putting the superhero trapping in front of the social movement. The TV show in 1975 brought a new generation of fans to the character, and when that faded she was back to being a straightforward superhero until the George Perez run kicked the mythology into overdrive.

I think what makes her important to pop culture is those two core ideas – she's a hero on par with Superman, and she's unapologetically female – that makes her a vessel that can hold whatever hopes, dreams, struggle and crisis are going on. When there's powerful social dynamics, she embodies them.

For instance, it's not a surprise that the Wonder Woman of the upcoming movies has a sword, instead of just the lasso. In today's social context, she isn't content to merely stand shoulder to shoulder with men – she's more dangerous, direct and viscerally combative. That's a reflection of the world today, and I expect she'll continue to reflect it.

## The Kurt Busiek Collection

### The best of the writer

#### Astro City: Life In The Big City (1995) Kurt Busiek, Brent Anderson, Alex Ross

The first volume of the epic superhero anthology series, originally published by Image Comics and completely removed from all previously known superhero worlds.



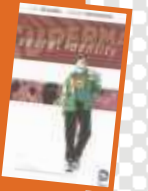
#### Marvels (1994) Kurt Busiek, Alex Ross

A view of the Marvel universe through the camera lens of the man on the street with beautifully painted pages from Ross, whose art continues to impress and be unlike anything else in the graphic novel market.



#### Superman: Secret Identity (2004) Kurt Busiek, Stuart Immonen

Growing up with the name Clark Kent is a bummer with everyone's Superman jibes, but Kent's life changes for real when he wakes up with his powers.



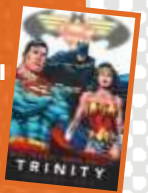
#### The Autumnlands: Tooth And Claw (2015) Kurt Busiek, Ben Dewey, Jordie Bellaire

A high-fantasy epic meshing magic with hints of science fiction, lavish painted chapter introductions and a wonderfully imaginative cast.



#### Trinity (2008) Kurt Busiek, Fabian Nicieza, Mark Bagley et al

DC's three greatest heroes come together to defeat an evil plot, with many other well-known faces popping up along the way.

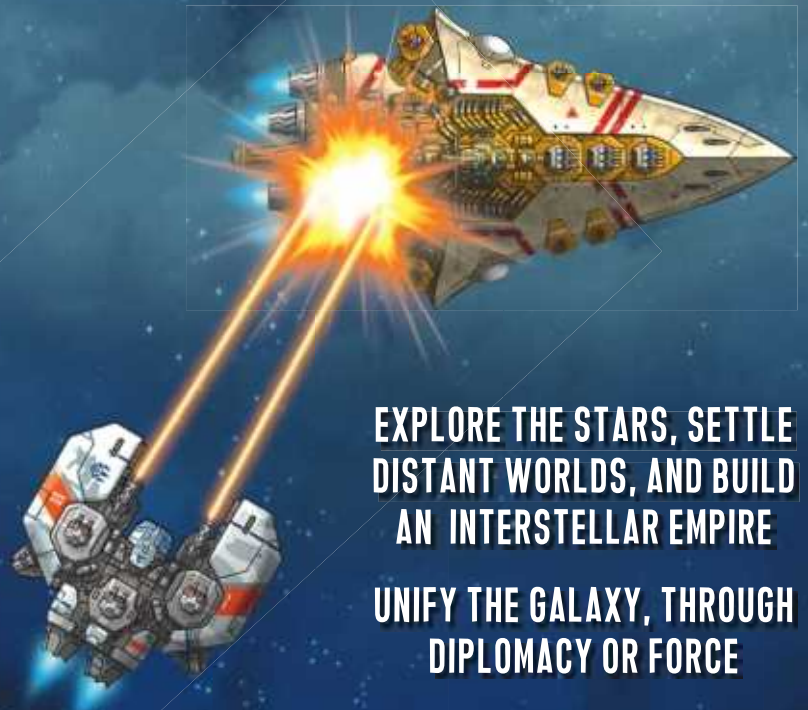




*"An indie game truly  
for the 4Xer to revel in"*  
90 - GAMEWATCHER

A VIVID TRIBUTE TO THE 4X CLASSICS

# STARS IN SHADOW



EXPLORE THE STARS, SETTLE  
DISTANT WORLDS, AND BUILD  
AN INTERSTELLAR EMPIRE

UNIFY THE GALAXY, THROUGH  
DIPLOMACY OR FORCE

BUY NOW ON



Use this QR Code to go  
directly to the webpage



STEAMWORKS



ICEBERG  
INTERACTIVE

Stars in Shadow © 2016 Ashdar Games INC. Developed by Ashdar Games INC. Licensed exclusively to and published worldwide by Iceberg Interactive. Iceberg Interactive design and mark are registered trademarks of Iceberg Interactive B.V. Microsoft®, Windows® and DirectX® are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. All other brands, product names, and logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. All rights reserved. Made in Canada.



*Hammer Horror Seconds Superman The Beyond*

MARCH 1974

£1.50

SciFiNow

THE PREMIER SCI-FI, FANTASY,  
HORROR & CULT TV MAGAZINE

# TimeWarp



TM

100% PURE  
SCI-FI  
ENTERTAINMENT

COMPLETE GUIDE

# THE EXORCIST

THE POWER OF CHRIST COMPELS  
YOU TO READ ON 90

© Poster Posse/Andrew Swainson

A SCIFINOW  
MONTHLY

"ONE OF THE BEST  
MONSTER MOVIES  
EVER MADE"

JOHN LANDIS







# THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE EXORCIST

ONE OF THE STRANGEST HORROR FILM FRANCHISES OF ALL TIME, THE EXORCIST HAS SPAWNED FOUR TROUBLED SEQUELS, A TELEVISION SERIES AND MYRIAD CREEPY CLONES, AS SCIFINOW DISCOVERS...

WORDS CALUM WADDELL

**Ask anyone to name the best horror film of all time, and there's a good chance that William Friedkin's 1973 shocker *The Exorcist* will be mentioned. Released to censorship battles, outrage, Oscar nominations and critical acclaim and disdain, it fast cemented itself as a modern legend, with stories of audiences fainting – and reports of church attendance increasing – greeting its cinematic debut.**

How much of *The Exorcist* was ballyhoo became a topic of discussion, with recently deceased author William Peter Blatty, a dedicated Catholic, spearheading the blossoming box-office takings by affirming that yes, it was really based on a true story. Meanwhile, young star Linda Blair became a household name, and in the UK, campaigner Mary Whitehouse – who admitted to never having seen the movie – succeeded in having it banned from a number of the nation's cinemas.

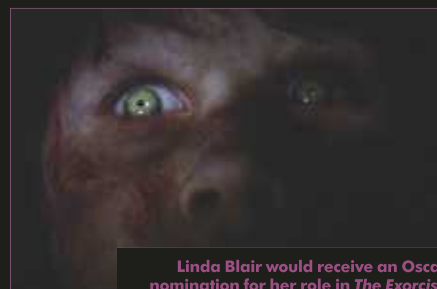
Following in the footsteps of *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) and *Straw Dogs* (1971), both of which caused film censors to gain grey hairs overnight, *The Exorcist* seemed to indicate that the Seventies was going to be, at least cinematically, a transgressive and troubled decade. Yet, away from the hype, *The Exorcist* is actually a remarkably conservative film. Squarely aimed at those who believe the 'power of God' can overcome all evil, there is an argument to be made that the movie is, in effect, a two-hour advertisement for American exceptionalism in the period of Watergate and the Vietnam War.

After all, it tells the story of a famous, divorced actress (played by Ellen Burstyn)

whose life is turned upside down by the demonic possession of her young daughter, Regan MacNeil (Blair). When science and rational thought fails her, it is that 'hokey' old institution of the Church – the very conservative ideology fast being disregarded by liberalism in the post-Beatles generation – that eventually comes to the rescue. Somewhere in the mix of Blair self-abusing with a crucifix, spouting obscenities and spinning her head around, this ever-so-important factor seems to have been totally disregarded by both outraged onlookers and fascinated horror-hounds.

"Yeah, I have heard from atheists that *The Exorcist* just doesn't work for them," admits Mark Kermode, arguably the film's most well-known enthusiast. "My editor at *Time Out* always tells me that he thinks Linda Blair is more interesting when she becomes possessed, and that it is just a boring American family before that happens – so I have heard that argument too."

Other fans of the film, however, argue that beholden to the Gospel or otherwise, what makes *The Exorcist* work so well is its skilled direction and sense of growing malevolence and mystery.



Linda Blair would receive an Oscar nomination for her role in *The Exorcist*.

"I think it is one of the best monster movies ever made," enthuses *An American Werewolf In London* director John Landis. "In fact, the Catholic Church should have paid Bill Friedkin for that movie. I went to see that film, and I am a total and complete non-believer. I grew up in a liberal, Jewish household, and I'm certainly not someone who thinks Satan exists, but while I watched *The Exorcist* it scared the shit out of me. I totally blocked all of that theological thought, and when Max von Sydow is going, 'The power of Christ compels you' I was thinking, 'Yeah, come on Christ, get that fucker out of her!' Now *that* is a good horror picture – I like that movie a lot – and believe me, that is hard to do: to take something preposterous, at least for some of us, and make it work."

At least one other 'Master of Horror' agrees. "When I was really young, I saw *The Exorcist*, and I remember thinking, 'Wow, what the fuck is this?'" laughs Eli Roth, who went on to produce his own homage in *The Last Exorcism* (2010). "So I asked my dad, and he said, 'Oh, you don't have to worry son, we're Jewish, so we don't believe in any of that.' I was like, 'Well, I just saw it happen to Linda Blair, so I sure as hell believe in it.' So *The Exorcist* really freaked me out, and the idea of possession terrifies to me this day – you know, the idea that something can take over your body is really fucked up, regardless of what your religion is."

Certainly, at least some of what everyone can probably agree upon is that *The Exorcist* has some truly spine-tingling moments of the modern macabre. From the nightmarish premonitions of troubled priest Father Karras (played by Jason Miller) to the painful medical ➤



Effects artist Dick Smith created numerous iconic images for *The Exorcist*.

## "I SAW THAT PART AS A DOCUMENTARY – IT REALLY CAPTURED SOME OF THAT CLASSIC BABYLONIAN FEEL"

BUD SMITH

➤ tests forced upon poor Regan, Friedkin's crowning bout of Christian-carnage has plenty of shocking and sublime set pieces. With this said, arguably the movie's most mesmerising moments are in its opening prologue, shot in Iraq. It is in this sequence that audiences are introduced to Max von Sydow and his Father Merrin character, as well as a haunting image of the ancient Middle Eastern demon Pazuzu.

"Friedkin was up against a strict deadline on that movie, and he asked me to come in and do some work," states Oscar winner Bud Smith, who is one of the many editors credited on the final film. "I remember that he wanted me to see what had already been cut together. Well, to me, there was a lot of padding – a lot of sightseeing around Washington, and then there was this little girl and her mother, and I said, 'Bill, you really don't need all of that stuff? It isn't important.' But the opening was what excited me the most. I started working on the prologue, asked him to leave me alone, and I cut it together. I saw that part as a documentary

– it really captured some of that classic Babylonian feel, and it felt unlike anything else in the movie."

