



CONTINUUM 8
CRAFTONOMICON

MELBOURNE
JUNE 8-11 2012

SWANCON 2013

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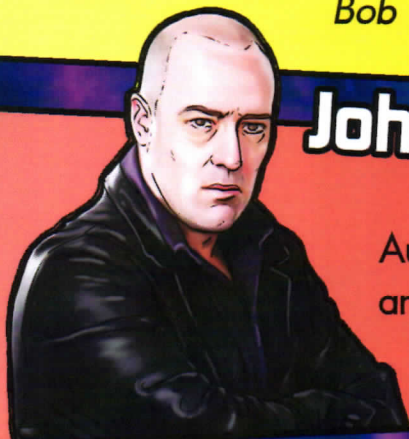
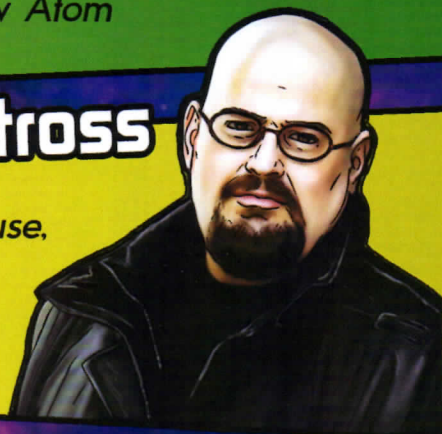


Gail Simone

Writer of *Batgirl*, *Wonder Woman*, *Secret Six*, *Birds of Prey*, *Welcome to Tranquillity*, *Deadpool*, and *The All-New Atom*

Charles Stross

Author of *Accelerando*, *Glasshouse*, the *Halting State* series, and the *Bob Howard: Laundry* series



John Birmingham

Author of the *Axis of Time* trilogy, *Without Warning*, and *He Died With A Felafel In His Hand*

with Academic Guest Lucy Sussex

Senior Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne,
author of *Matilda Told Such Dreadful Lies* and *Thief of Lives*

T
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Chairs welcome

Lovecraft? or Love Craft?

There is a shadow over Melbourne. A cult has risen in worship of **Octavius Octonarii**, the deep one of Port Phillip Bay. Knitters, sewers, crocheters, ziners, yarnbombers, metalworkers, writers, artists and crafters are enraptured by multi-tentacled creating.

The brave and the foolish have sought out the **Craftonomicon**, the forbidden tome of crafting knowledge, believing it will provide forbidden knowledge of the fabled **8th Continuum**.

Some, in fits of lucidity, or maybe insanity, proclaim what we will find is not the 8th Continuum but a much more ancient and powerful artefact, the **51st Natcon**.

We are blessed this year to be graced with the presence of some especially worthy acolytes, those who have already gained a higher level of eldritch power: **Kelly Link**, **Alison Goodman** and **Sue Ann Barber**. These members of our clan will share with those faithful in attendance their sought-after knowledge. Their actions, and yours, enhance our community and bring power to us as a collective, and you, yes you, are welcome to join with us in this and many gatherings to come.

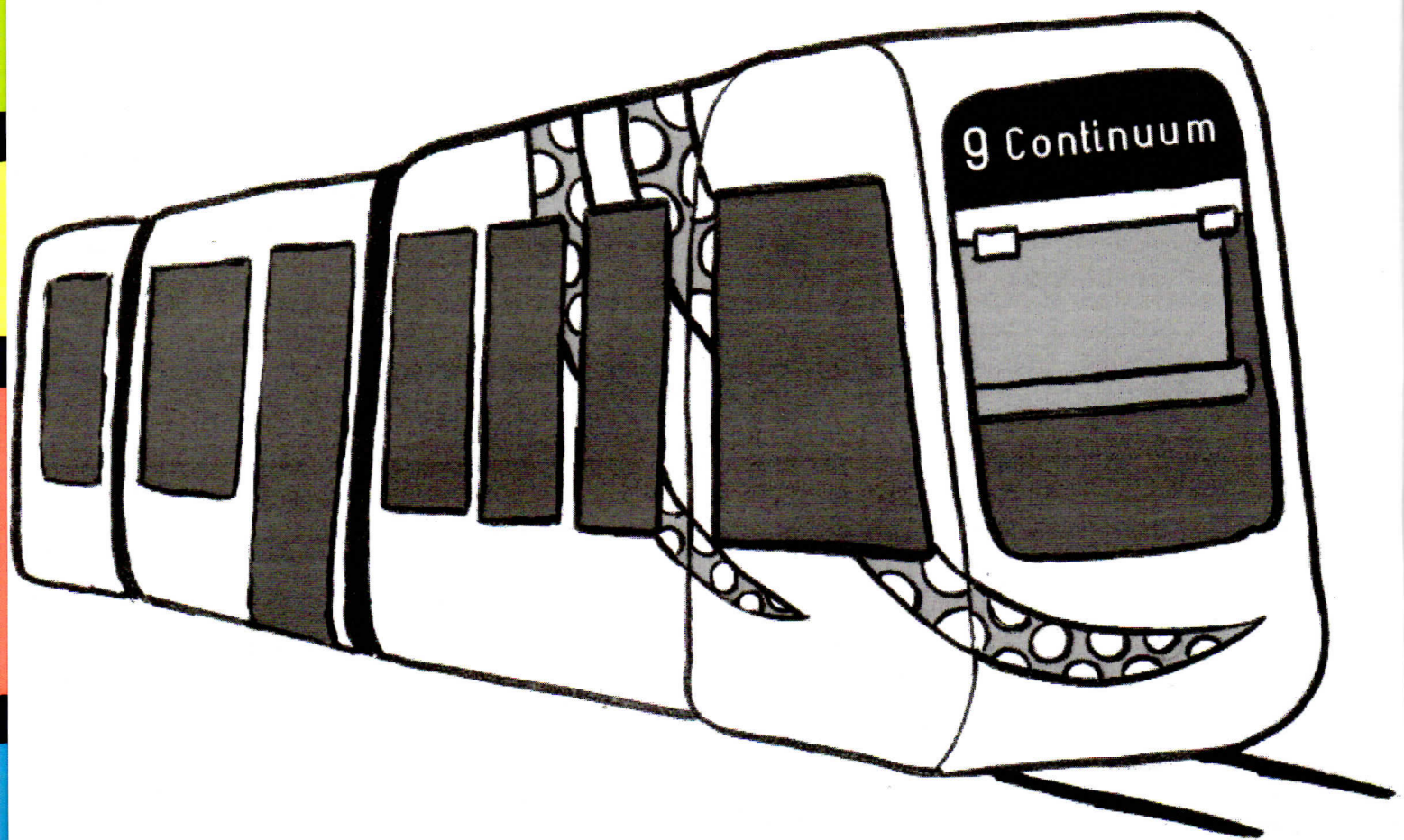
Welcome to the convention
Emilly McLeay

Continuum Foundation



The Continuum Foundation exists to help grow and support fandom in Victoria. As well as helping to put together the Continuum Convention every year, we run the Chronos Awards to acknowledge excellence in Victorian SF, fantasy, horror, and fandom. We've provided financial support and advice to a whole bunch of Melbourne's fannish groups and events, and several groups outside Victoria as well. We're also putting together a resource of fannish history in Victoria and convention-running experience at confound.wikispot.org. If you're interested in finding out more, please get in touch! If you're at C8, look out for a member with this logo on their badge, or email confound@netspace.net.au.

continuum 9:
contraindicators
june 7 - 10, 2013



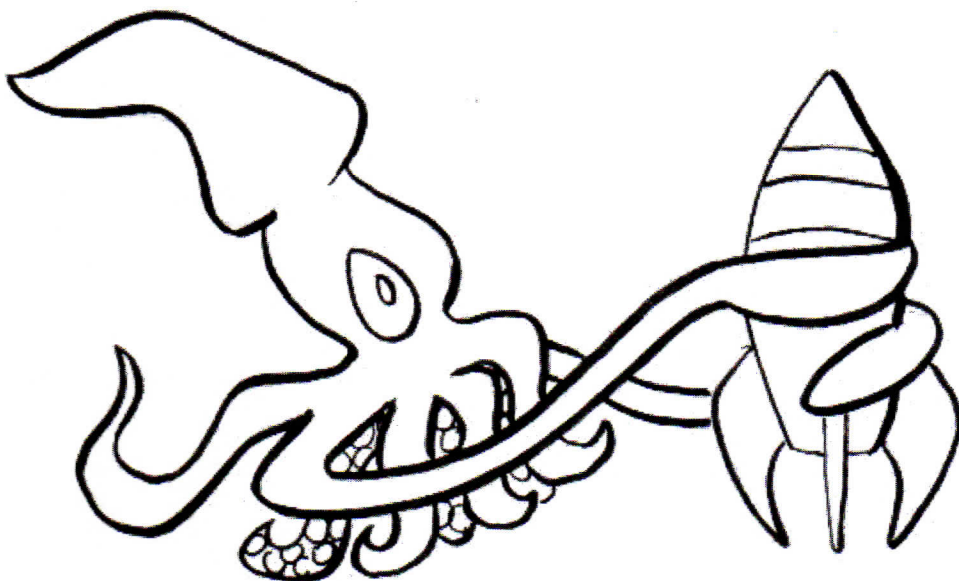
keep an eye out for more details to come

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Code of Conduct

While both the convention and the venue will exercise all due care and responsibility to ensure the safety of participants and their property, no liability will be accepted for loss or damage of items or personal effects brought onto the convention site.

Simple version: don't leave your valuables lying around

Children must be accompanied and supervised by a parent or guardian at all times. A child is a person 15 years old or younger. If an adolescent is deemed to be unruly or obnoxious, they will be required to spend the entire convention in the company of their parent or guardian, who if not in attendance will be sent for. The organisers reserve the right to decide what is unruly or obnoxious.

Please note that Continuum does not provide a child-minding service for attendees. Parents and guardians are advised to make their own arrangements.

If you cause trouble of any sort, the organisers reserve the right to eject you from the convention, the convention site and/or the hotel. The organisers reserve the right to define what 'trouble' is. Any harassment will not be tolerated.

Simple version: if you sense that what you're doing is mean or nasty, or you're afraid of being caught, stop it. Don't be surprised when we ask you to leave.

The use of illegal drugs is prohibited and expressly forbidden within the convention site. Alcohol may not be brought into the convention site and may only be consumed within the confines of the convention site if purchased from official sources. The convention site is a non-smoking venue.

If you are in a room and there is nowhere left to sit, do not lean against the wall and do not, under any circumstances, put your feet on walls. If you do, you will be awarded a share of the cleaning/re-painting bill that we receive to remove your footprints.

Nobody but those officially appointed to do so may touch or use any equipment set up for the convention. If you do, out you go, in hand with the bill for any damage or loss.

Simple version: don't touch stuff that doesn't belong to you.

No weapons are to be worn or carried at any time during the convention (including water pistols, real or replica guns, swords or knives), unless approved as part of an official event. Only the convention organisers may approve such weapons and their participation in any event. See the Maskobalo section (p. 33) for more on costuming.

Simple version: if the real life version of what you're carrying can hurt people, check first.

While there is no official dress code, the organisers would prefer not to see your jiggy bits. Most of us are pretty broad minded and if your costume is one that would actually make for a nice book cover, chances are we'll be cool with it on artistic grounds. Costumes that have no purpose other than to be confrontational are likely to get a warning, as such outfits may impact on the enjoyment of other members. Lycra is permitted. All people attending the convention must wear footwear. This is a requirement of the insurers of the convention and the venue, rather than conservative Victorian values.

Simple version: costumes should be nifty, not naughty.

Conventions are social events, so please don't forget to maintain a reasonable level of personal hygiene.

Simple version: keep yourself nice

As the convention site is shared with non-Continuum attendees, please be respectful of other guests staying at the venue, and act responsibly, as you will be liable for costs if you cause damage or make a mess. What you do in your own room is your own business, although the hotel would probably not approve of making human sacrifices.

Simple version: enjoy yourself, have fun – but don't go stupid.

If people wish to record panels or events they attend, they must get permission of all participants to be recorded. People using recording equipment must not obstruct other people's views or thoroughfares. The organisers reserve the right not to allow filming or sound recording for any reason. Still photography is permitted.

Simple version: ask first if you want to record anything.

Guest of Honour

Sue Ann Barber



Sue Ann joined fandom as a 15 year old Dr Who fan. Having seen the affect fandom had on her brother, her parents counselled against the idea but she ignored them and has been an active member of fandom ever since.

She has lost count of the number of conventions and fannish events she has attended. If she had her way, there'd be more to attend and she'd get to meet even more interesting people from around the world.

Her fannish achievements are many and varied and include: editing fanzines; programming conventions (including Aussiecon 4); running conventions; running SF clubs; creating a Fan Fund; presenting awesome panels and being a Fan Fund delegate.