Smith, who would go on to work with Friedkin on numerous other projects, also fondly remembers being present when the very first screenings of the finished fear-film were being offered to studio executives at Warner Bros. "Only five executives were permitted to see the film, and they actually had a guard at the door to stop anyone from coming in or looking through any holes," mentions the editor. "Friedkin had total freedom to make that movie. Warner just had total faith in leaving Bill alone, because he had made *The French Connection*, which was a massive hit. So we ran the film, and there was no music yet – no *Tubular Bells* – and they were all just stunned. I will never forget, two of the five people said, 'We should never let this go out to the theatres; it is so disgusting and offensive that it will give us a bad name.' Thankfully, the other three people disagreed."

Released to enormous box-office receipts, *The Exorcist* became not just the biggest grossing movie of 1973; it set the standard for future examples of splatter cinema as well. With groundbreaking special effects by Oscar-winner Dick Smith – considered the godfather of contemporary make-up wizardry – Friedkin's frightener pushed the boundaries of what was permissible, not to mention possible, on the big screen.

Attesting to the plasma-packed power of *The Exorcist*, the film would remain banned on UK



Oscar-winning thespian Ellen Burstyn would add some motherly charm.



home video until 1999 where – as seemingly timeless as ever – it became one of the year's best-selling DVDs. One year later, in 2000, Friedkin put together a new director's cut of the film – including the chilling 'spider-walk' sequence, where Regan – manifested as a blood-drooling human-insect – crawls down the stairs of her mother's house. It is arguably one of *The Exorcist*'s greatest spook-scenes, and one that should have made it into the original cut (a glaring cable made it, sadly, impossible to edit into the movie in the pre-CGI age). Back in 1973, however, the initially skeptical studio suits at Warner Bros had just one question: 'How soon could they unleash a sequel?'

The answer was revealed in 1977 with *The Exorcist II: The Heretic*, directed by John Boorman, who had previously helmed his



Blair returned for *The Exorcist II*, but the flop sequel hindered her career.

# THE EXORCIST: FILM BY FILM



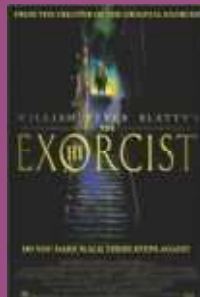
## THE EXORCIST (William Friedkin, 1973)

The horror genre was turned upside down by the success of this legendary spine-tingler in the early Seventies, which finds Linda Blair's Regan MacNeil haunted and possessed by an ancient demonic spirit. After sundry painful-looking medical experiments, the luckless teenager succumbs to a lengthy exorcism – which, depending on your point of view, is either a garish thrill-ride of guts and gore or a serious theological undertaking. Putting all controversy aside, *The Exorcist* has stood the test as one of the best horror movies of all time, and remains the ultimate must-see.



## THE EXORCIST II: THE HERETIC (John Boorman, 1977)

The problem with ultra-bore *The Exorcist II* is highlighted the minute Blair walks onto the screen. Not only has she grown into a photogenic young adult (making her turn into 'creepiness' unconvincing), but she is clearly lost among a wealth of misdirection. Expected to carry the weight of this expensive-looking sequel, she is far out of her league – and, as an imposing James Earl Jones gets some good screen time as an African chieftain, everything else here stinks, in particular Richard Burton as a priest sent to find out what really happened in Georgetown in 1973.



## THE EXORCIST III: LEGION (William Peter Blatty, 1990)

There are two schools of thought on this one, the first being that audiences and critics of the time unfairly overlooked this unheralded gem of a horror movie, and the second that ultimately it is almost as disjointed as its predecessor. Count us in the latter camp. Indeed, rehasing *The Exorcist* as a sort-of slasher film is a strange decision, and leading man George C Scott looks positively unenthused by the story he is expected to engage with. In addition, a tacked-on final exorcism fails to recapture any of the bile and blood of the 1973 movie.



## EXORCIST: THE BEGINNING (Renny Harlin, 2004)

Harlin has long been a favourite of fear fans thanks to his roots in such horror romps as *Prison* (1987) and *A Nightmare On Elm Street Part 4: The Dream Master* (1988). However, his tongue-in-cheek style was probably not an ideal fit for an *Exorcist* film, and as such, *The Beginning* is a difficult proposition to take seriously. The end result, which offers at least some scenic North African locations, is a certified disaster, although it is probably the most outright entertaining *Exorcist* sequel of them – just not in the way intended.



## DOMINION: PREQUEL TO THE EXORCIST (Paul Schrader, 2005)

Take your pick – either Harlin's special effects-heavy prequel, which serves up some gross-out gore and a few moments of likeable lunacy, or this long, boring drama-in-the-desert, wherein a possessed young boy provides the key to some spiritual existentialism. Boring beyond words, Schrader's movie certainly looks good, but it once again proves the difficulties in making a po-faced treatise about Christian dogma in the modern age. Maybe we should just admit that a prequel is a bad idea!

# COMPLETE GUIDE

## THE EXORCIST



As fiery as the effects were, the sequels were a mixed bunch.

own controversial big studio blockbuster with *Deliverance* (1972). Largely seen as one of the feeblest follow-ups ever conceived, *The Exorcist II* – which enjoyed a troubled production process, with Boorman reportedly refusing to ‘deliver the goods’ – is not just gore-less, but largely pointless.

Despite focusing on the post-exorcism trauma of Regan (a returning Blair), the film removes itself from the family drama of the original (Ellen Burstyn refused to reprise her role). Instead, we get flashbacks to an earlier mission from Max von Sydow’s globe-trotting priest, this time in an unnamed African country, where a possessed child unleashes a horde of locusts. How this connects to Blair’s troubled teenager is never really explained (Richard Burton, playing an equally confused priest, concludes that the Pazuzu demon was active in other continents), and the final film features none of the grisly special effects, grandstanding taboo-breaking or ‘good versus evil’ showdowns of the original. Unsurprisingly, it remains one of the great ‘what was anyone thinking?’ undertakings of all time.

“Of course, when I saw *The Exorcist II*, I was so disappointed,” continues Roth. “I think the best thing that can be said about it is that it has a great trailer. But you know, John Boorman was probably onto a losing idea right from the start, because I think that everyone put far too much pressure on that genre after the first movie. That original film was nominated for Academy Awards, and was a complete phenomenon, so people expected more of the same, and it is unfair to ask anyone doing a possession movie to rely on yet another spinning-head sequence. So you know, the question is, what do you do, and what can you do?”

Lying dormant for over a decade, it would ultimately be up to Blatty to reinvent *The Exorcist* for a new generation, leading to 1990’s *The Exorcist III: Legion*. With Blatty in the directorial chair, hopes were high for this second sequel, but the author-turned-filmmaker envisioned more of a serial-killer thriller than a demonic-possession movie, which led to yet more turbulence behind the scenes. Studio Morgan Creek, in fact, demanded that the movie climax with an exorcism – which was not the motion picture Blatty was trying to craft.

The story itself focuses on an investigation into some Satanic-themed murders taking place in the same Georgetown (Washington DC) locale as the first film, and connects itself to the original via the character of Lt William F Kinderman (George C Scott). If you are asking ‘who?’ then you are probably not alone: Kinderman (essayed



**“THE EXORCIST III WAS A VERY DIFFICULT EXPERIENCE”**

BRAD DOURIF

He’s above you! George C Scott in *The Exorcist III*.



## NOT QUITE FRIEDKIN...

### How The Exorcist started a demonic trend

As with any big Hollywood success story, *The Exorcist* inspired a small cottage industry of possession films – and, perhaps unsurprisingly, some of the most memorable came from such Catholic countries as Italy and Spain.

Italy was already in the midst of a horror film revolution, of course, so when the colourful *Beyond the Door* (1974) appeared – starring genre veteran Richard Johnson (*Zombie Flesh Eaters*) – few should have been surprised. Warner Bros, however, sued the film for plagiarism, only to lose and see the Euro-romp notch up further big box office on the back of such welcome free publicity.

Indeed, in 1974 money, *Beyond The Door* grossed \$15 million – and, to this day, remains one of the more enjoyed *Exorcist* rip-offs (it is also miles better than the real *Exorcist II*). Less successful, however, was 1974’s equally silly *The Antichrist*, which also throws in some witchcraft to the pot – and the intriguingly titled softcore shocker *The Sexorcist* (1974). Italy also gave us *Night Child* (1975), once again starring Johnson, a more subtle child-possession opus that has plenty of style and a good deal of creepiness. As far as these cash-ins go, *Night Child* is easily the best of the B-bunch. However, to confused patrons of British VHS shops in the Eighties there was also *The Exorcist III: Cries And Shadows*, a shady re-titling of schlock-packed Italian flick *Naked Exorcism* (1975). Mario Bava was urged to shoot a wealth of fresh footage, including a new wraparound possession plot, to his masterpiece *Lisa And The Devil* (1973) so that it could notch up some American box office as the newly titled *House Of Exorcism* (1975). In this case, the gamble was not worth it – *House Of Exorcism* was a commercial disaster.

In Spain, meanwhile, horror veteran Paul Naschy starred in the slow-burning – and boring – *Exorcismo* (1975), while *Tombs Of The Blind Dead*’s Amando de Ossorio rushed out *The Possessed* (1975). Meanwhile the one-man Z-movie machine that was the late Jess Franco got in on the act with *Sexorcismes* (1975), a pornographic horror flick that went under various re-edits and re-titles. In Turkey came *Seytan* (1974), a near shot-by-shot rehash with cheap-as-chips special effects (copyright laws were unenforced in Istanbul at this time). More interesting was the American blaxploitation variant *Abby* (1974), directed by the talented grindhouse master William Girdler. By the mid-Seventies, opportunistic, domestic and Euro-filmmakers had moved on to other things, although the release of *The Exorcist II* gave us Girdler’s *The Manitou* (1978), featuring Tony Curtis, and yet another Italian cash-in with the oddball *Malabimba* (1979).





# THE EXORCIST

## COMPLETE GUIDE



Actor Jason Miller was hands-on with *The Exorcist III*, as well as the original film.



*The Exorcist: The Beginning* was Renny Harlin's attempt to make the franchise into a popcorn thrill ride.



by Lee J Cobb in 1973) was a minor personality in Friedkin's outing – a policeman who becomes interested in the Regan case.

For part three, the grim-faced investigator begins to connect a slaughter spree with a demonic entity that he may well have met in the past. A cameo from Jason Miller further connects this third episode with the 1973 venture, but the aforementioned tacked-on 'exorcism' at the movie's end adds very little impact. At the very least though, a villainous turn by the ever-excellent Brad Dourif makes *The Exorcist III* a little more watchable than Boorman's previous pot-boiler.

"That was a very difficult experience for me," says Dourif of *The Exorcist III*. "The first scene I did went really well, but the second scene did not go so smoothly, and they showed it to me on the set. I think I let Blatty have too much influence over the way I said each line, but it was because he had such a big opinion of each line that was in the script. He was very serious about this film, and what we got from that was a very slow and very boring 20-minute performance from me. So eventually I went back on set, and Blatty and I cut a lot of stuff.

"When we did some of the re-shoots, The studio decided to replace me with Jason Miller," he continues. "They did a demographic study, and fans of *The Exorcist* said they wanted to see some of the original characters back. So they got Miller, but he just couldn't do the role. So then they decided that I was going to be this crazy spirit, and I came back in and had a day to get ready and re-do the whole thing that was meant to be this long performance from Miller. That was that. The original cut of my performance was much better than what you see in the final film, but you can only see that in the director's cut."

Unearthed via some old VHS footage, the original director's cut of *The Exorcist III* has recently made its debut in the USA on Blu-ray, although fans hoping for a newly rediscovered classic will likely be disappointed. In either cut, Blatty's shocker lacks the intensity of Friedkin's trendsetting terror title, and largely just plods along in TV-movie style, with lots of boring 'police detective' exposition. A mixed critical success, *The Exorcist III* made a slight profit at the 1990 box office, but for all intents and purposes it did little to assure producers that the franchise could survive another instalment. However, after 2000's theatrical re-release of the 1973 film, in Friedkin's new director's cut a decision was made to reawaken the gods all over again.

"The director John Frankenheimer was going to do a new *Exorcist* film, but he got sick, and it was offered it to me," states Paul Schrader, the man behind *Dominion: Prequel To The Exorcist*. "By that time it was all ready to go anyway, and the script was there, and it was a chance for me to do a genre film, and also a period film, so it was very tempting to me in that regard. I think the intention of doing our film was to stay as ➤

# COMPLETE GUIDE

## THE EXORCIST

➤ far away from the other films as possible. We could never compete with the Friedkin film, and that was the beauty of doing a prequel – we didn't have to! Nobody in my film knows where Georgetown is. So I could stay away from the Friedkin film, and the further I got away from it, the better off I think I was."

With an old hand of Schrader's standing behind-the-camera (this is the man who penned *Taxi Driver* and *Raging Bull*, after all), hopes were high for *Dominion*, bolstered by a fine character-actor cast headed by Stellan Skarsgård and a location shoot that took the cast and crew to the epic deserts of Morocco. Unfortunately, word soon started to spread of yet another troubled *Exorcist* film.

"About halfway through the shoot, I started to hear things about it not being scary enough," admits Schrader. "I suppose the biggest difference is that my film focuses on this disfigured, afflicted little boy who becomes possessed. However, as he gets progressively more possessed, he actually begins to get better, and his face begins to be projected as that of Lucifer. So this is probably not a very good mechanism for a horror film – you know, if you

have the possessed boy getting better instead of worse. So anyway, that was the story they had developed, and yes, it wasn't really a horror script. Then, about the time that we finished, I had a feeling that there had been a shift in opinion – and Jim Robinson, who was the producer, had come to believe that he had made the wrong movie."

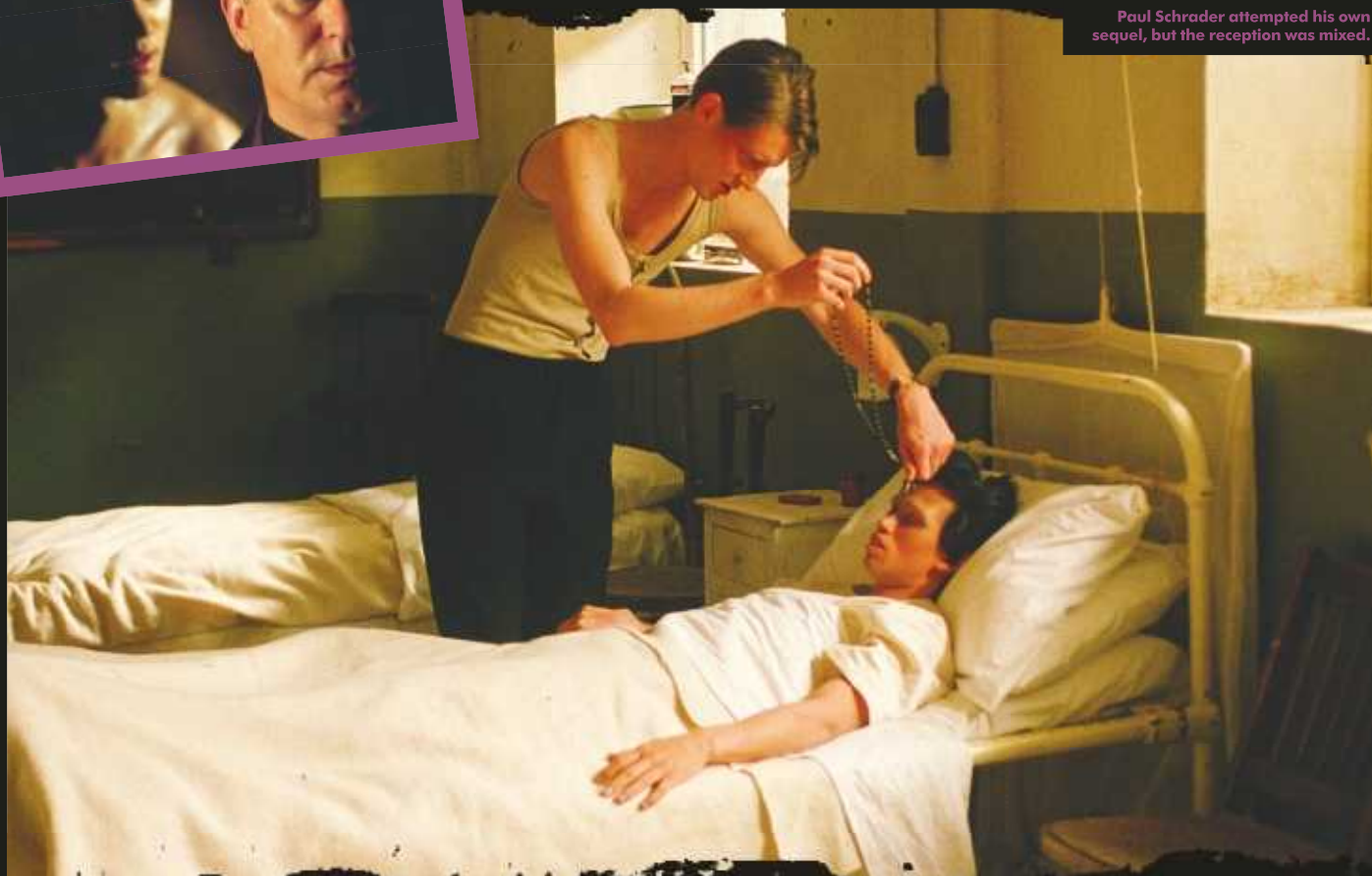
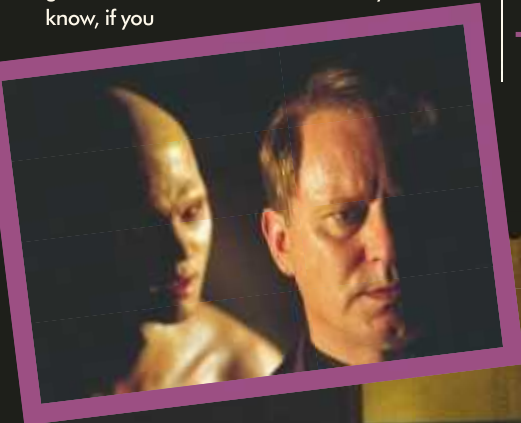
As such, *Dominion* was shelved, and *Deep Blue Sea*'s Renny Harlin was brought in to craft an all-new 'rollercoaster' ride of vomit and violence, à la the Friedkin film. Also starring Skarsgård, the result was 2004's *Exorcist: The Beginning*, an unapologetically trashy depiction of foul-talking possessed dames, CGI-enhanced demons and mystic mumbo-jumbo in the sand. Even Skarsgård, playing the character later portrayed by von Sydow, knows that scenery-chewing is probably the best option. Unsurprisingly, *Exorcist: The Beginning* was a certified flop, leading the curious to wonder just how bad Schrader's take on the prequel could possibly have been.

**"I STARTED TO HEAR THINGS ABOUT IT NOT BEING SCARY ENOUGH"**

PAUL SCHRADER



Paul Schrader attempted his own sequel, but the reception was mixed.





# THE EXORCIST

## COMPLETE GUIDE



The *Exorcist* seemed to be a franchise on its deathbed until the recent television series.

"I think after Renny's film failed with audiences, the studio saw that they might as well try and make some money from my version," continues Schrader. "And my movie had been shot and edited in 2003 – I just needed \$35,000 to finish some post-production work. So they gave me that, and finally I got to release my version, but it was really just for the DVD market. I don't think there were any other hidden motives in all of this – it's all about money – and they knew they could claw back some interest on home video."

Unfortunately for Schrader, *Dominion: Prequel To The Exorcist* received almost the same muted reception as Harlin's bout of hokum. While Blatty himself would be one rare supporting voice, most critics and viewers agreed that both *Exorcist* predecessors were as bad as each other.

At a push, the best thing that can be said is that Harlin's attempt at a prequel is silly enough

to make for agreeably daft, late night, drunken viewing. Schrader's, on the other hand, is just ponderous and painfully dull. Yet, with each going belly-up at the box office, it seemed that – once more – *The Exorcist* was a shock-series in limbo.

Nevertheless, as with Regan herself, a saviour was soon to appear – that of the small-screen horror hit, grounded by such success stories as *The Walking Dead* and *Bates Motel*. Debuting in September, 2016, *The Exorcist* TV series has played well to fans of Friedkin's first movie – returning to the key issues of modernity, family conflict and spiritual crisis. Initially beginning as a very loose attempt to take Blatty's creation into primetime, as the show has gone underway it has – gradually – revealed that this will become the story of a grown-up Regan MacNeil (now played by Geena Davis).

Understandably, fans of the original film and new audiences alike are currently tuning in, eager to see a lineage to Friedkin's film that finally, after sundry stillborn sequels, respects the groundwork of the 1973 classic. And, in this respect at least, one thing is undeniable: the devil is in the detail.



*The Exorcist: The Complete Anthology* is available to buy on Blu-ray now, distributed by Warner Home Video.



© Togen/Linda Blair

## WHAT LINDA DID NEXT

### The subsequent career of The Exorcist's young star

After *The Exorcist*, Linda Blair was probably the most famous 14-year old on the planet. As a result, paparazzi followed her every move and her gradual evolution into adulthood was documented in newspapers and magazines across the planet.

Having been nominated for an Academy Award (for Best Supporting Actress) for *The Exorcist*, and notching up a Golden Globe (in the same category), it seemed as if everything was going very smoothly for the young thespian. Unfortunately, it would not last. A role in the blockbuster sequel *Airport 1975* (released, erm, in 1974) saw her profile spiral even further – and her leading-lady spin in the same year's hit television movie *Born Innocent* indicated she was at the top of Tinseltown.