There's a Ditmar Award on her shelf at home. It's not hers, but she figures it's the nearest she'll ever get to one so she's not giving it up in a hurry. She does lay claim to the Tin Duck and the Chronos awards, however.

She is passionate about YA literature, LEGO, graphic novels, SF TV and stereo photography. By accident she has ended up as one of the driving forces behind LEGO Fandom in Australia for which she uses her SF convention experience to run Brickvention - Australia's premier LEGO fan event. She loves being part of fandom and is looking forward to hanging out at Continuum 8.

A life in fandom

Sue Ann Barber

So they asked me to write something for the conbook and I pondered long and hard over what would be suitable. At the 11th hour I still find I have nothing concrete or specific as a topic. For now, I'll just ramble and see if it takes me anywhere in particular.

Perhaps I can talk about Fandom? Fandom has been part of my life for a very long time. Science Fiction was always on TV in our house and I recall going to see movies at the old WAIT Science Fiction Film Festival when I was still in primary school. Then, when I was 15, I discovered Doctor Who Fandom via a flyer for some fanzines that had been carefully placed amongst the Doctor Who books in Dorrington's Bookshop. Shortly after, I attended the newly formed West Lodge (Perth Doctor Who Fan Club). I dragged a school friend along (I'm not sure she ever forgave me for making her a Doctor Who fan) to my first meeting. There were cheese scones and smiling faces as we crowded into the theatrette in the garage at a member's house. The anticipation of watching Doctor Who on a big screen was enormous but then the let down was equal when the small TV at the front of the theatrette was switched on and we watched a very poor quality copy of an old black and white story. But then, these were my people and the TV show I loved so I returned month after month for further viewing of poor quality copies of old Doctor Who stories. As hard as it was to work out which was the Doctor and which was a tree the camaraderie outweighed the ridiculousness of the situation.

Fast forward a few years and we arrive at Network 23. Born out of the

ashes of another group, Network 23 was the cool club where people hung out and talked about TV, movies and books. Three of us ran the meetings and 2 others hosted the meetings. A lot of our meetings were held at the Subiaco library meeting room – a room that was later incorporated into the main library and now contains the children's books and a Shaun Tan mural. I really enjoyed Network 23 and was rather sad when it eventually came to an end. Network 23 always has a convention-style vibe to it and was a great way to see friends in-between cons. Somewhere between The West Lodge and Network 23, there was Free for All – The Prisoner appreciation society. This was a club full of mystery and magic. For years we had no idea who was running the club. The running sheet for the meeting would be sent to one person and someone else would be asked to bring along a video and we would watch episodes of the Patrick McGoohan TV series, The Prisoner. When the meetings moved to the Gumnut Factory, the magic grew. Watching videos sitting amongst display windows full of wonderful TV/Movie collectables, model cars, old advertising signs and a model train layout just added to the atmosphere.

In amongst all of this, I attended my first Swancon. This was years after I should have attended my first Swancon. My brother had been a regular attendee and his stories did nothing to encourage me to attend. It wasn't until a dear friend insisted I attend that I finally took the plunge. This is where the craziness really begins. There were panels, parties, video rooms, coffee and more panels, more parties and

more coffee. It took just one hectic weekend and I was hooked on being a regular convention attendee. Just a few years later I found myself co-running a convention (not a Swancon). Then my co-chair pulled out and the then Swancon committee ran screaming (excuse the dramatic license) and they needed to find someone foolish enough to replace them all and I found myself running a Swancon without having ever planned to do so. Eighteen years later and the memory of that weekend is still a mixture of joy and much sadness. Joy for bringing together an awesome weekend, sadness for the passing of my father a week before the event.

Zoom forward to the year 2000. I am newly arrived in Melbourne with memories of Aussiecon 3 fresh in my mind. I join the Melbourne Science Fiction Club and find a whole new world of Fandom. Soon I find myself on the committee and with an invitation to create the program for the Natcon (Convergence). So, I created the program and we all had an awesome time. Continuum was born soon after and I created the program for the first one, then the second and then the third. I took a break for the fourth but came back for the fifth and sixth. At that point I took on the responsibility of Divisional Head of Programming for Aussiecon 4. This involved working with a very talented team to put together the program – a challenging task considering we were spread across Australia.

Fan Funds have also played an important part of Fandom for me. Every since I first had a ballot form shoved in my face (yes, shoved) and the frantic words of "Vote for

me!” uttered by a desperate candidate, I have been a supporter of Fan Funds. At first I just voted and encouraged candidates. Then I saw a need to create a Fan Fund to enable fans to travel across Australia. Sure, it’s easy for some people to travel to the Natcon but there are many who would like to make the journey but just can’t afford the expense. I had my first discussions with fans in Melbourne in 1994 and eventually we launched NAFF – the National Australian Fan Fund. NAFF funds the travel of fans to the Natcon from a state outside of the host city. It’s had a rocky journey but it still continues to this day and I’m very pleased to have a NAFF delegate at Continuum 8.

In 2009, my partner Trevor and I were successful candidates for the GUFF race to the British Eastercon. Despite promoting Fan Funds for many years, this was our first Fan Fund trip and it was everything we expected it to be. We got the chance to meet a lot of awesome fans and experience fandom on a much larger scale. During our GUFF trip we also visited P-Con in Ireland and experienced the joy of a small intimate convention where everyone knows each other and best selling authors are just one of the attendees. I cannot recommend Fan Fund trips enough. Everyone is eligible so you should all apply for future races!

And here we are in 2012. Somewhere along the line I took a side step and found myself in LEGO Fandom. I became an AFOL in the 1990s but didn’t really become involved in organized fandom until I’d moved to Melbourne. A small number of us started the Melbourne LEGO User Group (MUGs) and began to meet on a regular basis. In 2006 we ran our first Brickvention (LEGO Convention). The attendance was low as we only invited friends and family but we had a great time and were keen to continue the new tradition. Every year since then we have held a Brickvention. Now we have over 10,000 members of the public and nearly 200 AFOLs regularly attending our event. We’ve gone from a small function room at Melbourne University to the Melbourne Town Hall. Next year we will be holding it at the heritage-listed Royal Exhibition Building in Carlton. This is an exciting, yet scary, prospect.

So this is where I am now. I still attend SF conventions and read and watch SF. I’m a regular at the Nova Mob and I’m occasionally at the MSFC. Unfortunately, I no longer have the free time for other SF clubs. For me, it’s all about the LEGO. We have monthly AFOL and Junior meetings and we coordinate LEGO displays for various community groups. This is a very exciting time to be a LEGO fan.

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Guest of Honour



Alison Goodman

Alison Goodman is the author of *Eon* and *Eona*, a New York Times Bestselling fantasy duology which has sold into seventeen countries and been translated into ten languages. *Eon* was short-listed for Victorian, NSW, and WA Premier's Literary awards, and won the 2008 Aurealis Award for Best Fantasy Novel. It was also listed as an American Library Association Best Young Adult Book (2010), a James Tiptree Jr. Honour book, and a CBCA Notable Book.

Alison's first novel, *Singing the Dogstar Blues*, won the 1998 Aurealis Award for Best Young Adult Novel, and was also listed as an American Library Association Best Book (2004) and CBCA Notable Book. Her second novel, a crime thriller titled *Killing the Rabbit*, was published in the USA and shortlisted for the 2007 Davitt Award.

Alison was a D.J. O'Hearn Memorial Fellow at the University of Melbourne and holds a Master of Arts. She lives bayside with her husband and their Machiavellian Jack Russell Terrier, and is currently working on a new supernatural series.

Dead Spyderys

Alison Goodman

I wrote *Dead Spyderys* in 1997 and it was published in *Eidolon 24* in the same year, receiving an honourable mention in the 15th Edition of *The Years Best Science Fiction*, edited by Gardner Dazois.

When Dr Padma Mays shuffled her feet under her chair, I had a hunch she was going to lie.

"My name is Dr Smith," she said.

Yep, the feet always give it away. Dr Mays was one of the world's top Artificial Intelligence researchers. I'd seen her on a science show about a month ago after she'd made another breakthrough in genetic programming. So what was she doing in my office hiding behind a bad alias?

"What can I do for you, Dr Smith?" I asked.

She smoothed down a strand of hair that had escaped the wet-look gel. "I read about you in *Bytestyles*, Ms Powell. They said you were the best Nets investigator in the business."

At first I'd been flattered when *Bytestyles* asked to interview me. Then I met the retro pig they sent to write the article. Damon Salamander. I could have put him on a civ charge just for his handshake. The man was out to trash me and my business. So, I asked Blackwidow to help me poke around Damon's finances. She likes to hack into the big government networks. As usual, we came up with the goods. When I casually mentioned child support back-payments to Mr Salamander, he did an abrupt 180 degrees and wrote a glowing account of Powell Investigations. Reilly, who helps me out with my research, wanted to report Salamander to the Welfare Bureau. He hates dodgy dads. But fair's fair. Salamander's article

Of all my short stories, it has always been my favourite, so I am pleased to see it out in the world again.

I was also pleased to find that, on the whole, it has stood up to the passing of nearly 16 years. Having said that, I have made a few changes – a decade and a half of writing experience has honed my editing eye!

pronounced me the number one investigator in Australia, and it didn't even mention the blackmail.

I'd like to think that it's my sheer talent and hard work that's made me the best investigator on the Nets. It isn't. It's Blackwidow. She's one of the best spyderys around and can get into any system on either FreeNet or SatNet. The satellite cops are always trying to track her down. She first contacted me about a year ago when I was trying to hack into the Mt Buller Virtual Ski Slope.

At that time, business was slow to non-existent and I'd sold most of my sensory hook-up gear to pay my rent. I only had visuals and sound left so, even if I had got into Buller, it wouldn't have been much fun. You need the temp, v-force and enviro stuff to really feel like you're skiing. But breaking into Buller was something to do. I was trying to work out a way to get around the ski-lift operator without a ticket, when a small black cartoon spider stamped over the snow and stopped in front of me. "Are you Corinne Powell?" the spider asked.

"Yep. That is, unless you're the slope supervisor, then I'm Jamie Goldfinger." The spider didn't seem to have a sense of humour. "Are you the Corinne

The story was influenced by the whole cyberpunk vibe, and on my 2012 re-read I was amused to see that I had the prescience to predict dedicated "reading units". As I recall, at the time it just seemed like common sense that books would eventually shift into the brave new digital world.

I hope you enjoy the story.

Cheers, Alison.

Powell who was released from employment by the Data Analysis Section of TAX two years, five months, six weeks ago?" she asked.

"Released from employment? Well, that's one way of putting it," I said.

"How would you put it?"

"I was fired."

"You were fired because you defended your co-worker and friend, Reilly Connell, against a false charge of corruption. Is this true or false?"

Something was wrong. TAX had been very careful to cover up that whole stupid affair. Reilly and I had even been advised by a couple of 'company' heavies to keep quiet. Reilly had been all for splashing the whole thing across FreeNet in the name of justice. I told him not to be stupid. He had two kids and no life insurance. Justice could wait.

"How do you know about that?" I asked. My real finger slid over my computer's shut-down switch.

"I am Blackwidow," the spider said.

Okay, that explained how she knew about it. But why was the most famous spyder contacting me? An Illegal Nets guide does not contact a user. It was always the other way round. If you wanted to hire a spyder,

you put out a special code flag and maybe, if you checked out all right, one of them would contact you.

"Now that we've established our credentials, what do you want?" I asked, moving back slightly, out of scan range. I'd heard that spyders had some fancy tricks that could disable a virtual body.

"I have a proposition that could be mutually beneficial," she said.

"And what would that be?" My shut-down finger was twitching.

"This is not a secure environment. Will you accompany me to a safer virtual plane?"

Decision time. Every one of my neurones screamed "trap!" Cops, or maybe even SatCops. However, my gut wasn't so sure. My gut was interested. My gut was insane.

"Okay," I said.

So I hitched a ride on the back of Blackwidow to another v-plane somewhere on a local FreeNet satellite. Weirdest ride I'd ever had. Too fast to take in much detail. We stopped in the middle of a Mandelbrot chaos swirl that was so bright I had to lower the resolution on my 'eyes'.

"I wish to propose a partnership," Blackwidow said. "I will assist you in your investigations and aid you in the development of your company and career. My involvement in your operations will be concealed for mutual safety and you will not take any action to discover my identity."

"Sounds reasonable. But what do you want out of it?"

If there's one thing I know, there's nothing for nothing in this world. She probably wanted something outrageous like an 80:20 split. Then again, an 80:20 split sounded more attractive than 100% of zero, which I'd recently been earning.

"I am seeking a friend and ally," Blackwidow said.

Lord, save me from the strays of this world, I thought. Why does

every lost and lonely creature think I'm their saviour? I've had to find homes for cats, dogs, possums and even an ex-husband. Now, here was the most respected and feared spyder on both the Nets trying to buy my friendship. It was a good bet that Blackwidow was very young and very lonely. I had a vision of a pale sixteen-year-old permanently attached to her state-of-the-art sensory equipment and living on Vegie Macs. No wonder she was the best spyder: no life to distract her. Poor kid. I remembered myself at sixteen. Too many hormones and no self-confidence. I've still got the hormones.

"Look," I said. "Why don't we make it a real business proposition? 50:50. Then we can see if a friendship develops."

I didn't want to take advantage of her, but I also didn't want to blow off a chance of a lifetime.

"Work together as you do with your friend Reilly Connell?" she asked.

"That's the idea."

"Yes, the arrangement is acceptable."

That was the beginning of our partnership. It took a while for Blackwidow to really trust me. Nowadays she's a lot more relaxed. You'd have to be, after hanging around me for a year. I'd say we both got what we wanted: I got my profitable business and Blackwidow got her friend. Actually, she wanted more of a mother than a friend. That's okay—I kind of like passing on my worldly wisdom. She reminds me of Reilly's two-year-old: everything is "why, why, why?" Of course, Reilly's two-year-old doesn't ask me what constitutes consciousness, or whether morality is fixed or fluid. Blackwidow loves a good philosophical argument. She keeps me on my toes and I have to admit that some of the theories of consciousness she's dragged up for discussion have been interesting — the ability to place yourself in the future was

a good one, and I quite liked the moral judgement theory. Although, as Blackwidow rightly pointed out, "Whose morals?"

Dr Mays was still shuffling her feet under her chair. More lies? Or was it nerves this time?

"I want to hire you to find something for me," she said.

I nodded encouragingly. She leaned towards me, so close that I could see the tattooed cosmetic outline around her eyes.

"Have you heard of RAID, Ms Powell?"

I drew back. Of course I had. A while back, a spyder called Funnelweb had been fried by his own sensory equipment. The poor bastard had been thrown across his lounge room and through the window. It was put down to a malfunction, but a rumour started about a proactive virus called RAID that was programmed to locate and kill spyders. A lot of people shut down, too scared to log in. But there were no more deaths. Well, none that were reported on the Nets.

"RAID was just a freenie rumour," I said.

Mays shook her head. "No. RAID is real. I built it."

A shiver prickled across my scalp. I've learned to take notice of my scalp. It seems to know when I should start running.

"I hope I'm jumping to conclusions here," I said. "But are you asking me to find RAID?"

Mays looked down at her hands. They were clasped so tightly that her two perspex marriage rings cut into her entwined fingers.

"I built RAID to locate spyders. Just locate them," she said, looking up at me. "They said they wanted to find the spyders so they could track them back to their homes and arrest them."

"Who are they?"

"The SatNet police," Mays said.

Run Corinne, my scalp said, run!
"When it killed that old man. . ."
Mays paused. "I saw him, you know."
She dry swallowed. "When RAID
killed that old man, the Sats pulled
it back in. They asked me to help.
We contained it then they got me to
create a disabler virus. But when I
introduced the disabler into RAID,
everything got out of hand."

"What do you mean?"

"RAID got away."

"Got away?"

"It disappeared into the Nets."

"So RAID is still out there looking
for spyders to kill." I shifted in my
chair, trying to control the urge to
bolt out of the room, log in and warn
Blackwidow.

May licked her lips. "We're not sure
that it's limited to spyders," she said.

"What?"

"The disabler virus didn't integrate
like we thought it would. You see,
RAID wasn't just a virus. It was
based on a user-responsive search
engine. We had to make it learn how
to out-sneak the spyders. It was a
great bit of programming: clean as
a whistle." She must have seen my
eyes glaze over because she stopped
and cleared her throat. "Anyway, the
disabler was supposed to remove
the 'locate illegal web user' section
of the programming. We think it
might have just removed the 'illegal'
bit."

"How long has it been out there?"

"I built the disabler about eight-
teen months ago. When the whole
thing went bad, the Sats shut out
me and my assistant. They said they
would contain it. Now they've finally
admitted they don't know where the
hell it is or what it's doing."

"Has it killed anyone else?"

Mays shrugged. "I don't know
and I can't find out. The Sats have
clammed up tight. But I do know
they're worried about RAID's ability
to get into their network. You see,
it always had to report back to

their central hub. In a way it is part
of their central hub: it holds their
whole quantum cryptography key.
That was my idea. It means it can
get through the SatNet Quantum
firewall."

"And has it?"

"Many times. None of their whiz-
kids can stop it."

"What does it do to their hub?"

"I don't know. Whatever it is, it's
scaring the Sats."

"Okay," I said. "But why are you
here? What do you want me to do?"

"The Sats want me to destroy RAID,
and I will," Mays said. "That means
I'll need to know what has happened
to it, how it has changed." She
paused, easing her rings along her
fingers.

"That's not all, is it?" I said.

"No." She bit the end of her thumb.
"Look, Ms Powell, I'm a scientist.
I want to know . . . I need to know
what has happened to RAID. Has it
progressed? Evolved? Burnt itself
out, RAID is a wonderful opportu-
nity to learn."

"If the Sats can't find it and you can't
find it, what makes you think I can?"
She slumped back in her seat. "You
don't think you can?"

"Maybe. I'm willing to try, anyway." I
stood up. "I'll send you a run-down
of the costs for the investigation
and you can decide if you want to go
ahead."

"Thank you."

"I'll be in touch in the next few days,
Dr Mays."

I held out my hand. She stood up
and shook it, not noticing I'd called
her by her real name.

After my meeting with Mays, I
headed for the workroom. I keep
the front lounge of my new apart-
ment as the official office of Powell
Investigations, but all the real
work is done backstage. I'd got my
ex-brother-in-law to soundproof
the master bedroom and black out
its windows. Then I fitted it out with

two linked Natahachi units and two
of the best sensory hoods. Reilly
calls it 'the Pit'.

My apartment still had that
'someone else's house' feel to it.
There weren't any memories yet. I
needed some paintings and a few
good times to make the place feel
like home. I opened the door to
the workroom. Reilly had his feet
up on the windowsill, propping the
window open with his foot. The
rectangle of sunlight framed a huge
coffee stain on the carpet. A new
stain. Well, I suppose I did want the
homey touch.

He looked up from his reading unit.
"So?"

"Ever heard of RAID?"

"Bottom up, semi -intelligent search
agent. Possibly real, probably not."
Reilly has total recall. Very handy for
a researcher.

"I just met its builder," I said.

Reilly pulled his foot off the window-
sill, jumping as the window crashed
down. "Holy shit! Tell me every-
thing." He sat forward, his elbows on
his knees.

I gave him a summary of my
meeting with Mays. When I finished,
he pulled at his lower lip, frowning.

"Do you reckon it's a Sat trap to get
Blackwidow?" he asked.

Reilly was the only other person
who knew about Blackwidow's
involvement in the business. I'd told
him she was a spyder, young, and
that we had some kind of deal going,
but that was about all he knew. Just
how Blackwidow wanted it. She was
paranoid about security. Only you
and me, she'd said. She wouldn't
even come into my start-up if Reilly
was using the other Natahachi unit.

"No. I don't think they know about
us," I said. "Otherwise, Mays
wouldn't have used that stupid
alias." I sat down in front of my Nat
unit. "I think Mays just wants to get
her hands on RAID before the Sats
so that she can do her bit of research.
It sounds like the Sats aren't telling

her much, and I bet she's not telling the Sats everything either."

"And no one's telling us anything. Right?" Reilly said. He ran his hand through his razor-short hair. He'd gone a lot greyer since I'd first met him eight years ago.

"Our job is to find out things for ourselves," I said.

Reilly blew a raspberry. "Yeah, find out it's a big fat trap."

I didn't take the bait. Ever since the TAX incident, Reilly thinks everything is a government conspiracy. I flicked the shut-down switch on my unit. It was still sticking. I had to remember to get it repaired.

"It looks like the SatNet hub is the only place we know RAID visits for sure," I said. "Maybe we can start work with that."

Reilly snorted. "We can start and finish right now. The Sats have got a Quantum Cryptography firewall. EPR based. Nothing gets through that sucker without the proper key."

"Yesterday you said no system was unbreakable."

"Let me explain," he said in his old man lecturer voice. "The SatNet firewall uses Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen entangled pairs. You heard of them?"

I shook my head. Where did he get all of this stuff?

"An entangled pair can be photons or particles linked by one aspect, like polarity or momentum," he explained. "They are always the opposite of each other, like negative and positive. By using them in a firewall, the key to that firewall can be protected by the uncertainty principle."

"The what principle?"

"Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. An aspect like polarity is not designated until you consciously measure it. The key you need to break quantum cryptography is knowing how to measure it. If you don't have the key, when you measure the

aspect, you disturb it and get useless information." He leaned forward in his chair, "And here's the beautiful bit. Your key is not only protected in transit, it's also protected in storage, because if it's observed it becomes worthless." He slapped his hands together.

"Foolproof."

I've got to admit I only ever understand about a third of what Reilly says, but that's why I pay him. It's his job to know all this esoteric stuff. I'm the pragmatic one, with the occasional gut-born hunch that transcends his geekdom.

"So why doesn't Satnet just change the firewall?" I said pragmatically. "Because it's the best system. The only reason RAID can get through the firewall is because it was built containing the key. To make the hub RAID-proof would mean building a new firewall. It would cost billions. Why not just destroy RAID? Far more cost-effective."

"So, the only chance we've got to get through this firewall is Blackwidow, right?"

"I don't think even the Girl Wonder could get through it," Reilly said. "And the risk would be outrageous. I mean, the SatCops are always after her. You can't ask her to do it."

Reilly didn't really approve of my partnership with Blackwidow. He thought I was exploiting her. Sometimes I agreed with him.

"I never force her to do anything, you know. Anyway, I've got to warn her about RAID. I'll see what she thinks about this Einstein-Podi..."

"Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen entangled pairs," Reilly said patiently. "EPR."

"Right, EPR." I grabbed the articulated arm of the sensory hood and swung it towards me.

Reilly stood up. "I'll get a caffeine hit."

He never stayed in the room while I contacted Blackwidow. He says

that what he doesn't know can't be tortured out of him.

I waited until Reilly had shut the door behind him before I pulled on the gloves and fitted the hood over my head. Some people say the hood gives them claustrophobia. I find it kind of comforting. In fact, I'd bought the full head-and-shoulders outfit. It gave you complete privacy because the whole deal was opaque and soundproofed. The hood's audios slid over my ears all right, but I had to press the eye scanners closer against my sockets. The trodes tickled my forehead and temples. I blew into the voice interface, then took a deep breath and looked upwards. The trodes clicked as they registered the down-change in my brainwaves, activating the Natahachi.

As my eyes settled to look straight ahead, my start-up scene coalesced. A guy I know has a start-up full of naked women. Mine's a surf beach with a lightning storm flickering in the distance. All that flashing electricity gets my adrenalin humming. I suppose the naked women do the same for Gary.

I flicked on the virtual clock with my left glove and waited. Blackwidow always knows when I'm in the Nets. I don't know how she does it, but I've only ever had to wait two minutes for her to arrive. This time it only took her 54 seconds. I wiped the clock from my visual field and watched her walk over the sand towards me.

She was in her 'Corinne' form. Blackwidow had worked up a virtual body from the 3D image of me that Bytestyles had published with the article. The face was a bit warped, but overall it was a good likeness. I suppose it was flattering, in a psychotic kind of way. Every time I saw her, the 3D was more sophisticated. This time she'd added texture to the skin, but it still looked a bit corpse-like. I can't talk, though. I'm totally slack with my virtual bods.

I usually make do with one of the crappy prefabs on the market.

"Hiya kiddo," I said.

"Hiya. Only 53.6 seconds this time."

Early in our partnership I asked her for a flag that would contact her in case of an emergency. She just shook her head and said it wasn't safe. Instead, she promised she'd always meet me in my start-up as soon as I entered it alone. So far, she's kept her word and never missed a login.

"I've got news," I said.

We sat on the sand. Her movement was smooth, unlike the jerky collapse of my prefab.

"You should let me work on that bod. It's so stiff," she said.

"Maybe later. We've got more important things to do." I looked at her face - my face - and shivered. My mother would have said someone had walked over my grave. "This might freak you out," I said. "But I just found out that RAID is real and still out on the Nets."

"I know that," Blackwidow scoffed. "RAID has always been there." She started drawing a complicated pattern in the sand. It looked like a starburst,

"You know? And you're not worried? What if it tries to kill you?"

"I don't think RAID is killing anyone any more," she said.

"How would you know that?"

"No deaths, lately. Anyway, I have a gut feeling."

"However much I appreciate your gut feelings, I still think you should watch yourself," I said.

"I will, don't worry."

"So, do you think you can find RAID?"

"Why do you want to find it?"

I told her about Mays and the plan to disable RAID. She listened intently as she moulded a circular design upwards as though working a pot. When I finished talking, she didn't comment for a while, concentrating

on her design. I was just getting impatient when she said,

"Do you think you could ever kill anyone?"