Another made-for-TV success, *Sarah T – Portrait Of A Teenage Alcoholic*, arrived in 1975 but a cocaine habit, and headlines about her arrest for dealing the narcotic, overshadowed most of her life following comeback horror film *The Exorcist II* in 1977. Blair was dragged through the coals in the popular press and her career never recovered.

By the early Eighties, she was either headlining disco-dance drudge such as *Roller Boogie* (1979), cheap and cheerful slasher flicks such as *Hell Night* (1981) or starring in shockers such as *Chained Heat* (1983) and *Savage Streets* (1985).

A slightly higher profile return came with the Leslie Nielsen-starring *Exorcist* spoof *Repossessed* (1990) and, for most mainstream audiences, it would be their first exposure to Blair since *The Exorcist*.

Since then, though, the actress has largely focused on her animal rights work – alongside the odd foray back into TV or film, usually in minor roles (she can be glimpsed in Wes Craven's *Scream* as a roving reporter). A familiar face at conventions, the good-humoured Blair would have been a coup for the new *Exorcist* television show, but her role of Regan instead went to the more high-profile Geena Davis. The gods, quite clearly, work in mysterious ways.



The *Exorcist*'s legacy shows that the fear of God continues to attract new viewers.

**"TIM CURRY WAS  
ALWAYS OFF BY  
HIMSELF BEING  
TORTURED WITH  
MAKE-UP"**

ANNETTE O'TOOLE



INTERVIEW

# ANNETTE O'TOOLE

WE TALK TO THE STAR OF *IT*, *CAT PEOPLE* AND *SMALLVILLE* ABOUT HER NEW HORROR FILM AND WHY NOBODY CAN REPLACE TIM CURRY

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

**Generations of genre fans have a special place in their hearts for Annette O'Toole. She was Beverly Marsh in the nightmare-inducing TV miniseries of Stephen King's *It*, she starred in Paul Schrader's beguiling *Cat People* remake, and appeared as both Lana Lang in *Superman III* and Martha Kent in *Smallville*.**

We have recently seen O'Toole pop up in excellent TV like *11.22.63* and *Halt And Catch Fire*, and she's superb in upcoming indie horror *We Go On*. She plays Charlotte, the protective mother of a man offering a reward to anyone who can prove that there's an afterlife. From writer-director duo Jesse Holland and Andy Mitton, it's a slow-burn with a welcome emphasis on character, and the relationship between a mother and her son (played by Clark Freeman). "I love the film," she enthuses. "It's difficult for me to watch myself on screen, but I really enjoyed watching the movie."

**How did you get involved with *We Go On*?**

I knew Andy Mitton's wife Laura, who's also in the film, and she got in touch with me and said, "My husband has this script for his new independent film, would you be interested in reading it?" I just thought it was so inventive and a very interesting new take on a genre we've seen so many times before. I loved the part.

**Charlotte is a great character, and her relationship with her son is interesting. Was that what first jumped out at you?**

I thought so, that's why I loved the script. I thought, "Wow, most of these movies you see, they're scary, but you very rarely get that deep character development." And I loved the fact that it becomes sort of like a buddy film with this guy and his mother, I've never seen that relationship before.

Clark and I bonded right away as friends and sort of mother-son feeling. I'd worked with Clark's sister Cassidy in *Smallville*, but I'd never met him before, and he's just an angel. It was a really wonderful working situation.

**Speaking of *Smallville*, John Glover has a great part, and it was wonderful to see you two on screen together again!**

I have to say I was a bit instrumental in that working out. Andy and Jesse were so sweet, they wanted my husband, Michael McKean, to play that role. Michael was doing *Better Call Saul*, and it was impossible for him. So I called John and I said, "There's this great script, would you be

interested in doing this role?" Now I can't imagine anybody else in that part. He does it so beautifully. John's one of my really dearest friends in the world. Any chance I get to work with John Glover, I will take it.

**How does it feel to have been a part of horror films like *Cat People* and *It* that have really endured?**

It's great! I was talking about *Cat People* the other day. I was rehearsing for a play, and John Heard's name came up, and I just remembered how wonderful it was working with John. We also did an episode of *The Outer Limits* together in Vancouver, before *Smallville* even! So I do like having been involved in those things. Every year here on New Year's Eve they do a marathon of the old *Twilight Zone* episodes, and I'm always pulled into those – they're so beautifully written. I love that stuff, as a kid I watched all that.

**We have to ask about *It*! What was it like working with Tim Curry as Pennywise?**

He's the nicest man in the world. I didn't have much to do with him. There's one scene where the John Ritter character thinks he's with me, and it turns out to be Pennywise, so we were there the same day. But Tim was always around. He was always in his little tiny trailer getting make-up re-done, fixing his teeth, a bit more blood. So the poor man was always off by himself being tortured with make-up, but I can't say anymore than he was just the dearest, sweetest guy. He's a voracious reader. I remember most of the time he was talking about what books he'd piled up in his hotel room, and I love readers, so he's the best.

**Having been in *Superman III* and *Smallville*, how do you feel about the surge superhero movies and TV shows?**

Yeah, I'm not interested in doing any more of that. When you're at the movies and you see the



Horror fans will never forget Stephen King's *It*.

trailers, I just kind of roll my eyes thinking, "Really? Why do we need this?" And I know it's all about money and it's all about remaking it for the next generation, but I look at movies like *It* and *Cat People*, and think there's no reason to redo these movies. If it's done really well the first time, just go watch that movie. Why do we have to have another group of actors do these parts? They're iconic! Obviously, I'm thinking of Tim Curry as Pennywise. I just feel like nobody's going to be better in that role, nobody's going to be scarier.

**When you get scripts, are you more interested in the character than the genre?**

Ideally. At this point I don't get a ton of scripts. It's just how it is, but the ones I get, I've been so lucky. This movie just came to me, it's a fluke and I think it was so beautifully done. I did a movie called *Women Who Kill*. I play a serial killer, like this female Hannibal Lecter type. It's a wonderful film.

When I'm given the opportunity to branch out and do something I've never done, that's what these low-budget movies are wonderful for, and they come to me because they never get sent to the big name actresses, so I'm very grateful for them. It is what I look for, it's not always what I get, but lately, I tell you, maybe as I'm getting older and more of the actresses my age are getting sick of it and dropping out, maybe I have more opportunities to do these things.

I love this way of working now, where you can do a whole movie on your iPhone. I love that immediacy. That's what always bothered me, waiting and waiting, and then it's like we're ready to do your big scene, and it's like 2am. This way, you're living with all the other people, and you forget there is a camera. I think it's awesome. ☺

*We Go On* will be available on Shudder from 23 February.



O'Toole is superb in indie horror *We Go On*.



**30 ปี**

ที่มันสะสมแระอาสาดไว้  
เพื่อเฝ้ามองมาตลอดในป



**มันอยู่ใน  
ริบลิธึม  
THE BEYOND**

ยุคสมัย... แสงจันทร์

เพื่อ

เป็น...  
เป็น...  
เป็น...

แคธรีน แม็คคอลล  
(ตอนเป็นนักเรียน)

เดวิด วอร์เนอร์  
(เป็น...





FLASHBACK

# THE BEYOND

LUCIO FULCI'S ICONIC HORROR SHOCKER THE BEYOND DEFINED THE DIRECTOR'S STYLE AND CREATED CONTROVERSY FOR ITS SHAMELESS MIX OF COLOURFUL VISUALS AND CARNAGE-PACKED HORROR...

WORDS CALUM WADDELL

Ask any genre buff to name some of the essential Italian horror films from the golden age of the country's splatter movie boom, and chances are that alongside such classics as Dario Argento's *Suspiria* and Mario Bava's *Black Sabbath*, Lucio Fulci's *The Beyond* will come up. Despite being released in its native Italy to critical disdain, and winding up heavily censored – and then banned – in the UK as a 'video nasty', the surrealist masterpiece gained an almost unrivalled fan following as the years progressed. Indeed, while Fulci himself – who passed away in 1996 at the age of 68 – never lived to see *The Beyond* obtain its stellar reputation, he predicted that his best achievements would stand the test of time.

"Yes, Lucio did say that we should be taking the script and the characters seriously," admits Catriona MacColl, the English-born actress who stars in *The Beyond*. "To me, this was a very bizarre horror movie which was mainly focused on lots of blood and gore, but to Lucio it was important that this was a professional project with the best crew that his budget could afford. He was someone who took great pride in his work and who anticipated that it would stand out and be appreciated – even if, at the time, the critics never really knew what to do with any of it."

In *The Beyond*, MacColl stars alongside the late, great David Warbeck – a Hammer Films veteran who had subsequently found his calling in various Italian horror productions and a number of oddball genre epics. Portraying a doctor destined to find out the hard way that the supernatural actually exists, he teams up with MacColl's increasingly confused hotelier to investigate a series of strange occurrences, including phantom Alsatians, a blind mystic and evidence of some corpses coming back to life. In the midst of this madness, Fulci also offers up a random but prolonged spider attack, a gruesome crucifixion and eyeballs poked out with rusty nails.

None of this makes much sense, but that is hardly the point.

"Yes, well, you can probably imagine what it was like trying to make sense of the screenplay," laughs MacColl. "Lucio's English was not so good, and what had happened is that the script had been done in Italian, but then, for the international cast, it had been translated back. So we were reading this sometimes-nonsensical English that had come from an Italian base, and as such, some of it lacked coherency. I remember we had two characters – Arthur and Martha. And in the Italian dub it was fine – they are called something else – but in the English-language version their names rhyme. So there was a scene where I had to shout out 'Arthur' and then 'Martha', and I kept laughing, and so did David Warbeck. But Lucio would have none of it – even when we both explained that this would seem ridiculous when it played to native English speakers."

"Then, on top of all that, you had a plot that was tied together just by a series of gory special

effects. I looked at what I was expected to do, and concluded that my role was simply to combat evil. The zombies and everything did not make any sense, but I thought, 'Well, at least I will have the chance to express fear and do a lot of screaming,' and I thought that was quite interesting. I mean, why not delve into the dark side of yourself? As for Lucio, he would shout and scream and stamp his feet. He also taught me some wonderful Italian swear words, which I know he regretted."

*The Beyond* also benefits from some outstanding widescreen photography, a spooky sense of Southern Gothic and a genuinely shocking finale that gives audiences one of the big screen's most malevolent portraits of Hell itself. Even so, what makes it so hard to categorise are its unexpected left-field turns into different sub-genres. The film opens with a haunted-house narrative, but soon becomes a more traditional 'gore' outing, before, without much warning, introducing some zombies, albeit ones who do not eat human flesh. Then, just when it appears ➤

In the US, *The Beyond* was renamed *The Seven Doors Of Death*, re-scored, re-edited and heavily censored. It promptly flopped.