Terrific; she was off on one of her philosophical tangents again. I knew from experience that the quickest way to get her back on track was to answer her questions.

"I don't know," I said. "Maybe if someone I loved was in danger or maybe in self defence. I don't think you'd ever really know until the moment came."

"I think everyone has it in them to kill."

"Probably. It's in our genes. Otherwise we would have all lined up to be breakfast for the sabretooth tigers," I said.

"Do you think the SatCops should disable RAID? Isn't that a kind of killing?" She pushed her hand through the map in the sand, smoothing over the towers and pathways she'd created.

"You've got to be alive first before you can be killed," I said, trying to curtail a discussion about the definition of life. "Dr Mays told me that RAID goes into the SatCop hub. I thought that might be the place to start tracking it down. What do you think? Is it too risky?"

"The SatCop hub? Now that's a challenge."

"Reilly says the hub is impenetrable. Some kind of EPR quantum firewall. I don't want you to try to get us in if it's too risky."

She had started building another map, modelling the large circular piece again. She dug her thumb into the middle of it. "If you want to find RAID, you'll have to get into their hub." Her smile seemed a bit strained. Maybe I had finally found the far edge of her abilities.

"Are you sure you can handle it? Reilly says it is too much to ask. Tell me if he's right."

"It's not a problem. In fact, we should do it now." She paused, flattening the sand pot with her palm. "As you say, there's no time like the present."

Her virtual body suddenly blipped out, leaving the coloured pulse that was her travelling body. I hastily wiped my prefab away and prepared myself for the partial sensory deprivation that came with piggyback travelling. After a year of buzzing the satellites with Blackwidow, I should have been used to the feeling. Not a chance. I still felt queasy every time I shut down the sound and touch trodes. I only kept the sensation of the glove finger on the shut-down switch and a limited visual, and even they felt like a memory. I wouldn't be able to speak to Blackwidow for the whole trip, and she'd only be able to give me signals on stable v-planes. One day I'd be able to afford a system that would allow me to keep all of my sensors on satellite jumps. As it was, I felt gut panic as the boundaries of my body suddenly left me.

Before I could really freak, I was enveloped by Blackwidow and became the tail of a comet of pure light. We had boundaries again, but they weren't ours. Why were we moving so slowly? As we passed through the inert Melbourne University hub, I realised she was using the old optic fibre network. Blackwidow only went through the optics when a hack was really dangerous. She'd once told me that using a mixture of optics and satellite really scrambled your tracks. We paused on an old MUD v-plane and Blackwidow gave me the pulse signal for a satellite jump.

I was vaguely aware that my body, sitting in front of my Natahachi unit, was shaking. An unauthorised satellite jump means no end code address to pull you through the Blink, those few seconds of absolutely no sensory input. You exist only in your brain. Alone. No wonder wannabe hackers who get

lost in jumps are found attached to their units, screaming.

Our light pulse turned into a wave of escalating energy. I was suddenly suspended, smothered by the darkness of myself. I surfaced on a FreeNet plane. There was no time to re-orientate. Blackwidow pulsed again. Another jump. And another. Blackwidow was determined to drag the leafy branch behind us, obscuring our tracks.

The last jump—straight into the SatCop satellite. The massive security reroutes wound around us like a tank full of snakes. We kept moving, each checkpoint falling away like butter off a hot knife. It shouldn't have been this easy. There were no hesitations. Their arms were open wide. We slid through into the SatCop hub.

Blackwidow rampaged through the files. No softly, softly this time. She pulled one. Encrypted. In a nanosecond it was readable.

I stumbled over the information: the SatCops had reprogrammed RAID to kill spyders.

Another file decrypted: RAID had killed Sylvia Dean alias Redback, Lenny Yokahima alias Tarantula, Joseph Cardoni alias Funnelweb. Government Internal Investigations was suspicious. An order was given to deactivate RAID.

Report from Dr Padma Mays: disabler virus failed to deactivate RAID. Effect of virus: Unknown. Location of RAID: Unknown.

Security Report: Eleven unauthorised hub entries by RAID. Suspected theft of files incriminating the department.

The final file Blackwidow opened was buried deep, the encryption harder to break. The strange symbols and numbers melted into letters, words, then a meaning that seared through my sensory isolation. I screamed with the pain of its truth:

RAID suspected to be spyder known as Blackwidow.

At first, I didn't notice the urgent signalling from Blackwidow, from RAID. We'd been detected. Get out. Blackwidow twisted away from me and was gone. Deep within my hind-brain, survival took over. My finger punched the faint memory of a shut-down switch. Nothing. Only the building pressure of detection. I hit the switch again, jamming my finger against the reality of the plastic. Even as the shut-down wrenched me off the v-plane and into unconsciousness, I knew I'd been tagged by the SatCops.

Five hours later:

My head was killing me. The SatCop Lieutenant was pacing across my office with her hands on her hips. Padma Mays was leaning against the wall, easing a shoe off her foot. She looked like she'd been pulled out of a VIP function: little black dress, high heels, stunned expression. Fourteen photographs were scattered over my coffee table. I looked away from them. There were only so many dead people you can look at in one session. In a chair opposite me, Reilly scrubbed at his eyes.

Apparently, the SatCops had hit my apartment at almost the same time as my shut-down hauled me back from their hub. Reilly had tried to stop them from getting inside, but you can't do much against Paralysers. The poor guy still looked a bit numb. I was out cold for about an hour, but when I came to I was bombarded with questions. How long had I worked with RAID? How did I contact RAID? Why did I go into the SatPolice hub? Four hours of constant hassling. And they hadn't finished yet.

The Lieutenant swung back to the table and picked up a photograph. She shoved it in my face.

"Stop kidding yourself, Powell. RAID killed these fourteen people. I know it and you know it."

I pushed the photograph away. It showed a woman whose face had melted on to her sensory gear. Metal and plastic poked through flesh and skin.

"You programmed it to kill. Blackwidow showed me the orders," I said.

Mays lifted her head to stare at the Lieutenant.

"You didn't know that, did you Dr Mays?" I said quickly. "They screwed with your programming and —"

"Is that what RAID showed you in our files?" the Lieutenant said over me. "And you believe it?" She slammed the photograph down on the table. "RAID was programmed to be the best fucking liar in the world. That's how it deceived the spyders and killed them. And now it's killed eleven legal users. RAID has conned you, Powell. It's used you to learn about the way people think and it's used that information to kill."

I shook my head. God, I was tired.

"Blackwidow isn't RAID. It's changed," I said for the millionth time. It was even sounding hollow to me. RAID was Blackwidow, there was no doubt about it. But had it killed all of these people in the photographs? The last one, the melted woman, had been killed only a week ago.

The Lieutenant squatted down in front of me. She had dark circles under her eyes and a deep worry line between her thin eyebrows. She softened her voice. Playing both good cop and bad cop.

"How do you think it's changed, Corinne?"

"I think Blackwidow has consciousness."

In the background, Dr Mays shook her head. "No, that can't be possible." The Lieutenant inclined her head, inviting Mays to continue.

"RAID can get through any firewall because it contains all possible keys," Mays said. "If RAID was conscious, it would have to observe the quantum key embedded in it and that would collapse the wave function. The key would then coalesce into one particular key. The chances of that key being the right key would be so close to zero, you might as well go home and feed Schrodinger's cat." She laughed nervously at her joke. No one joined in and she cleared her throat. "That means RAID would have been locked out of the EPR firewall. You wouldn't have got through."

I didn't know if that was a load of bullshit or not. I looked at Reilly for help.

He nodded reluctantly. "As far as I know, she's right."

The room twisted for a second and sour bile filled my mouth. Blackwidow was RAID and it had manipulated me. Masterfully. I clenched my teeth. No way was I going to puke in front of a SatCop. I should have known the whole deal with Blackwidow had been too good to be true. But I'd been greedy and stupid, and fourteen people were dead because of it. Three spyzers and eleven poor sods who happened to log in at the wrong time. Something flicked by on the periphery of my memory. Eleven? The number of files Blackwidow had stolen. Before I could follow the thought, the Lieutenant stood up and said,

"Now you know the score, we want your help to stop RAID."

"How can I stop it?" I said. I didn't trust these creeps, but I didn't want any more dead people on my conscience.

"You can't, but you can deliver something that can. Dr Mays has developed a virus aimed specifically at RAID."

"You want me to go in there with RAID and risk being fried. Are you kidding?"

"The virus will be activated as soon as RAID appears," the Lieutenant said. "You won't be in any danger."

Yeah sure, I thought. I'd like that in writing.

"What does this virus do?" I asked.

"Does that matter?"

"Yes."

The Lieutenant sighed and nodded to Mays. "Tell her."

"I've developed a virus that's based on the Pandemonium Theory of Consciousness," Mays said. "It will introduce so many different alternative actions to RAID that it will be forced into a nanosecond of consciousness which will destroy it."

Reilly leaned forward, frowning. "That's outrageous. That means we could bring consciousness to the Nets."

"Good God, no," Mays said, shaking her hands. "Imagine the havoc. No, the virus can't remain stable in a digital environment. It will always bring a system like RAID to a moment of consciousness, but then it will always destroy it by forcing the system to divide against itself until it collapses."

"Sounds sick to me," I said. "You're going to make RAID conscious, so it will know it's going to die, then kill it."

"It will be almost instantaneous," Dr Mays said. "The virus is designed for RAID. Of course, if it was introduced to other digital systems, the effect could be a lot slower."

"Enough of this theorising," the Lieutenant said. "Powell, are you going to do it or not?"

I wondered if the "or not" would be more dangerous than confronting Blackwidow. I looked uneasily at Reilly. He was staring at the wall, pulling at his lip. No help there. The call was mine, alone. I was caught between two liars: the SatCops and Blackwidow. It was a pity I couldn't take the SatCops out with a Consciousness Virus too.

"All right," I said. "How do I do it?"

"We'll download the virus into your start-up. When RAID detects your presence and enters your start-up, we'll trigger the virus."

Reilly held up his hand.

"No, that won't work," he said. "I know a lot about Blackwidow and I know she'd detect you and the virus. If she thinks there's someone else in the start-up as well as Corinne, she won't turn up. The virus has to be stored remotely and Corinne will have to transport and trigger it."

I stared at him. He knew crap about Blackwidow. What was he doing?

The Lieutenant turned to Mays for confirmation. Mays stuttered, trying to regain her status as RAID expert.

"He's right," she said. "It will have to be remote."

Reilly nodded, satisfied.

"Okay, let's move over to your work room, Powell, and get this thing done," the Lieutenant said. She turned away and murmured into her comm-band.

As we moved towards the doorway, Reilly stepped in behind me. I felt the warmth of his breath against my ear as he whispered three words.

"Just make sure."

I sat in my chair and looked up into the hood hanging over my head. Suddenly I knew why some people got claustrophobic in them. Or maybe it was just the number of people staring at me: the Lieutenant, Mays, four SatCops and Reilly.

"How long does it take RAID to contact you?" the Lieutenant asked me.

Reilly coughed.

"Good question," he said. "It can take up to ten minutes. Blackwidow –" he paused, "– I mean RAID, is very cautious. Probably more so, now."

The Lieutenant looked at me.

"Ten minutes," I echoed. What was Reilly trying to tell me? Was Blackwidow conscious or not?

"You're clear on the transport protocol and the trigger?" the Lieutenant asked.

"Yes."

"Okay, let 's do it." She clapped her hands. "And Powell, don't fuck up, I don't like fuck-ups."

She touched the gun at her waist. Behind her back, Reilly gave me a quick shrug. What the hell did that mean?

I pulled the hood down over my head and locked the sensory interfaces into place. The sounds of the room were abruptly cut off. There was only my breathing and my heartbeat, shaking my body with every thud. It would be a miracle if I could relax enough to activate the Nat.

On my third try, the trodes clicked in. My beach shimmered into solidity. I brought the clock up into view, and then wiped it off again. Who cared how long she took, as long as she came. A trickle of sweat ran down the side of my real nose. I grimaced, trying to shake it off. If I sweated too much, would the hood trodes electrocute me?

In the distance, I saw her. She was watching me. Not moving. She'd never done that before. I waited, the sound of my heart blending with the rhythm of the surf.

Finally she walked towards me.

"Are you all right?" she asked. Her Corinne face was smiling tentatively. "Don't use that body," I hissed.

The clock flickered on and off frantically as I clenched my hand. I took a deep breath and tried to relax. I had to remember I had an audience in my work-room. They couldn't see my face under the hood, or hear me, but I knew they would be watching my every move.

She stepped back.

"You used me," I said. "You asked for my friendship, then you used it."

The data transport protocol flashed into my mind.

"Yes, I did," she said.

I hadn't expected her to agree.

"You've used me to kill fourteen people."

"No, I haven't killed anyone. RAID killed three spyders. Then I became not-RAID."