TERRY LEVINE presents an AQUARIUS ASSOCIATES / A HOUSE OF AN AQUARIUS PRODUCTIONS PRESENTATION  
Starring CATRIONA MACCOLL • DAVID WARBECK • CAROL WELLS • TONY TARTY • JOHN AND VICTORIA LAUREN  
Director of Photography GILBERT WINTER • MUSIC BY BRUCE AND BOY FORD  
Executive Producer PETER HARRITY • Screenplay BY GORDON SHAW • Edited BY SHARON ROSE • Directed by LUCIO FULCI  
Produced by TERRY LEVINE • Distributed by HOLLYWOOD RELEASING, INC. • Prints by TECHNICOLOR  
© 1981 • All Rights Reserved



➤ that Fulci has run out of surprises, the auteur of excess throws in a subplot about a possessed young child. Amazingly, though, all of this comes together to provoke a genuine sense of nightmare: unpredictable and uneasily creepy.

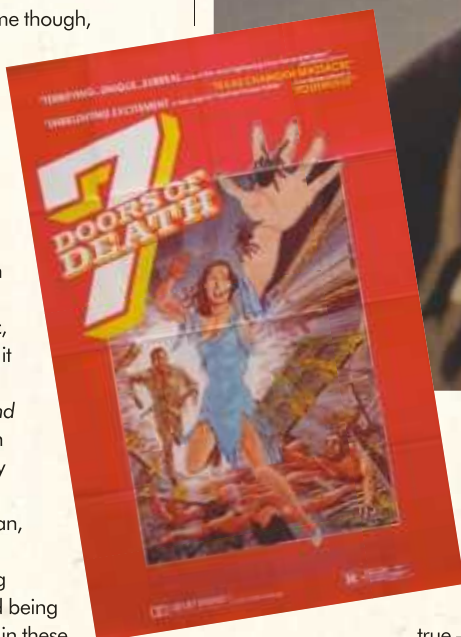
"As the years have passed, and directors like Quentin Tarantino and Eli Roth have told me how much they love these films, *The Beyond* in particular, I think I can look back and see what Lucio was doing," continues MacColl. "I can see why it is a cult classic. At the time though, I just felt that it was a little job no one would really ever know about. My agent even said to me, 'You can do these horror films in Italy, and get to travel to America, too, and no one will even see them.' But I think even back then someone must have seen something special in there – that sense of nightmarish logic, or lack of logic, for instance... it is quite a dreamlike movie.

"My memories of *The Beyond* are really just hanging out with David a lot – we became really close, and stayed in touch for years. He was a very warm man, and he did not seem to be too worried about where his acting career was going – he enjoyed being paid to travel, and liked being in these movies. He never complained, and it was a pleasure to be around him. Whenever I said, 'David, I am young, and here I am in a zombie movie – do you think I will be taken seriously as an actress back home?' And he would just reply, 'Just enjoy being in New Orleans,

was such a perk of doing these films."

Not helping MacColl's initial woes about *The Beyond*, however, was the fact that the film landed itself in hot water in the UK. Shorn of around two minutes of censorship cuts, it did gain a British theatrical spin before landing on video

true – the chance to travel

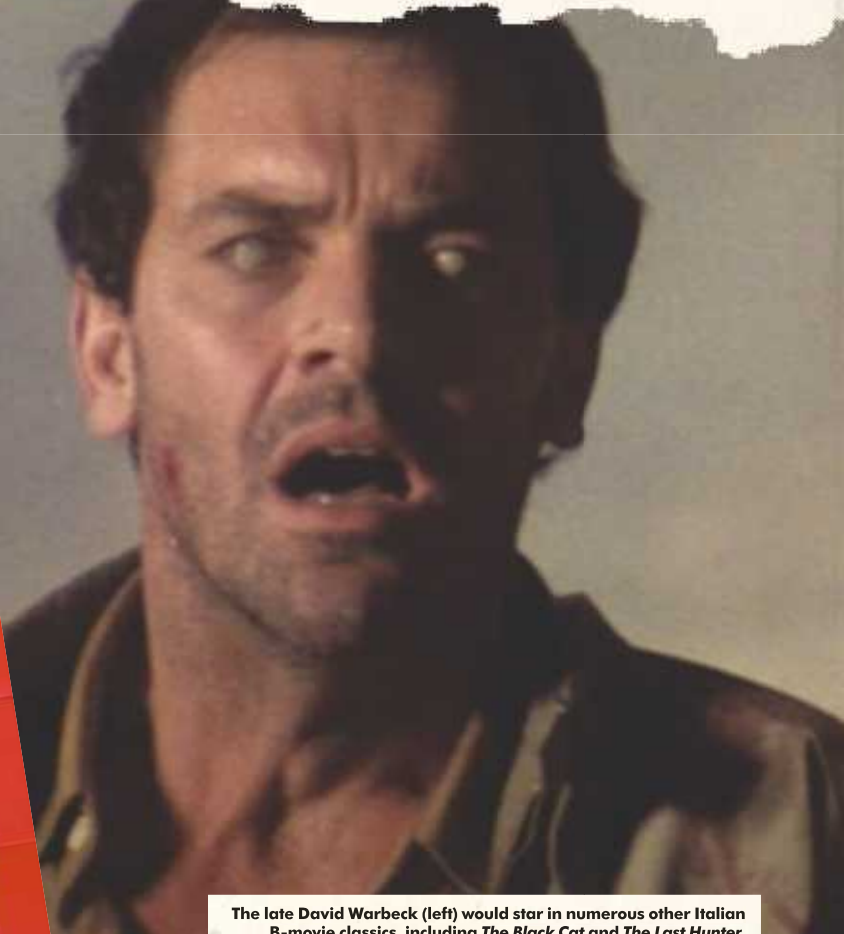


## "AT THE TIME IT WAS DEFINITELY NOT CONSIDERED ACCEPTABLE TO BE DOING THIS KIND OF FILM"

CATRIONA MACCOLL



The zombies in *The Beyond* were created by make-up effects genius Giannetto De Rossi, who also worked on *Zombie Flesh Eaters*.



The late David Warbeck (left) would star in numerous other Italian B-movie classics, including *The Black Cat* and *The Last Hunter*.

Catriona, you have an actual acting job at least, and that can only be a good thing! And then he would order a drink! But it was

and promptly attracting the wrath of anti-horror campaigners. While *The Beyond* – along with two other Fulci/ MacColl collaborations (1980's *City Of The Living Dead* and 1981's *The House By The Cemetery*) – would be banned on VHS, years later all three would gain uncut special edition British Blu-ray releases. In the early Eighties, however, such a re-appraisal seemed impossible.

"Oh yes, back then you could not tell anyone you had even appeared in a Fulci film," laughs MacColl. "The entire genre of Italian horror was being dragged through the papers at the time as being the worst and most disgusting stuff that anyone could see, and all I could think was, 'Oh god, I'm never going to have a career if anyone finds out I am the star of these.' I went to the cinema in London one afternoon to see it – incognito, wearing dark glasses. I soon found out I did not need them because there were only about five other people there – probably because it was on a Wednesday afternoon in terrible weather. But I recall, objectively, that I thought I had done what was asked of me. However, I did not know what to think of the movie. At the time it was definitely not considered acceptable to be doing that kind of film."

Also unleashed in the US, recut, re-scored and under a new title – *The Seven Doors Of Death* – and with a name change for Fulci himself (he became Lewis Fuller), *The Beyond* would soon become contraband. For fans in the UK, it would be passed around on pirate videotape alongside such other famous Italian 'nasties' as *Cannibal Holocaust* and Dario Argento's *Tenebrae*. In the USA, meanwhile, for those who wanted to see the full cut in its essential widescreen framing it would be via a Japanese laserdisc, which began to fetch insane figures across fan conventions in the Eighties and Nineties. Yet, all this activity only added to *The Beyond*'s legacy as a legendary curiosity that only





## TOP 5 FULCI FRIGHTENERS

Where to start with the master of fear



### LIZARD IN A WOMAN'S SKIN (1971)

**1** Deliriously arty oddball giallo horror film about an upper-class, London-based lady whose sexual repressions may or may not have caused a murder spree. This is Fulci at his creative peak, with aesthetic splendour to spare and some gorgeous art nouveau set dressing.

### ZOMBIE FLESH EATERS (1979)

**2** The notorious 'video nasty' that made Fulci a horror household name. Shark vs zombie. Eyeball vs splinter of wood. It's a little confusing because it's called *Zombie* on IMDb, was originally called *Zombi 2*, and known as *Zombies* elsewhere.



### THE BEYOND (1981)

**3** Still considered one of Fulci's most mesmerising masterworks, its ambitiously nonsensical and non-linear approach to horror would typify much of the gore auteur's later cinematic output as well.

### MANHATTAN BABY (1982)

**4** Underrated by most, it takes Fulci away from the zombies for a suspense-ridden story of supernatural possession and ancient Egyptian artefacts. *Manhattan Baby* is so strange, even by Fulci's standards, that you will either recoil in bemusement or fall in love with its widescreen charms.



### THE NEW YORK RIPPER (1982)

**5** At first glance this giallo-slasher about a madman sexually mutilating women is beyond reprehensible. At second glance, co-writer Dardano Sacchetti's claim that this is actually a "jet-black comedy" – sending up the entire giallo form – makes sense.



Catriona MacColl, also appeared in *City Of The Living Dead* and *The House By The Cemetery*.

'in the know' horror-hounds really knew about and appreciated.

"I believe Quentin Tarantino discovered the film this way, too," continues MacColl. "A lot of other people were not at ease with Lucio – some of the cast and crew on these films absolutely hated him – but I loved him. I thought he was such a challenge to be around, and I was determined to win him over. I don't think anyone got to the bottom of who he was; he was a mixture of contradictions, and his emotions would often be pushed to the limit. He respected me a lot, and treated me better than many of the other actresses that he dealt with. The reason for that was totally down to him, but he was always very nice to me, and we had great respect for each other. He liked the British school of acting a great deal, and I approached these films with some degree of seriousness. I think that made it easier for me to throw myself into them. Lucio was a little paranoid, and he would scream sometimes, but I did not let it get to me – I was determined not to let him frighten me. I think that in the end, I showed him that none of that affected me."

Unfortunately, Fulci's career after *The Beyond* would be plagued by ill health, lower budgets and disastrous directorial decisions. While he oversaw MacColl in the splendid 1981 spine-tingler *The House By The Cemetery*, his trademark surrealism and carefully crafted horror set

pieces would vanish, replaced by either base misogyny (as in 1990's *Cat In The Brain*) or no-budget cheapies packed full of nudity but little by way of brains (1987's *Aenigma*, 1988's *Sodoma's Ghost*, 1991's *Voices From Beyond*). Much like fellow countryman Argento, the prime era of Fulci's frissons was the Seventies and early Eighties – a time when Italian cinema was able to support even its most avant-garde B-names with sizeable budgets and international crews.

"I never saw his later movies, but the fans did tell me they were a disaster," reveals MacColl. "I was asked to be in a later film, and I turned him down, as I felt that after doing three, I really had to do other things. From the little bits I have been exposed to, from *Cat In The Brain* and things like that, it seems he just lost the funding that he once had to realise his ideas. It is very sad, and I wish he had lived just a little bit longer so we could have talked more and he could have seen how beloved he has become."

At least, then, we have *The Beyond*: a beautiful, bizarre and gloriously bloody indication of why Italian nightmares were, at one point, the finest fear-flicks ever made. ☺



*The Beyond* is available to buy on DVD and Blu-ray now, distributed by Arrow in the UK and Grindhouse Released in the US.

**RELIVING THE  
ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN**

Val Guest (centre) directs Peter Cushing  
and Forrest Tucker on the snowscape  
set at Pinewood Studios.

INSIDE  
**THE VAULT  
OF HAMMER  
HORROR**

BEHIND THE SCENES ON THE  
PAST AND PRESENT OF THE STUDIO  
THAT DRIPPED BLOOD

Packed full of snapshots of the world's most  
iconic horror film studio, *The Hammer Vault* is a  
repository of blood-red brilliance that all gore  
hounds will want to own. Here, we look through  
some of the images from the updated edition,  
complete with notes from the book...

WORDS STEVE WRIGHT



The updated  
edition of *The  
Hammer Vault* by  
Marcus Hearn is  
available to buy  
now, published  
by Titan.



# INSIDE THE VAULT OF HAMMER HORROR

GALLERY

## ABBY'S REVENGE

Filming the scene in *Let Me In* in which the tormented Owen (Kodi Smit-McPhee) is almost drowned by Kenny's brother (Brett DelBuono) and his fellow bullies. Abby will come to his rescue, cementing their mutual devotion. "There's a dark implication of what the future could be," says director Matt Reeves. "Some people think it's a happy ending; others find it extremely disturbing. It leaves you to interpret the story as you will."



## THE RESIDENT

In an abandoned hospital in New Mexico *Jokinen* examines the dummy torso that Juliet will operate on in the emergency room scenes. Hilary Swank spent time observing procedures in a working hospital to ensure her performance was authentic.



## CHRISTOPHER LEE'S MONSTER

Staff photographer John Jay conducted a light-hearted session with Lee in and around the main house in the grounds of Bray Studios. In this picture, Lee, fully made up as the Creature, examines a reel of film in the projection room.



## ONE OF THE QUIET ONES

Olivia Cooke and Jared Harris on location at Harefield Grove on 19 June. In the Seventies the house had been used as a location by Brian Clemens for his television series *The Professionals* and by director José Larraz for his films *Symptoms* and *Vampyres* (both 1974).

WORDS POPPY-JAY PALMER

WE LOOK BACK AT JOHN FRANKENHEIMER'S NOIR THRILLER AND EXPLORE HOW IT MANAGED TO GO FROM A COMPLETE FAILURE TO A CULT MASTERPIECE, AND HOW ITS SUCCESS WAS IMPACTED BY THE PEOPLE WHO MADE IT...

Time Warp  
**Retro  
Classic  
Film**



### Film

**RUNNING TIME:**

107 minutes

**RELEASE DATE:**

5 October 1966

**DIRECTOR:**

John Frankenheimer

**WRITER:**

Lewis John Carline

**CAST:**

Rock Hudson, Salome

Jens, John Randolph

# SECONDS

**John Frankenheimer's *Seconds* has become something of a phenomenon over time, but for a bizarre reason. After its release in 1966, the film was a massive failure. Its reviews were pretty regular – some critics liked it, and some panned it – but hardly anyone saw it. It made little to no impact, and fell off the film radar for years. However, it is now often considered a masterpiece and a cult classic. It went from failure to iconic without ever being a success.**

Watching it now, it's easy to see why *Seconds* has finally managed to earn its cult classic status. Even with advancements in filmmaking, it's extraordinary. Frankenheimer explores the themes of identity and mistakes through Arthur Hamilton (John Randolph, and later Rock Hudson),

who gets the chance to start his life over after being approached by a company that promises to fake his death, give him a surgical makeover and relocate him to the other side of the country. *Seconds* is a character study, while also being something of a noir thriller, capable of causing the hairs on your arms to stand on end with just an intriguing camera angle or an uncomfortably long pause. It was a pioneering film in the unofficial 'identity swap' sub-genre.

However, when you look at the film beyond what's on screen, it's also easy to see how it didn't draw in audiences in the same way as some of Frankenheimer's other films, such as *The Manchurian Candidate*, *Birdman Of Alcatraz* and *Seven Days In May*. On Frankenheimer's director's commentary for *Seconds* (recorded in 1997 for the film's laserdisc release), he explains why the now-cult classic flopped so badly when it hit cinemas around the world in 1966.

"The movie got some really wonderful reviews, and it got some criticism for casting Rock Hudson in this part," he says. According to Frankenheimer, Hudson's casting was most of the problem. The combination of Hudson and a strong sci-fi thriller concept should have been a winner, but it ended up having quite the opposite effect. The kind of people who wanted to see a Rock Hudson film didn't want to see him in this kind of role, and the people who wanted to see a film like *Seconds* didn't want to see a film with Hudson in it.

"As a result, that leaves an audience of about five or six," Frankenheimer joked. "This was literally a movie where you could call up the theatre and say, 'What time does *Seconds* go on?' and the guy would say, 'Well, what time can you get here?' It was a terrible



failure when it came out, and yet now it's considered this great cult picture."

When it came to casting, Frankenheimer was reluctant to hire Hudson for the lead. His thought process was similar to those of the thriller fans who didn't fancy the film: he thought Hudson didn't have the chops to take on a character as complex as Hamilton. With a need to isolate himself from his own life and cut off all ties to the mistakes he had made in the past, Hamilton as a character was as far away as you can get from the charming, debonair romantic leads Hudson was known for playing, often opposite the likes of Doris Day and Lauren Bacall. Instead, Frankenheimer had his eye on the likes of Laurence Olivier and Kirk Douglas, someone who was used to heavier roles.

The director was finally convinced to give Hudson the part by the actor's agent while at a party. Since shooting the film, Frankenheimer has said that he ended up being immensely happy with the decision and his star's performance.

"At the time we made [*Seconds*], Rock Hudson was the romantic idol of the world," he said in the 1997 commentary. "The idea of Rock Hudson playing this part was a very, very daring career move for him. I must say he acknowledged this as the best thing he ever did. I don't know if he's right; he was wonderful in the movie, but it was very kind of him to feel that way. He certainly worked ➤

### About

Arthur Hamilton was in a rut. He had a family and a good job, but his life had lost purpose long ago. Every success was unfulfilling and everything he had left him wanting something else. His love for his wife faded and left him feeling cold, and he rarely saw his only child. But after receiving a phone call from his long-dead (or so he presumed) friend, everything started to change. Introduced to a secret organisation that promised to change his life for the better, Hamilton is blackmailed and talked into undergo a series of surgeries to change his face and give him an entirely new identity.

**"SECONDS IS A CHARACTER STUDY, WHILE ALSO BEING A NOIR THRILLER"**



Frankenheimer worked with Khigh Dhieigh in *The Manchurian Candidate*.



## CLASSIC QUOTES

**"WHAT KIND OF MAN IS HE? THERE'S GRACE IN THE LINE AND COLOUR, BUT IT DOESN'T EMERGE PURE. IT PUSHES AT THE EDGE OF SOMETHING STILL TENTATIVE, UNRESOLVED – AS IF SOMEWHERE IN THE MAN THERE IS STILL A KEY UNTURNED"**

NORA

**"IT'S GOING TO BE DIFFERENT FROM NOW ON. A NEW FACE AND A NAME. I'LL DO THE REST. I KNOW IT'S GOING TO BE DIFFERENT. I SUPPOSE YOU DO TOO"**

TONY

**"THE GOOD THINGS ALWAYS HAPPEN WITH THE RAIN"**

NORA

**"THE QUESTION OF DEATH SELECTION MAY BE THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISION IN YOUR LIFE"**

MR RUBY

**"THIS MAY HURT A LITTLE"**

NORA

**"I COULDN'T HELP IT, CHARLIE. I HAD TO FIND OUT WHERE I WENT WRONG"**

TONY

**"RELAX, OLD FRIEND. CRANIAL DRILL"**

DOCTOR



Hudson had to be held down by football players for the last scene.



The role of Arthur Hamilton was a big departure for Hudson.

➤ hard, and he tried hard. He was one of the nicest men I ever knew."

The cast was given a lot of time to run through scenes and rehearse throughout the film, something Hudson wasn't used to. Frankenheimer believed that the extra time really helped the actor's performance. Hudson put all he had into the role. During the party scene in which Hamilton gets drunk and has to be carried to bed, he actually got hammered in real life too.

While shooting *Seconds*, Hudson caused trouble for Frankenheimer simply by being so darn good-looking. In order to make the transition scene, in which Hamilton has surgery to become Antiochus Wilson, as menacing and unpleasant as possible, Frankenheimer had to make Hudson look as menacing and unpleasant as possible. He basically had to make Rock Hudson not look pretty, which was no easy task. He eventually managed it with the wispy white wig and facial



scars and stitches you see in the film. "Rock Hudson looking badly at that time in his life was one of the great achievements in cinema, let me tell you," Frankenheimer said.

Hudson's transformation isn't the only aspect of that particular scene worth noting: in order to make Hamilton's surgery look as realistic as possible, the crew filmed a real medical procedure. Frankenheimer, director of photography James Wong Howe and a small crew piled into an operating theatre to get some shots for the film. However, most of the crew ended up being unnecessary, as six of them fainted as soon as the surgery started and spent the duration of the shoot on the ground. Determined to get the footage he needed, Howe frantically thrust a camera into Frankenheimer's hands and made him operate it, not caring if the shots were steady or not.

In 1997, Frankenheimer recalled attending a party where a man he

didn't recognise approached him like he knew him and explained that the pair of them had worked together on a film. When Frankenheimer told him he was having trouble placing him, the man said that Frankenheimer and his crew had photographed him having his nose operated on.

Up until his death in 2002, Frankenheimer continually sang praises for Academy Award-winning cinematographer Howe, whose work on the film was part of the reason *Seconds* has become such a cult classic. The director has even said that Howe's contribution was perhaps even bigger than any other cameraman he'd ever worked with. "His balance, his light, the way he would help me frame shots was just so important to this movie," Frankenheimer said.

Howe's work was creative and innovative, and he was never one to shy away from a challenge. He really understood Frankenheimer's

## TOP 5 MOVIE SURGERIES

Genre goes under the knife

### EYES WITHOUT A FACE (1960)



1 The surgical effects aren't as advanced as they are today, but that doesn't make it any less horrifying. And mask is horrible too.

### PROMETHEUS (2012)



2 Creepy C-sections are one thing, the fact that Elizabeth Shaw performed the extra-terrestrial C-section on herself made this scene even grizzlier.

### AMERICAN MARY (2012)



3 The revenge-fuelled medical procedures featured here ensured that we would never knowingly piss off Katharine Isabelle, and you shouldn't either.