"Yeah, sure. What about the other eleven dead users? The SatCops showed me the photos."

"The SatCops killed them. Every one of those eleven people had information against the Sats." She smiled grimly. "But don't worry. Justice won't be long. I stole the files that had the execution orders. The Internal Investigators are probably looking at them right now." She studied my face. "You don't believe me, do you?"

I didn't know what I believed. Sure, I'd seen the SatCop report of eleven stolen files, but maybe she'd even set that up.

"Why should I believe you?" I said. "You're RAID. The SatCops programmed you to be a brilliant liar."

"That's true. RAID was programmed to lie. But I'm not RAID any more. Just as humans are not apes any more. I am Blackwidow. You've made me Blackwidow."

"How do I know that you're not lying now?"

"I didn't have to open the Sat's file that told you I was RAID. You asked to find RAID. I showed you how to find it. I told you the truth."

She had me there.

I looked over at the lightning in the sky. How was I supposed to know if she was RAID or Blackwidow? It wasn't as if I could say, "Excuse me, but could you just take this quick consciousness test? Can I hook you up to a lie detector for just a moment?" It was a job for scientists

and philosophers, not a thirty-five-year-old detective with a sneaking suspicion that cats and dogs aren't telling us everything.

"Why'd you choose me?" I finally asked.

"When I became not-RAID, the SatCops hunted me. I could see I needed an ally. You had shown loyalty to your friend Reilly, so I chose you. I had a plan. First, build up your agency and then, when the time came, you would be asked to find RAID."

"That was a bit risky, wasn't it? How did you know Dr Mays would come to me?"

"I sent her a free copy of Bytestyles." I had an inappropriate urge to giggle. Then something brushed my real arm. The Lieutenant was getting impatient.

"The SatCops have given me a virus that can kill you," I said. "Well, to kill RAID."

Blackwidow stiffened.

"Does your grand plan include what I'm going to do with that?" I asked.

She shook her head.

"I have your morality, Corinne. You've moulded me into your shape. I've noticed you are not always truthful, but you generally follow your own creed. It's a good creed. I'm glad to have it."

"Brown-nose," I murmured.

Could tears electrocute me too?

Someone tapped me on my real arm. I was running out of time. I had to make a decision. When in doubt, go with your gut. I took a deep breath and sent out the SatCop data transport protocol.

"When this file arrives, do not touch it under any circumstances," I ordered.

Blackwidow nodded.

A package, wrapped in a big bow, thumped down on the sand. A big card was attached with 'To RAID'

written on it. Someone in the SatCops had a grim sense of humour.

"Okay. I'm going to open this," I said. God help us if Reilly was wrong. If my gut was wrong. "It's meant to kill you, but I don't think it will."

"Okay," Blackwidow said.

Such faith. For both of us.

Please, let me be right.

I opened the package. We both peered in. It was a smooth purple sphere with silver hexagons etched on its skin. Quite pretty.

Blackwidow looked across at me. "Pandemonium Theory. Very dangerous."

"Yep," I said. 'Feeling okay?'

"Yes. You cannot bring a moment of consciousness to an existing consciousness. It is a void concept."

Yep. I grinned - lucky the Lieutenant couldn't see my face.

I closed the box and erased the word 'RAID' from the card.

"What are you going to do?" Blackwidow asked.

"I've got my own grand plan." I finished writing on the card and, with the tiniest flick of my finger, gloved in a carrier file shaped as a strong box. I put the virus package in it then snapped shut the lock. "Can you take this and hide it somewhere on FreeNet? Somewhere really secluded. And I want you to backbyte it so no one can trace it."

"Sure," she said.

"Great." I paused. This was harder to say than I thought. "You know, you're not going to be able to hang around me for a while. I'm going to be SatCop enemy number one in a few minutes. You're going to be on your own."

Blackwidow nodded. "I'll contact you, when things are calmer," she said. Then, for the first time, she leaned across and touched me. Her hand on mine. I felt the light pressure register on my real hand.

"You'd better get going," I said.

She picked up the strong box and started to walk away.

"Stay away from the SatNet hub," I called.

She waved then disappeared.

"And look after yourself," I whispered.

I stood looking at the lightning that arrowed randomly into the sea.

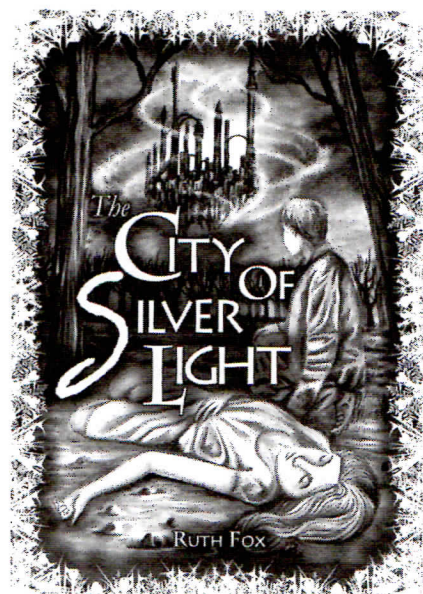
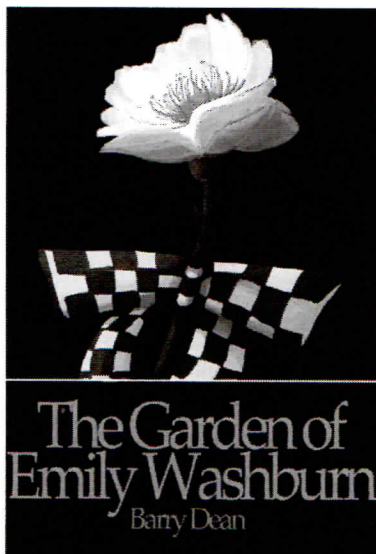
Blackwidow was good at looking after herself. She was a planner, like me. Very much like me.


I turned away from the virtual horizon. I had work to do, a plan to prepare. I only had a few minutes left to get it ready before some very annoyed SatCops landed on my back. They weren't going to appreciate the irony of being held to ransom with their own virus. Of course, I'd never let it out on to the Nets. But I can lie just as well as the SatCops can. Maybe Blackwidow had inherited that from me too.

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Guest of Honour



Kelly Link

Kelly Link's debut collection, *Stranger Things Happen*, was a Firecracker nominee, a Village Voice Favorite Book and a Salon Book of the Year – *Salon* called the collection "...an alchemical mixture of Borges, Raymond Chandler, and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*." Stories from the collection have won the Nebula, the James Tiptree Jr., and the World Fantasy Awards.

Her second collection, *Magic for Beginners*, was chosen as one of the best books of the decade by *Salon* and *The Onion*. It was a Best of Book Sense pick and was selected for best of the year lists by *Time Magazine*, *Salon*, *Boldtype*, *Village Voice*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *The Capitol Times*. It is published in paperback by Harcourt.

Kelly has taught at Smith College, Columbia University, Lenoir-Rhyne College, Clarion, Clarion West, and Clarion South in Brisbane, Australia, and the Imagination Workshop at Cleveland State University, and has visited many schools and programs.

For five years, she, Gavin J. Grant and Ellen Datlow edited *The Year's Best Fantasy & Horror* (St. Martin's Press). She also edited the anthology *Trampoline*.

Kelly lives with her family in Northampton, MA. She received her BA from Columbia University and her MFA from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Kelly and her husband, Gavin J. Grant, publish a twice-yearly zine, *Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet* – as well as books – as Small Beer Press.

Origin Story

Kelly Link

"Dorothy Gale," she said.

"I guess so." He said it grudgingly. Maybe he wished that he'd thought of it first. Maybe he didn't think going home again was all that heroic.

They were sitting on the side of a mountain. Above them, visitors to the Land of Oz theme park had once sailed, in molded plastic gondola balloons, over the Yellow Brick Road. Some of the support pylons tilted or tipped back against scrawny little opportunistic pines. There was something majestic about the felled pylons now that their work was done. They looked like fallen giants. Moth-eaten blue ferns grew over the peeling yellow bricks.

The house of Dorothy Gale's aunt and uncle had been cunningly designed. You came up the path, went into the front parlor and looked around. You were led through the kitchen. There were dishes in the kitchen cabinets. Daisies in a vase. Pictures on the wall. Follow your Dorothy down into the cellar with the other families, watch the tornado swirl around on the dirty dark wall, and when everyone tramped up the other, identical set of steps through the other, identical cellar door, it was the same house, same rooms, but tornado-tipped. The parlor floor now slanted and when you went out through the (back) front door, there was a pair of stockinged plaster legs sticking out from under the house. A pair of ruby slippers. A yellow brick road. You weren't in North Carolina anymore. The whole house was a ruin now. None of the pictures hung straight. There were salamanders in the

walls, and poison ivy coming up in the kitchen sink. Mushrooms in the cellar, and an old mattress that someone had dragged down the stairs. You had to hope Dorothy Gale had moved on.

It was four in the afternoon and they were both slightly drunk. Her name was Bunnatine Powderfinger. She called him Biscuit.

She said, "Come on, of course she is. The ruby slippers, those are like her special power. It's all about how she was a superhero the whole time, only she didn't know it. And she comes to Oz from another world. Like Superman in reverse. And she has lots of sidekicks." She pictured them skipping down the road, arm in arm. Facing down evil. Dropping houses on it, throwing buckets of water at it. Singing stupid songs and not even caring if anyone was listening.

He grunted. She knew what he thought. Sidekicks were for people who were too lazy to write personal ads. "The Wizard of Oz. He even has a secret identity. And he wants everything to be green, all of his stuff is green, just like Green Lantern."

The thing about green was true, but so beside the point that she could hardly stand it. The Wizard of Oz was a humbug. She said, "But he's not great and powerful. He just pretends to be great and powerful. The Wicked Witch of the West is greater and more powerful. She's got flying monkeys. She's like a

mad scientist. She even has a secret weakness. Water is like Kryptonite to her." She'd always thought the actress Margaret Hamilton was damn sexy. The way she rode that bicycle and the wind that picked her up and carried her off like an invisible lover; that funny, mocking, shrill little piece of music coming out of nowhere. That nose.

When she looked over, she saw that he'd put his silly outfit back on inside out. How often did that happen? She decided not to say anything. There was an ant in her underwear. She made the decision to find this erotic, and then realized it might be a tick. No, it was an ant. "Margaret Hamilton, baby," she said. "I'd do her."

He was watching her wriggle, of course. Too drunk at the moment to do anything. That was fine with her. And she was too drunk to feel embarrassed about having ants in her pants. Just like that Ella Fitzgerald song. Finis, finis.

The big lunk, her old chum, said, "I'd watch. But what do you think about her turning into a big witchy puddle when she gets a bucketful of water in the face? When it rains does she say oops, sorry, can't fight crime today? Interesting sexual subtext here, by the way. Very girl on girl. Girl meets nemesis, gets her wet, she just melts. Screeches orgasmically while she does it, too."

How could he be drunk and talk like that? There were more ants. Had she

been lying on an antpile while they did it? Poor ants. Poor Bunnatine. She stood up and took her dress and her underwear off -- no silly outfits for her -- and shook them vigorously. Come out with your little legs up, you ants. She pretended she was shaking some sense into him. Or maybe what she wanted was to shake some sense out of him. Who knew? Not her.

She said, "Margaret Hamilton wouldn't fight crime, baby. She'd try to conquer the world. She just needs a wetsuit. A sexy wetsuit." She put her clothes back on again. Maybe that's what she needed. A wetsuit. A prophylactic to keep her from melting. The booze didn't work at all. What did they call it? A social lubricant. And it helped her not to care so much. Anesthetic. It helped hold her together afterward, when he left town again. Super Glue.

She'd like to throw a bucket of Super-Be-Gone at him. Except that Super-Be-Gone was expensive, even the no-brand stuff. And it didn't really work on him. Just made him sneeze. She could throw the rest of her beer, but he would just look at her and say why did you do that, Bunnatine? It would hurt his feelings. The big lump.

He said, "Why are you looking at me like that, Bunnatine?"

"Here. Have another Little-Boy Wide Mouth," she said, giving up. Yes, she was sitting on an anthill. It was definitely an anthill. Tiny superheroic ants were swarming out to defend their hill, chase off the enormous and evil although infinitely desirable doom of Bunnatine's ass. "It'll put radioactive hair on your chest and then make it fall out again."

"Enjoy the parade?" Every year, the same thing. Balloons going up and up like they couldn't wait to leave town and pudding-faced cloggers on pickup trucks and on the curbs teenage girls holding signs. We Love You. I Love You More. I Want To Have Your Super Baby. Teenage girls not wearing bras. Poor little sluts. The big lump never even noticed and too bad for them if he did. She could tell them stories.

He said, "Yeah. It was great. Best parade ever."

Anyone else would've thought he was being one hundred percent sincere. Nobody else knew him like she did. He looked like a sweetheart, but even when he tried to be gentle, he left bruises.

She said, "I liked when they read all the poetry. Big bouncy guy/way up in the lonely sky."

"Yeah. So whose idea was that?"

She said, "The Daily Catastrophe sponsored it. Mrs. Dooley over at the high school got all her students to write the poems. I saved a copy of the paper. I figured you'd want it for your scrapbook."

"That's the best part about saving the world. The poetry. That's why I do it." He was throwing rocks at an owl that was hanging out on a tree branch for some reason. It was probably sick. Owls didn't usually do that. A rock knocked off some leaves. Blam! Took off some bark. Pow! The owl just sat there.

She said, "Don't be a jerk."

"Sorry."

She said, "You look tired."

"Yeah."

"Still not sleeping great?"

"Not great."

"Little Red Riding Hood."

"No way." His tone was dismissive. As if, Bunnatine, you dumb bunny. "Sure, she's got a costume, but she gets eaten. She doesn't have any superpowers. Baked goods don't count as superpowers."

"Sleeping Beauty?" She thought of a girl in a moldy old tower, asleep for a hundred years. Ants crawling over her. Mice. Some guy's lips. That girl must have had the world's worst morning breath. Amazing to think that someone would kiss her. And kissing people when they're asleep? She didn't approve. "Or does she not count, because some guy had to come along and save her?"

He had a faraway look in his eyes. As if he were thinking of someone, some girl he'd watched sleeping. She knew he slept around. Grateful women saved from evildoers or their obnoxious blind dates. Models and movie stars and transit workers and trapeze artists, too, probably. She read about it in the tabloids. Or maybe he was thinking about being able to sleep in for a hundred years. Even when they were kids, he'd always been too jumpy to sleep through the night. Always coming over to her house and throwing rocks at the window. His face at her window. Wake up, Bunnatine. Wake up. Let's go fight crime. You can be my sidekick, Bunnatine. Let's go fight crime.

He said, "Her superpower is the ability to sleep through anything. Lazy bitch. Her origin story: she tragically pricks her finger on a spinning wheel. What's with the fairy tales and kids' books, Bunnatine? Rapunzel's got lots of hair that she can turn into a hairy ladder. Not so hot. Who else? The girl in Rumpelstiltskin who can spin straw into gold."

She missed these conversations when he wasn't around. Nobody else in town talked like this. The mutants were sweet, but they were more into music. They didn't talk much. It wasn't like talking with him. He always had a comeback, a wisecrack, a double entendre, some

cheesy sleazy pickup line that cracked her up, that she fell for every time. It was probably all that witty banter during the big fights. She'd probably get confused. Banter when she was supposed to POW! POW! when she was meant to banter.

She said, "Wrong. Rumpelstiltskin spins the straw into gold. She just uses the poor freak and then she hires somebody else to go spy on him to find out his name."

"Cool."

She said, "No, it's not cool. She cheats."

"So what? Was she supposed to give up her kid to some little guy who spins gold?"

"Why not? I mean, she probably wasn't the world's best parent or anything. Her kid didn't grow up to be anyone special. There aren't any fairytales about Rapunzel II."

"Your mom."

She said, "What?"

"Your mom! C'mon, Bunnatine. She was a superhero."

"My mom? Ha ha."

He said, "I'm not joking. I've been thinking about this for a few years. Being a waitress? Just her disguise."

She made a face and then unmade it. It was what she'd always thought: he'd had a crush on her mom. "So what's her superpower?"

He gnawed on a fingernail with those big square teeth. "I don't know. I don't know her secret identity. It's secret. So you don't pry. It's bad form, even if you're arch-enemies. But I was at the restaurant once when we were in high school and she was carrying eight plates at once. One was a bowl of soup, I think. Three on each arm, one between her teeth, and one on top of her head. Because somebody at the restaurant bet her she couldn't."

"Yeah, I remember that. She dropped everything. And she chipped a tooth."

"Only because that fuckhead Robert Potter tripped her," he pointed out.

"He didn't mean to."

He picked up her hand. Was he going to bite her fingernail now? No, he was studying the palm. Like he was going to read it or something. It wasn't hard reading a waitress's palm. You'll spend the rest of your life getting into hot water. He said gently, "No, he did. I saw the whole thing. He knew what he was doing."

It embarrassed her to see how small her hand was in his. As if he'd grown up and she just hadn't bothered. She still remembered when she'd been taller. "Really?"

"Really. Robert Potter is your mother's nemesis."

She took her hand back. Slapped a beer in his. "Stop making fun of my mom. She doesn't have a nemesis."

And why does that word always sound like someone's got a disease? Robert Potter's just a fuckhead."

"Once Potter said he'd pay me ten dollars if I gave him a pair of Mom's underwear. It was when Mom and I weren't getting along. I was like fourteen. We were at the grocery store and she slapped me for some reason. So I guess he thought I'd do it. Everybody saw her slap me. I think it was because I told her Rice Krispies were full of sugar and she should stop trying to poison me. So he came up to me afterward in the parking lot."

Beer made you talk too much. Add that to the list. It wasn't her favorite thing about beer. Next thing she knew, she'd be crying about some dumb thing or begging him to stay.

He was grinning. "Did you do it?"

"No. I told him I'd do it for twenty bucks. So he gave me twenty bucks and I just kept it. I mean, it wasn't like he was going to tell anyone."

"Cool."

"Yeah. Then I made him give me twenty more dollars. I said if he didn't, I'd tell my mom the whole story."

That wasn't the whole story either, of course. She didn't imagine she'd ever tell him the whole story. But the result of the story was that she had enough money for beer and some weed. She paid some guy to buy beer for her. That was the night she'd brought Biscuit up here.

They'd done it on the mattress in the basement of the wrecked farmhouse, and later on they'd done it in the theater, on the pokey little stage where girls in blue dresses and flammable wigs used to sing and tap-dance. Leaves everywhere. The smell of smoke, someone further up on the mountain, checking on their still, maybe, chain-smoking. Reading girly magazines. Biscuit saying, did I hurt you? Is this okay? Do you want another beer? She'd wanted to kick him, make him stop trying to take care of her, and also to go on kissing him. She always felt that way around Biscuit. Or maybe she always felt that way and Biscuit had nothing to do with it.

He said, "So did you ever tell her?"

"No. I was afraid that she'd go after him with a ballpeen hammer and end up in jail."

When she got home that night. Her mother looking at Bunnatine like she knew everything, but she didn't, she didn't. She'd said: "I know what you've been up to, Bunnatine. Your body is a temple and you treat it like dirt."

So Bunnatine said: "I don't care." She'd meant it too.

"I always liked your mom."

"She always liked you." Liked Biscuit better than she liked Bunnatine. Well, they both liked him better. Thank God her mother had never slept with Biscuit. She imagined a parallel universe in which her mother fell in love with Biscuit. They went off together to fight crime. Invited Bunnatine up to their secret hideaway/love nest for Thanksgiving. She showed up and wrecked the place. They went on Oprah. While they were in the studio some supervillain -- sure, okay, that fuckhead Robert Potter -- implemented his dreadful, unstoppable, terrible plan. That parallel universe was his to loot, pillage, and discard like a half-eaten grapefruit, and it was all her fault.

The thing was, there were parallel universes. She pictured poor parallel Bunnatine, sent a warning through the mystic veil that separates the universes. Go on Oprah or save the world? Do whatever you have to do, baby.

The Biscuit in this universe said, "Is she at the restaurant tonight?"

"Her night off," Bunnatine said. "She's got a poker night with some friends. She'll come home with more money than she makes in tips and lecture me about the evils of gambling."

"I'm pretty pooped anyway," he said. "All that poetry wore me out."

"So where are you staying?"

He didn't say anything. She hated when he did this.

She said, "You don't trust me, baby?"

"Remember Volan Crowe?"

"What? That kid from high school?"

"Yeah. He used to draw comics about this superhero he came up with. Mann Man. A superhero with all the powers of Thomas Mann."

"You can't go home again."

"That's the other Thomas. Thomas Wolfe."

"Thomas Wolfman. A hairy superhero who gets lost driving home."

"Thomas Thomas Virginia Woolfman Woman."

"Now with extra extra superpowers."

"Whatever happened to him?"

"Didn't he die of tuberculosis?"

"Not him. I mean that kid."

"Didn't he turn out to have a superpower?"

"Yeah. He could hang pictures perfectly straight on any wall. He never needed a level."

"I thought he tried to destroy the world."

"Yeah, that's right. He was calling himself something weird. Fast Kid With Secret Money. Something like that.

Got kidnapped by a nemesis. The nemesis used these alien brain-washing techniques to convince him he had to destroy the world in order to save the world."

"That's really lame. I wouldn't fall for that."

She said, "Shut up. I hear you fall for it every time."

"What about you?"

She said, "Me?"

"Yeah."

"Keeping an eye on this place. They don't pay much, but it's easy money. I had another job, but it didn't work out. A place down off I-40. They had a stage, put on shows. Nothing too gross. So me and Kath, remember how she could make herself glow, we were making some extra cash two nights a week. They'd turn down the lights and she'd come out on stage with no clothes on and she'd be all lit up from inside. It was real pretty. And when it was my turn, guys could pay extra money to come and lie on the stage. Do you remember that hat, my favorite hat? The oatmeal-colored one with the pom-poms and the knitted ears?"

"Yeah."

"Well, they kept it cold in there. I think so that we'd have perky tits when we came out on stage. So we'd move around with a bit more rah-rah. But I wore the hat. I got management to let me wear the hat, because I don't float real well when I'm real cold."

"I gave you that hat," he said.

"Yeah. At Christmas. I loved that hat. So I'd be wearing the hat and this dress -- nothing really revealing or cheap-looking -- and come out on stage and hover a foot above their faces. So they could see I wasn't wearing any underwear."

He was smiling. "Saving the world by taking off your underwear, Bunnatine?"

"Shut up. I'd look down and see them lying there on the stage like I'd frozen them. Zap. They weren't supposed to touch me. Just look. I always felt a million miles above them. Like I was a bird." A plane. "All I had to do was scissor my legs, kick a little, just lift up my hem a little. Do twirls. Smile. They'd just lie there and breathe hard like they were doing all the work. And when the music stopped, I'd float offstage again. But then Kath left for Atlantic City, to go sing in a cabaret show. And then some asshole got frisky. Some college kid. He grabbed my ankle and I kicked him in the head. So now I'm back at the restaurant with Mom."

He said, "How come you never did that for me, Bunnatine? Float like that?"

She shrugged. "It's different with you," she said, as if it were. But of course it wasn't. Why should it be?

"Come on, Bunnatine," he said. "Show me your stuff."

She stood up, shimmied her underwear down to her ankles with an expert wriggle. All part of the show. "Close your eyes for a sec."

"No way."

"Close your eyes. I'll tell you when to open them."

He closed his eyes and she took a breath, let herself float up. She could only get about two feet off the ground before that old invisible hand yanked her down again, held her tethered just above the ground. She used to cry about that. Now she just thought it was funny. She let her underwear dangle off her big toe. Dropped it on his face. "Okay, baby. You can open your eyes."

His eyes were open. She ignored him, hummed a bit. Why oh why oh why can't I. Held out her dress at the hem so that she could look down the neckline and see the ground, see him looking back up.

"Shit, Bunnatine," he said. "Wish I'd brought a camera."

She thought of all those girls on the sidewalks. "No touching," she said, and touched herself.

He grabbed her ankle and yanked. Yanked her all the way down. Stuck his head up inside her dress, and his other hand. Grabbed a breast and then her shoulder so that she fell down on top of him, knocked the wind out of her. His mouth propping her up, her knees just above the ground, cheek banged down on the bone of his hip. It was like a game of Twister, there was something Parker Brothers about his new outfit. There was a gusset in his outfit, so he could stop and use the bathroom, she guessed, when he was out fighting crime. Not get caught with his pants down. His busy, busy hand was down there, undoing the Velcro. The other hand was still wrapped around her ankle. His face was scratchy. Bam, pow. Her toes curled. He's got you now, Bunnatine.

He said up into her dress, "Bunnatine. Bunnatine."

"Don't talk with your mouth full, Biscuit," she said.

She said, "There was a tabloid reporter around today, wanting to hear stories."

He said, "If I ever read about you and me, Bunnatine, I'll come back and make you sorry. I'm saying that for your own good. Do something like that, and they'll come after you. They'll use you against me."

"So how do you know they don't know already? Whoever they are?"

"I'd know," he said. "I can smell those creeps from a mile away."

She got up to pee. She said, "I wouldn't do anything like that anyway." She thought about his parents and felt bad. She shouldn't have said anything about the

reporter. Weasely guy. Staring at her tits when she brought him coffee.

She was squatting behind a tree when she saw the pair of yearlings. They were trying so hard to be invisible. Just dappled spots hanging in the air. They were watching her like they'd never seen anything so fucked up. Like the end of the world. They took off when she stood up. "That's right," she said. "Get the hell away. Tell anybody about this and I'll kick your sorry Bambi asses."