Making Rock Hudson not look pretty was the film's greatest challenge.



vision, which was invaluable when it came to composition and talking a hands-on approach while working together. Unlike many cinematographers, Howe actually operated the cameras for a lot of the scene. The hand-held cameras he favoured were extremely loud, and as a result, almost all of the film's audio had to be dubbed in afterwards. As *Seconds* was made during the time before Steadicam, Howe would also operate the handheld cameras while sat in a wheelchair and have someone push him round as he captured the scene.

Howe devised a few elaborate plans to get a great shot. The film's opening scene was shot on location in Grand Central Station, and together Frankenheimer and Howe found a way to film without closing down the station or attracting crowds. While Frankenheimer and Howe were focusing on actor John Randolph as

his character Hamilton was being stalked through the station by a mysterious stranger, a male model and a Playboy bunny – who had been hired specially – were creating a diversion on some steps at the other side of the station. They acted out a passionate love scene, being fake-directed by the film's writer Lewis John Carlino, while Frankenheimer, Howe and Randolph went unnoticed. Howe even hid running cameras inside suitcases so that passersby wouldn't know what they were doing.

It's genius like this that put *Seconds* ahead of its time. Rock Hudson's casting in the dark sci-fi drama may have left potential cinema-goers feeling conflicted about whether to see the film or not, but it's also likely that 1966 might not have been ready for it.

*Seconds* is available now on DVD and Blu-ray as part of Eureka's Masters of Cinema Series.

## WATCH FIRST



**FRANKENSTEIN (1931)**  
A scientist attempts to create artificial life in this moody and very well-lit horror classic.

## WATCH NEXT



**SELF/LESS (2015)**  
A terminally ill businessman has his consciousness transferred to the body of a younger man.

## YOUR TAKE ON THE CLASSIC

WHAT YOU THOUGHT @SCIFINOW



"Masterpiece on every level. Wild, scary, funny, piercingly smart. All-round classic." **@TomHuddleston\_**



"Great James Wong Howe black and white cinematography, and a fantastic opening sequence." **@SSheil**



"It's superb – Rock Hudson way out of his comfort zone, Frankenheimer on form. I keep recommending it to people and telling them to read nothing about it beforehand for maximum impact." **@mattround**



"It's an amazing, if disturbing, film. Hudson is brilliant. Love it." **@ms\_mjolnir**



"A rare five stars from me. It's like *Mad Men* S2 in the Twilight Zone." **@cjlines**



"AWESOME. AMAZING. OUT OF THIS WORLD. WAY AHEAD OF ITS TIME. If you haven't watched it... WATCH IT!!!" **@HahnShoLobo**

## ISLAND OF LOST SOULS (1932)



**4** Outlandish movie operations aren't outlandish enough if they don't involve animals in some way. Dr Moreau took things too far.

## BRAZIL (1985)



**5** Surgery isn't a massive part of *Brazil*, but that visual of Ida having her face stretched by Dr Jaffe isn't leaving our minds in this lifetime. It's like a really hardcore face mask.





# THE SCIFINOW TERMINATOR: THE SARAH CONNOR CHRONICLES QUIZ

ARE YOU CLEVER ENOUGH TO BE THE FUTURE LEADER OF THE  
HUMAN RESISTANCE? OR IS YOUR HEAD DEVOID OF  
A BRAIN? FIND OUT WITH OUR QUIZ!

## ARRIVEDERCI

1. How old was John Connor in the pilot episode?
2. What year was Cameron sent back from?
3. What is the name of the FBI Special Agent who pursues Sarah Connor in Season One?
4. Who is revealed to be Skynet's target for termination in the episode 'Self Made Man'?
5. Who sells Sarah fire arms and is later killed by Cameron?

## AUF WIEDERSEHEN

6. Whose identity did Cameron assume before being reprogrammed?

7. Who is Derek Reese's younger brother?
8. What model Terminator is Cromartie?
9. What kind of building did Charley Dixon use as a safe house?
10. Who does Cameron give her processor chip to in the series finale?

## SAYONARA

11. Whose love interest is Riley Dawson?
12. What is the name of the high-tech corporation run by Catherine Weaver?
13. What model of Terminator is Catherine?
14. What is the name of the computer designed by Sarah's love interest Andy?

15. Who sailed to Australia to deliver supplies aboard the USS Jimmy Carter?

## SHALOM

16. Who created *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles*?
17. Which genre TV regular took on the role of Cameron Phillips?
18. What is the title of the show's final episode?
19. In which US city was the show's pilot episode filmed: a) Albuquerque, NM, b) Los Angeles, CA, or c) Salt Lake City, UT?
20. How many seasons did the show go on to run for?

**DIDN'T HE/SHE DO WELL!** See how you did with our arbitrary scoring system



**16-20**

**CATHERINE WEAVER**  
Are you even human? No living being could score that high without the assistance of some kind of processor chip. But not being human isn't a bad thing; when things get tricky, you always know how to have the upper hand.



**11-15**

**SARAH CONNOR**  
You're sometimes too cool for your own good, which means you have obstacles thrown at you designed challenge your brilliance. You don't win all your battles, but you'll rarely come face to face with one that you won't have a crack at.



**6-10**

**JOHN CONNOR**  
You're destined to be a leader, which means you're a lot more resourceful than other kids your age. But you sometimes forget you're still a kid. Take things as they come, and if you screw up you can always ask for help.



**0-5**

**CAMERON PHILLIPS**  
For someone so awesome on paper, you sure do mess up a lot. It could be your lack of humanity, or it could just be a tech malfunction. It's getting hard to tell; you perform well when it matters, but it looks like this quiz didn't matter.

ANSWERS: 1. 15 2. 2027 3. James Elliston 4. The Governor of California 5. Enrique Salceda 6. Resistance fighter Allison Young 7. Kyle Reese, John Connor's father 8. T-888 9. A Lighthouse 10. John Henry 11. John Connor's 12. ZeiraCorp 13. T-1000 14. The Turk 15. Jesse Flores 16. Josh Friedman 17. Summer Glau 18. Born to Run 19. Albuquerque, New Mexico 20. Two



# KRACKERS

KRACKERS COMICS & GAMES

COMICS • GRAPHIC NOVELS • TOYS  
WARHAMMER • DUNGEONS & DRAGONS  
STAR WARS • MAGIC: THE GATHERING  
DR WHO • KID ROBOT • FUNKO POP!  
ADVENTURE TIME • BOARDGAMES

5 BATH PLACE, TAUNTON, SOMERSET TA1 4ER TEL: (01823) 335 057  
[WWW.KRACKERS.COM](http://WWW.KRACKERS.COM)

# American GRAFFITI

.The Comics Specialist.

Stockist of US comics,  
Graphic Novels, Manga  
and much more.

Established over 25 years

78 Church Lane, Barnstaple,  
Devon. EX31 1BH  
Tel: 01271 325740  
E-mail [shop@amgrafcomics.co.uk](mailto:shop@amgrafcomics.co.uk)

To advertise in

# SciFiNow

Contact  
Simon Hyland – 01732 445327




## 8-BIT KIDS

### Growing Up With The Commodore 64

*Remember growing up in the 1980s? Holidays were all about gaming, endless hours of battling it out around the Commodore 64.*

*To us, a gaming holiday was worth as much as a Caribbean getaway to our parents!*

**Re-live those days with this top notch hardback book that takes you back to the 80s!!**

- +100 new exclusive pictures
- Original Zzap!64 ads
- Original Oliver Frey artwork
- Nostalgia galore
- A must-have for all booklovers and collectors

**pre-order NOW!**




[www.8bitkids.co.uk](http://www.8bitkids.co.uk)

**NEW YEAR OFFER!**

**50%  
OFF\***

\* UK Direct Debit print edition offer only, 50% saving based on cover price of £4.99 per issue.

WHEN YOU SUBSCRIBE TO  
***SCIFINOW MAGAZINE***

**SciFiNow™**

THE WORLD'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION  
FANTASY AND HORROR MAGAZINE



# SciFiNow

THE WORLD'S BEST SCI-FI, FANTASY  
AND HORROR MAGAZINE

NEXT ISSUE 10 MARCH

DON'T  
MISS OUT  
Turn to page 112  
to subscribe!

## GHOST IN THE SHELL

We plug in with the cast  
and crew of the most  
visually astonishing  
movie of 2017

SciFiNow  
www.scifinow.co.uk

Kelsey Media  
Cudham Tithe Barn  
Berrys Hill  
Cudham  
Kent  
TN16 3AG

### Editorial

**Editor** Steve Wright  
☎ 01202 586244  
**Email** [scifinow.stevewright@kelsey.co.uk](mailto:scifinow.stevewright@kelsey.co.uk)  
**Art Editor** Jonathan Wells  
**Features Editor** Jonathan Hatfull  
**Senior Staff Writer** Poppy-Jay Palmer  
**Production Editor** Jen Neal

**Contributors** Abigail Chandler, Martyn Conerio, Sarah Dobbs, Erlingur Einarsson, Will Lawrence, Becky Lea, Amy Martin, Katherine McLaughlin, Joanna Ozdowska, Russell Sheath, Michael Simpson, Laura Sneddon, Adam Tanswell, Calum Waddell

### Cover images

Kong: Skull Island © 2017 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved  
Twin Peaks © 1990 Twin Peaks Productions Inc.  
Star Wars: A New Hope © 1977 Lucas Films/Disney

### Advertisement Sales

Talk Media Sales ☎ 01732 445325  
David Lerpiniere  
[david.lerpiniere@talkmediasales.co.uk](mailto:david.lerpiniere@talkmediasales.co.uk)  
Amy Reeves-Clews  
[amy.reeves@talkmediasales.co.uk](mailto:amy.reeves@talkmediasales.co.uk)

Production: AT Graphics  
[kelseycopy@atgraphicsuk.com](mailto:kelseycopy@atgraphicsuk.com)  
☎ 01733 362317  
**Production Team Leader** Melanie Cooper

### Management

**Managing Director** Phil Weedon  
**Chief Executive** Steve Wright  
**Chairman** Steve Annetts  
**Finance Director** Joyce Parker-Sarioglu  
**Retail Distribution Manager** Eleanor Brown  
**Publishing Operations Manager** Charlotte Whittaker  
**Audience Development Manager** Andy Cotton  
**Subs Marketing Manager** Dan Webb  
**Brand Marketing Manager** Rebecca Gibson  
**Events Manager** Kat Chappell

### Subscriptions

13 issues of SciFiNow are published per annum  
**UK annual subscription** £64.87  
**Europe annual subscription** £74.99  
**USA annual subscription** £74.99  
**Rest of World annual subscription** £82.99

### Contact us

UK subscription and back issue ordering:  
☎ 0333 043 9848  
Overseas subscription ordering:  
☎ 0044 (0) 1959 543 747  
Toll free USA subscription ordering:  
☎ 1-888-777-0275  
UK customer service team:  
☎ 01959 543 747  
Customer service email address:  
[subs@kelsey.co.uk](mailto:subs@kelsey.co.uk)  
Customer service and subscription postal address:  
SciFiNow Customer Service Team  
Kelsey Publishing Ltd  
Cudham Tithe Barn  
Berry's Hill  
Cudham  
Kent  
TN16 3AG  
United Kingdom

### Website

Find current subscription offers at  
[shop.kelsey.co.uk/sfi](http://shop.kelsey.co.uk/sfi)  
Buy back issues at [shop.kelsey.co.uk/sfback](http://shop.kelsey.co.uk/sfback)

### Already a subscriber?

Manage your subscription online at  
[shop.kelsey.co.uk/myaccount](http://shop.kelsey.co.uk/myaccount)

### Distribution

Seymour Distribution Ltd, 2 East Poultry Avenue, London, EC1A 9PT  
[www.seymour.co.uk](http://www.seymour.co.uk)  
☎ 020 7429 4000

### Printing

William Gibbons & Sons Ltd

### Disclaimer

Kelsey Media 2016 © all rights reserved. Kelsey Media is a trading name of Kelsey Publishing Ltd. Reproduction in whole or in part is forbidden except with permission in writing from the publishers. Note to contributors: articles submitted for consideration by the editor must be the original work of the author and not previously published. Where photographs are included, which are not the property of the contributor, permission to reproduce them must have been obtained from the owner of the copyright. The editor cannot guarantee a personal response to all letters and emails received. The views expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Publisher. Kelsey Publishing Ltd accepts no liability for products and services offered by third parties.