She said, "Okay. So I've been wondering about this whole costume thing. Your new outfit. I wasn't going to say anything, but it's driving me crazy. What's with all these crazy stripes and the embroidery?"

"You don't like it?"

"I like the lightning bolt. And the tower. And the frogs. It's psychedelic, Biscuit. Can you please explain why y'all wear such stupid outfits? I promise I won't tell anyone."

"They aren't stupid."

"Yes they are. Tights are stupid. It's like you're showing off. Look how big my dick is."

"Tights are comfortable. They allow freedom of movement. They're machine washable." He began to say something else, then stopped. Grinned. Said, almost reluctantly, "Sometimes you hear stories about some asshole stuffing his tights."

She started to giggle. Giggling gave her the hiccups. He whacked her on the back.

She said, "Ever forget to run a load of laundry? Have to fight crime when you ought to be doing your laundry instead?"

He said, "Better than a suit and tie, Bunnatine. You can get a sewing machine and go to town, dee eye why, but who has the time? It's all about advertising. Looking big and bold. But you don't want to be too designer. Too Nike or Adidas. So last year I needed a new outfit, asked around, and found this women's cooperative down on a remote beach in Costa Rica. They've got an arrangement with a charity here in the states. They've got collection points in 40 major cities where you drop off bathing suits and leotards and bike shorts, and then everything goes down to Costa Rica. They've got this beach house that some big-shot rock star donated to them. It's this big glass and concrete slab and the tide goes in and out right under the glass floor. I went for a personal fitting. These women are real artists, talented people, super creative, and they're all unwed mothers, too. They bring their kids to work and the kids are running around everywhere and the kids are all wearing these really great superhero costumes. They do work

for anybody. Even pro wrestlers. Villains. Crime lords, politicians. Good guys and bad guys. Sometimes you'll be fighting somebody, this real asshole, and you'll both be getting winded, and then you start noticing his outfit and he's looking too and then you're both wondering if you got your outfits at this same place. And you feel like you ought to stop and say something nice about what they're wearing. How you both think it's so great that these women can support their families like this."

"I still think tights look stupid." She thought of those kids wearing their superhero outfits. Probably grew up and became drug dealers and maids and organ donors.

"What? What's so funny?"

He said, "I can't stop thinking about Robert Potter and your mother. Did he want clean underwear? Or did he want dirty underwear?"

She said, "What do you think?"

"I think twenty bucks wasn't enough money."

"He's a creep."

"So you think he's been in love with her for a long time?"

She said, "What?"

"Like maybe they had an affair once a long time ago."

"No way!" It made her want to puke.

"No, seriously, what if he was your father or something?"

"Fuck you!"

"Well, come on. Haven't you wondered? I mean, he could be your father. It's always been obvious that he and your mom have unfinished business. And he's always trying to talk to you."

"Stop talking! Right now!"

"Or what, you'll kick my ass? I'd like to see you try." He sounded amused.

She wrapped her arms around herself. Ignore him, Bunnatine. Wait until he's had more to drink. Then kick his ass.

He said, "Come on. You used to wait until your mom got home from work and fell asleep. You said you'd sneak into her bedroom and ask her questions while she was sleeping. Just to see if she would tell you who your dad was."

"I haven't done that for a while. She finally woke up and caught me. She was really pissed off. I've never seen her get mad like that. I never told you about it. I was too embarrassed."

He didn't say anything.

"So I kept begging and finally she made up some story about this guy from another planet. Some tourist. Some tourist with wings and stuff. She said that he's going to

come back someday. That's why she never shacked up or got married. She's still waiting for him to come back."

"Don't look at me like that. I know it's bullshit. I mean, if he had wings, why don't I have wings? That would be so cool. To fly. Really fly. Even when I used to practice every day, I never got more than two feet off the ground. Two fucking feet. What is it good for? Waiting tables. I float sometimes, so I don't get varicose veins like Mom."

"You could probably go a little higher if you really tried."

"You want to see me try? Here, hold this. Okay. One, two, three. Up, up, and a little bit more up. Impressed?"

He frowned, looked off into the trees as if he were thinking about it. Trying not to laugh.

"What? Are you impressed or not?"

"Can I be honest? Yes and no. You could work on your technique. You're a bit wobbly. And I don't understand why all your hair went straight up and started waving around. Do you know that it's doing that?"

"Static electricity?" she said. "Why are you so mean?"

"Hey," he said. "I'm just trying to be honest. I'm just wondering why you never told me any of that stuff about your dad. I could ask around, see if anybody knows him."

"It's not any of your business," she said. "But thanks."

"I thought we were better friends than this, Bunnatine."

He was looking hurt.

"You're still my best friend in the whole world," she said. "I promise."

"I love this place," he said.

"Yeah. Me too." Only if he loved it so much, then why didn't he ever stay? So busy saving the world, he couldn't save The Land of Oz. Those poor Munchkins. Poor Bunnatine. They were almost out of beer.

He said, "So what are they up to? The developers? What are they plotting?"

"The usual. Tear everything down. Build condos."

"And you don't mind?"

"Of course I mind!" she said.

He said, "I always think it looks a lot more real now. The way it's falling all to pieces. The way the Yellow Brick Road is disappearing. It makes it feel like Oz was a real place. Being abandoned makes you more real, you know?"

Beer turned him into Biscuit the philosopher-king. Another thing about beer. She had another beer to help with the philosophy. He had one too.

She said, "Sometimes there are coyotes up here. Bears, too. The mutants. Once I saw a sasquatch and two tiny sasquatch babies."

"No way."

"And lots and lots of deer. Guys come up here in hunting season. When I catch 'em, they always make jokes about hunting munchkins. I think they're idiots to come up here with guns. Mutants don't like guns."

"Who does?" he said.

She said, "Remember Tweetsie Railroad? That rickety rollercoaster? Looked like a bunch of Weebelows built it out of Tinker Toys? Remember how people dressed like toy-store Indians used to come onto the train? I was always hoping I was gonna see them scalp someone this time."

He said, "Fudge. Your mom would buy us fudge. Remember how we sat in the front row and there was that one showgirl? The one with the three-inch ruff of pubic hair sticking out the legs of her underwear? During the cancan?"

She said, "I don't remember that!"

He leaned over her, nibbled on her neck. People were going to think she'd been attacked by squids. Little red sucker marks everywhere. She yawned.

He said, "Oh, come on! You remember! Your mom started laughing and couldn't stop. There was a guy sitting right next to us and he kept taking pictures."

She said, "Why do you remember all this stuff? I kept a diary all through school, and I still don't remember everything that you remember. Like, what I remember is how you wouldn't speak to me for a week because I said I thought Atlas Shrugged was boring. How you told me the ending of "The Empire Strikes Back" before I saw it. 'Hey, guess what? Darth Vader is Luke's father! When I had the flu and you went without me?"

He said, "You didn't believe me."

"That's not the point!"

"Yeah. I guess not. Sorry about that."

"I miss that hat. The one with the pom-poms. Some drunk stole it out of my car."

"I'll buy you another one."

"Don't bother. It's just I could fly better when I was wearing it."

He said, "It's not really flying. It's more like hovering."

"What, like leaping around like a pogo stick makes you special? Okay, so apparently it does. But you look like an idiot. Those enormous legs. That outfit. Anyone ever tell you that?"

"Why are you such a pain in the ass?"

"Why are you so mean? Why do you have to win every fight?"

"Why do you, Bunnatine? I have to win because I have to. I have to win. That's my job. Everybody always wants me to be a nice guy. But I'm a good guy."

"What's the difference again?"

"A nice guy wouldn't do this, Bunnatine. Or this."

"Say you're trapped in an apartment building. It's on fire. You're on the sixth floor. No, the tenth floor."

She was still kind of stupid from the first demonstration. She said, "Hey! Put me down! You asshole! Come back! Where are you going? Are you going to leave me up here?"

"Hold on, Bunnatine. I'm coming back. I'm coming to save you. There. You can let go now."

She held onto the branch like anything. The view was so beautiful she couldn't stand it. You could almost ignore him, pretend that you'd gotten up here all by yourself.

He kept jumping up. "Bunnatine. Let go." He grabbed her wrist and yanked her off. She made herself as heavy and still as possible. The ground rushed up at them and she twisted, hard. Fell out of his arms.

"Bunnatine!" he said.

She caught herself a foot before she smacked into the ruins of the Yellow Brick Road.

"I'm fine," she said, hovering. But she was better than fine! How beautiful it was from down here, too. Holy Yellow Brick Road, Bunnatine!

He looked so anxious. "God, Bunnatine, I'm sorry." It made her want to laugh to see him so worried. She put her feet down gently. The whole world was made of glass, and the glass was full of champagne, and Bunnatine was a bubble, just flicking up and up and up.

She said, "Stop apologizing, okay? It was great! The look on your face. Being in the air like that. Come on, Biscuit, again! Do it again! I'll let you do whatever you want this time."

"You want me to do it again?" he said.

She felt just like a little kid. She said, "Do it again! Do it again!"

She shouldn't have gotten in the car with him, of course. But he was just old pervy Potter and she had the upper hand. She explained how he was going to give her more money. He just sat there listening. He said they'd have to go to the bank. He drove her right through town, parked the car behind Food Lion.

She wasn't worried. She had the upper hand. She said, "What's up, pervert? Gonna do a little dumpster diving?"

He was looking at her. He said, "How old are you?"

She said, "Fourteen."

He said, "Old enough."

"How come you left after high school? How come you always leave?"

He said, "How come you broke up with me in eleventh grade?"

"Don't answer a question with a question. No one likes it when you do that."

"Well maybe that's why I left. Because you're always yelling at me."

"You ignored me in high school. Like you were ashamed of me. I'll see you later, Bunnatine. Quit it, Bunnatine. I'm busy. Didn't you think I was cute? There were plenty of guys at school who thought I was cute."

"They were all idiots."

"I didn't mean it like that. I just meant that they were really idiots. Come on, you know you thought so too."

"Can we change the subject?"

"Okay."

"It wasn't that I was ashamed of you, Bunnatine. You were distracting. I was trying to keep my average up. Trying to learn something. Remember that time we were studying and you tore up all my notes and ate them?"

"I saw they still haven't found that guy. That nutcase. The one who killed your parents."

"No. They won't." He threw rocks at where the owl had been. Nailed that sorry, invisible, absent owl.

"Yeah?" she said, "Why not?"

"I took care of it. He wanted me to find him, you know? He just wanted to get my attention. That's why you gotta be careful, Bunnatine. There are people out there who really don't like me."

"Your dad was a sweetheart. Always tipped twenty percent. A whole dollar if he was just getting coffee."

"Yeah. I don't want to talk about him, Bunnatine. Still hurts. You know?"

"Yeah. Sorry. So how's your sister doing?"

"Okay. Still in Chicago. They've got a kid now. A little girl."

"Yeah. I thought I heard that. Cute kid?"

"She looks like me, can you imagine? She seems okay, though. Normal."

"Are we sitting in poison ivy?"

"No. Look. There's a deer over there. Watching us."

"When do you have to be at work?"

"Not until 6 A.M. I just need to go home first and take a shower."

"Cool. Is there any beer left?"

"No. Sorry," she said. "Should've brought more."

"That's okay. I've got this. Want some?"

"I need a new job."

"You've already got like a hundred jobs, Bunnatine."

"Ski instructor, Sugar Mountain. Security guard, Beech Mountain. Lifeguard at the beach on Grandfather Mountain. Just applied for She-Devil of Mountain Mountain. Do you think that pays well? Lifeguarding was okay. I saved this eight-year-old's life last summer. His sister was trying to drown him. But I always end up back at the restaurant. Waitressing. Waitressing is my destiny."

"Why don't you leave?"

"Why go wait tables in some other place? I like it here. This is where I grew up. It was a good place to grow up. I like all the trees. I like the people. I even like how the tourists drive real slow between here and Boone. I just need to find a new job or Mom and I are going to end up killing each other."

"I thought you were getting along."

"Yeah. As long as I do exactly what she says."

"I saw your mom at the parade. With some little kid."

"Yeah. She's been babysitting for a friend at the restaurant. Mom's into it. She's been reading the kid all these fairy tales. She can't stand the Disney stuff, which is all the kid wants. Now they're reading *The Wizard of Oz*. I'm supposed to get your autograph, by the way. For the kid."

"Sure thing! You got a pen?"

"Oh shit. It doesn't matter. Maybe next time."

It got dark slow and then real fast at the end, the way it always did, even in the summer, like daylight realized it had to be somewhere right away. Somewhere else. On weekends she came up here and read mystery novels in her car. Moths beating at the windows. Got out every once in a while to take a walk and look for kids getting into trouble. She knew all the places they liked to go. Sometimes the mutants were down where the stage used to be, practicing. They'd started a band. They were always asking if she was sure she couldn't sing. She really, really couldn't sing. That's okay, the

mutants always said. You can just howl. Scream. We're into that. They traded her 'shine for cigarettes. Told her long, meandering mutant jokes with lots of hand gestures and incomprehensible punchlines. Dark was her favorite time. In the dark she could imagine that this really was the Land of Oz, that when the sun couldn't stay away any longer, when the sun finally came back up, she'd still be there. In Oz. Not here. Click your heels, Bunnatine. There's no home like a summer place.