Kelsey Publishing Ltd uses a multi-layered privacy notice, giving you brief details about how we would like to use your personal information. For full details, visit [www.kelsey.co.uk](http://www.kelsey.co.uk), or call 01959 543524. If you have any questions, please ask as submitting your details indicates your consent, until you choose otherwise, that we and our partners may contact you about products and services that will be of relevance to you via direct mail, phone, email or SMS. You can opt out at ANY time via email: [data.controller@kelsey.co.uk](mailto:data.controller@kelsey.co.uk) or 01959 543524.

SciFiNow is available for licensing worldwide. For more information, contact [bruce@bruceawfordlicensing.com](mailto:bruce@bruceawfordlicensing.com)

 **KELSEY media**  
[www.kelsey.co.uk](http://www.kelsey.co.uk)





# SUBSCRIBE & SAVE £££s

ON THESE AND MANY OTHER FANTASTIC  
MAGAZINES THIS NEW YEAR...



SAVE  
UP TO  
40%



SAVE  
UP TO  
40%



SAVE  
UP TO  
40%



SAVE  
UP TO  
37%



SAVE  
UP TO  
46%



SAVE  
UP TO  
43%



SAVE  
UP TO  
41%



SAVE  
UP TO  
44%



SAVE  
UP TO  
48%



SAVE  
UP TO  
43%



SAVE  
UP TO  
44%



SAVE  
UP TO  
44%



SAVE  
UP TO  
44%



SAVE  
UP TO  
44%



SAVE  
UP TO  
50%



SAVE  
UP TO  
39%



SAVE  
UP TO  
44%



SAVE  
UP TO  
39%



SAVE  
UP TO  
43%



SAVE  
UP TO  
44%



SAVE  
UP TO  
44%



SAVE  
UP TO  
37%



SAVE  
UP TO  
40%



SAVE  
UP TO  
58%



SAVE  
UP TO  
40%

[shop.kelsey.co.uk/jansale](http://shop.kelsey.co.uk/jansale)



## SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

☒ **YES! PLEASE START MY SUBSCRIPTION TO SCIFINOW MAGAZINE**

### DELIVERY / PAYERS DETAILS

Mrs/Ms/Miss/Mr ..... Forename .....

Surname .....

Address .....

.....

.....

..... Post / Zip code .....

Country .....

Daytime phone ..... Mobile .....

Email .....

### UK SUBSCRIPTIONS (DIRECT DEBIT ONLY)



☐ I wish to pay by Direct Debit paying just £32.44 for the first 12 months (SAVING 50%). I understand that after 12 months my subscription will continue at £48.65 still saving 25% every 12 months - unless I write to tell you otherwise.

### Instructions to your Bank or Building Society

Name of Bank .....

Address .....

.....

.....

..... Postcode .....

Account name .....

Sort code ..... Account number .....

.....

Signature ..... Date .....

Originator's Id number ..... Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction are subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Kelsey Publishing Limited and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank or Building Society.

### CHEQUE / CREDIT / DEBIT CARD



☐ UK: 6 issues at £29.94 **SAVING 15% £25.45**

☐ UK: 13 issues at £64.87 **SAVING 25% £48.65**

☐ USA / EUROPE: 13 issues at **£74.99**

☐ REST OF WORLD: 13 issues at **£82.99**

☐ I enclose a cheque made payable to Kelsey Publishing Limited (drawn from a UK account)

☐ Please debit my ☐ Visa ☐ Visa Debit ☐ Mastercard

Card number .....

Security number .....

Valid from ..... / ..... Expiry date ..... / .....

Signature ..... Date .....

### UK ONLY: PLEASE SEND COMPLETED FORM TO:

**FREEPOST RTKZ-HYRL-CCZX**, SCIFINOW SUBSCRIPTIONS, KELSEY MEDIA LTD., CUDHAM TITHE BARN, BERRY'S HILL, CUDHAM, KENT, TN16 3AG, UK

### INTERNATIONAL ONLY: PLEASE SEND COMPLETED FORM TO:

SCIFINOW SUBSCRIPTIONS, KELSEY MEDIA LTD., CUDHAM TITHE BARN, BERRY'S HILL, CUDHAM, KENT, TN16 3AG

PHONE TOLL FREE FROM USA: 1-888-777-0275 (7am-3pm EST)  
INTERNATIONAL ONLY PLEASE CALL: 0044 (0)1959 543 747

**SCIP0317**  
Offer/prices available until 17th March 2017. Kelsey Media Limited, uses a Multi Layered Privacy Notice giving you brief details about how we would like to use your personal information. For full details visit [www.kelsey.co.uk](http://www.kelsey.co.uk) or call 0333 043 9848. If you have any questions please ask as submitting your data indicates your consent, until you choose otherwise, that we and our partners may contact you about products and services that will be of relevance to you via direct mail, phone, email and SMS. You can opt-out at ANY time via email [data.controller@kelsey.co.uk](mailto:data.controller@kelsey.co.uk) or 0333 043 9848.



NORMALLY  
~~£4.99~~  
YOU PAY  
**£2.50\***

### SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION OFFER:

**○ SAVE 50% ON THE SHOP PRICE**

**○ SPREAD THE COST AND PAY JUST £32.44 EVERY 13 ISSUES BY DIRECT DEBIT**

**○ RECEIVE EVERY ISSUE DELIVERED DIRECT TO YOUR DOOR WITH FREE UK DELIVERY**

## SUBSCRIBE TODAY

ONLINE  
[shop.kelsey.co.uk/sci](http://shop.kelsey.co.uk/sci)

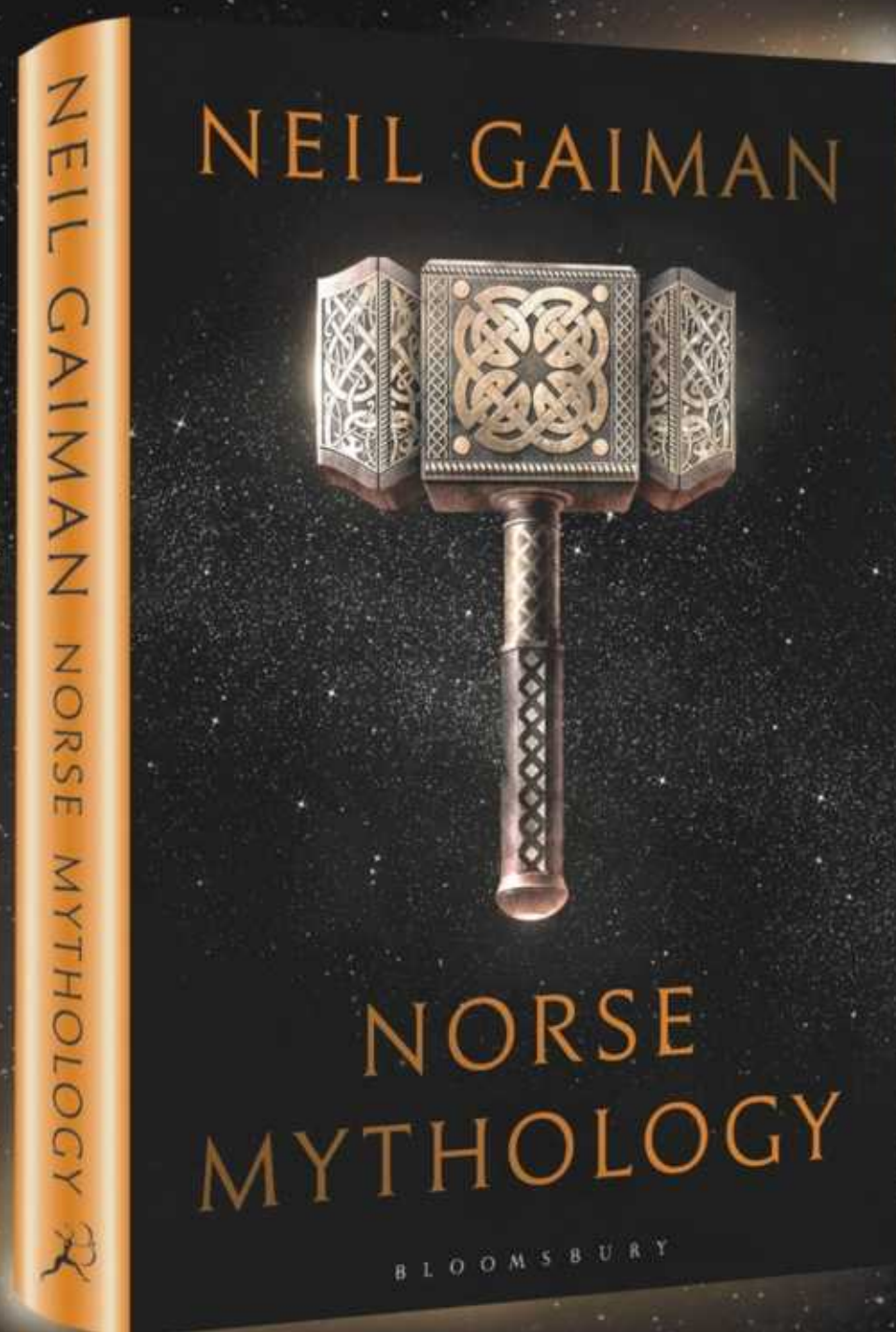
CALL US  
**0333 043 9848** PLEASE QUOTE: SCIP0317

BY POST  
**FREEPOST RTKZ-HYRL-CCZX**

SCIFINOW MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS, KELSEY MEDIA LTD., CUDHAM TITHE BARN, BERRY'S HILL, CUDHAM, KENT, TN16 3AG

Hotline open: Mon - Fri 8am - 6pm. Please note that calls are charged at your local rate, for further information please check with your service provider.

# ANCIENT MYTHS FROM A MODERN MASTER



BLOOMSBURY