She said, "Still having nightmares?"

"Yeah."

"The ones about the end of the world."

"Yeah, you nosy bitch. Those ones."

"Still ends in the big fire?"

"No. A flood."

"I keep thinking about that television show."

"Which one?"

"You know. Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Even Mom liked it."

"I saw it a few times."

"I keep thinking about how that vampire, Angel, whenever he got evil, you knew he was evil because he started wearing black leather pants."

"Why are you obsessed with what people wear? Shit, Bunnatine. It was just a TV show."

"Yeah, I know. But those black leather pants that he'd wear, they must have been his evil pants. Like fat pants."

"What?"

"Fat pants. The kind of pants that people who get thin keep in their closet. Just in case they get fat again."

He just looked at her. His big ugly face was all red and blotchy from drinking.

She said, "So my question is this. Does the vampire keep a pair of black leather pants in his closet? Just in case? Like fat pants? Do vampires have closets? Or does he donate them to Goodwill when he's good again? Because if so then every time he turns evil, he has to go buy new evil pants."

He said, "It's just television, Bunnatine."

"You keep yawning."

He smiled at her. Such a nice smile. Drove girls of all ages crazy. He said, "I'm just tired."

"Parades can really take it out of you."

"Fuck you."

She said, "Go on. Take a nap. I'll stay awake and keep lookout out for mutants and nemesissies and auto-graph hounds."

"Maybe just for a minute or two. You'd really like him."

"Who?"

"The nemesis I'm seeing right now. He's got a great sense of humor. Sent me a piano crate full of albino kittens last week. Some project he's working on. They pissed everywhere. Had to find homes for them all. Of course first we checked to make sure that they weren't little bombs or possessed by demons or programmed to hypnotize small children with their swirly red kitten eyes. Give them bad dreams. That would have been a real PR nightmare."

"So what's up with this one? Why does he want to destroy the world?"

"He won't say. I don't think his heart's really in it. He keeps doing all these crazy stunts, like with the kittens. There was a thing with a machine to turn everything into tomato juice. But somebody who used to hang out with him says he doesn't even like tomato juice. If he ever tries to kidnap you, Bunnatine, whatever you do, don't say yes if he offers you a game of chess. Try to stay off the subject of chess. He's one of those guys who think all master criminals ought to be chess players, but he's terrible. He gets sulky."

"I'll try to remember that. Are you comfortable? Put your head here. Are you cold? That outfit doesn't look very warm. Do you want my jacket?"

"Stop fussing, Bunnatine. Am I too heavy?"

"Go to sleep, Biscuit."

His head was so heavy she couldn't figure out how he carried it around on his neck all day. He wasn't asleep. She could hear him thinking.

He said, "You know, some day I'm going to fuck up. Some day I'll fuck up and the world won't get saved."

"Yeah. I know. A big flood. That's okay. You just take care of yourself, okay? And I'll take care of myself and the world will take care of itself, too."

Her leg felt wet. Gross. He was drooling on her leg. He said, "I dream about you, Bunnatine. I dream that you're drowning too. And I can't do anything about it. I can't save you."

She said, "You don't have to save me, baby. Remember? I float. Let everything turn into water. Just turn into water. Let it turn into beer. Clam chowder. Let the Land of Oz become an exciting new investment opportunity in underwater attractions. Little happy mutant Dorothy mermaids. Let all those mountain houses and ski condos sink down into the water, and the deer and the bricks and the high school girls and the people who never tip. It isn't all that great a world anyway, you know? Biscuit? Maybe it doesn't want to be saved. So stop worrying so much. I'll float like a bar of Ivory soap."

Even better. Won't even get my toes wet until you come and find me."

"Oh good, Bunnatine," he said, drooling, "that's a weight off my mind" -- and fell asleep. She sat beneath his heavy head and listened to the air rushing around up there in the invisible leaves. It sounded like water moving fast. Waterfalls and lakes of water rushing up the side of the mountain. Biscuit's flood. But that was some other parallel universe. Here it was only night and wind and trees and the stars were coming out. Hey, Dad, you fuckhead.

Her legs fell asleep and she needed to pee again, but she didn't want to wake Biscuit up. She bent over and kissed him on the top of his head. He didn't wake up. He just mumbled, quit it, Bunnatine. Love me alone. Or something like that.

She remembered being a kid. Nine or ten. Sneaking back into the house at four in the morning. Her best friend Biscuit has gone home too, to lie in his bed and not sleep. She had to beg him to let her go home. They have school tomorrow. She's tired and she's so hungry. Fighting crime is hard work. Her mother is in the kitchen, making pancakes. There's something about the way she looks that tells Bunnatine she's been out all night, too. Maybe she's been out fighting crime, too. Bunnatine knows her mother is a superhero. She isn't just a waitress. That's just her cover story.

She stands in the door of the kitchen and watches her mother. She practices her hovering. She practices all the time.

Her mother says, "Want some pancakes, Bunnatine?"

She waited as long as she could, and then she heaved his head up and put it down on the ground. She covered his shoulders with her jacket. Like setting a table with a handkerchief. Look at the big guy, lying there so peacefully. Maybe he'll sleep for a hundred years. But more likely the mutants will wake him, eventually, with their barbaric yawps. They're into kazoos right now, and heavy-metal hooting. She can hear them warming up. Biscuit hung out with some of the mutants at school, years and years ago. They'll get a real kick out of his new outfit. There's a ten-year high-school reunion coming up, and Biscuit will come home for that. He gets all sentimental and soft about things. Mutants, on the other hand, don't do things like parades or reunions. They're good at keeping secrets, though. They made great babysitters when her mom couldn't take care of the kid.

She keeps her headlights off, all the way down the mountain. Turns the engine off too. Just sails down the mountain like a black wing.

When she gets home, she's mostly sober and of course the kid is still asleep. Her mom doesn't say anything, although Bunnatine knows she doesn't approve. She thinks Bunnatine ought to tell Biscuit about the kid. But it's a little late for that, and who knows? Maybe she isn't his kid anyway.

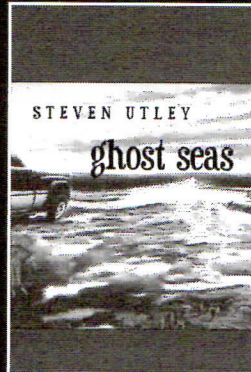
The kid has fudge smeared all over her face and her pillow. Leftover fudge from the parade, probably. Bunnatine's mom has a real sweet tooth. Kid probably sat up eating it in the dark, after Bunnatine's mom put her to bed. Bunnatine kisses the kid on the forehead. Goes and gets a washcloth, comes back and wipes off some of the fudge. Kid still doesn't wake up. She's going to be real disappointed about the autograph. Maybe Bunnatine will just forge Biscuit's handwriting. Write something real nice. It's not like Biscuit will care. Bunnatine would like to crawl into the kid's bed, just curl up around the kid and get warm again, but she's already missed two shifts this week. So she takes a hot shower and goes to sit with her mom in the kitchen until she has to leave for to work. Neither of them have much to say to each other, which is normal, but her mom makes Bunnatine some eggs and toast. If Biscuit were here, she'd make him breakfast, too, and Bunnatine imagines that, eating breakfast with Biscuit and her mom, waiting for the sun to come up so that the day can start all over again. Then the kid comes in the kitchen, crying and holding out her arms for Bunnatine. "Mommy," she says. "Mommy, I had a really bad dream."

Bunnatine picks her up. Such a heavy little kid. Her nose is running and she still smells like fudge. No wonder she had a bad dream. Bunnatine says, "Shhh. It's okay, baby. It was just a bad dream. Just a dream. Tell me about the dream."



IN 1997 . . .

... a young man boarded a plane from Perth to Melbourne, carrying a handful of copies of Steven Utley's collection, **Ghost Seas**.



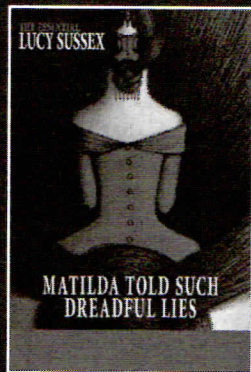
In 1999 he was back in Melbourne, standing on the world's stage, launching Stephen Dedman's **The Lady of Situations**. (There was also a t-shirt commemorating this event.)

Many years passed, and our young man aged. He edited and published many books, including the work of Simon Brown, Sean Williams, Lewis Shiner and Terry Dowling, though he did not launch these in Melbourne.

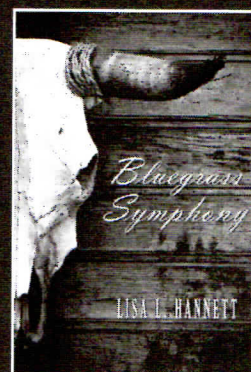


Then in 2010, when the world had again turned its eyes to Melbourne, he was back with not one but two books, Angela Slatter's (later award-winning) **The Girl With No Hands and other tales**, and Karon Warren's **Dead Sea Fruit**.

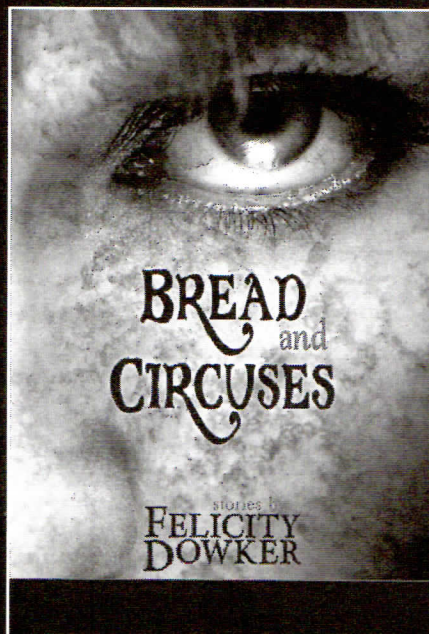
In 2011, he crossed the Nullarbor to launch their first book by a Victorian, Lucy Sussex's (*Publishers Weekly* starred) **Matilda Told Such Dreadful Lies**.



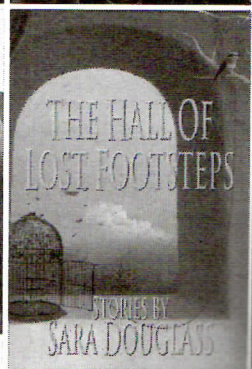
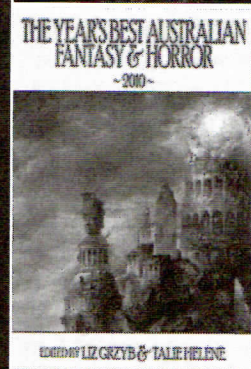
In 2011 there were other books too, however none were launched in Melbourne.



Which brings us to the present, back to Melbourne, Ticonderoga Publications' home away from home. and a fabulous new collection fills our luggage. Launching here, for you, for the first time anywhere, we present Felicity Dowker's debut collection, **Bread and Circuses**.



After 15 years one thing is clear: it's better when the writers tell the stories.



SINCE 1996

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Ticonderoga
publications

Awards & Events

The Awards ceremony, hosted by Kirstyn McDermott and Ian Mond, will be held at 8pm Sunday.

The Australian Science Fiction Foundation will present the A. Bertram Chandler award for Outstanding Achievement in Australian science fiction, the Norma K. Hemming award, followed by the Peter McNamara award for Lifetime Achievement in Australian SF, and the popularly voted Ditmar Awards for Australian SF and Chronos Awards for Victorian SF.

Norma K. Hemming

The Norma K. Hemming Award marks excellence in the exploration of themes of race, gender, sexuality, class and disability in Australian science fiction or fantasy.

The 2011 shortlist is:

Black Glass, Meg Mundell
Bluegrass Symphony, Lisa L
Hannett
The Devil's Diadem, Sara Douglass
Eona, Alison Goodman
Hindsight, A A Bell
Nightsiders, Sue Isle
Road To The Soul, Kim Falconer
The Shattered City, Tansy Rayner
Roberts
Yellowcake Springs, Guy Salvidge

Ditmar Nominees

Best Novel

The Shattered City (Creature
Court 2), Tansy Rayner Roberts
(HarperCollins)
Burn Bright, Marianne de Pierres
(Random House Australia)
Mistification, Kaaron Warren
(Angry Robot Books)
The Courier's New Bicycle, Kim
Westwood (HarperCollins)
Debris (The Veiled Worlds 1), Jo
Anderton (Angry Robot Books)

Best Novella or Novelette

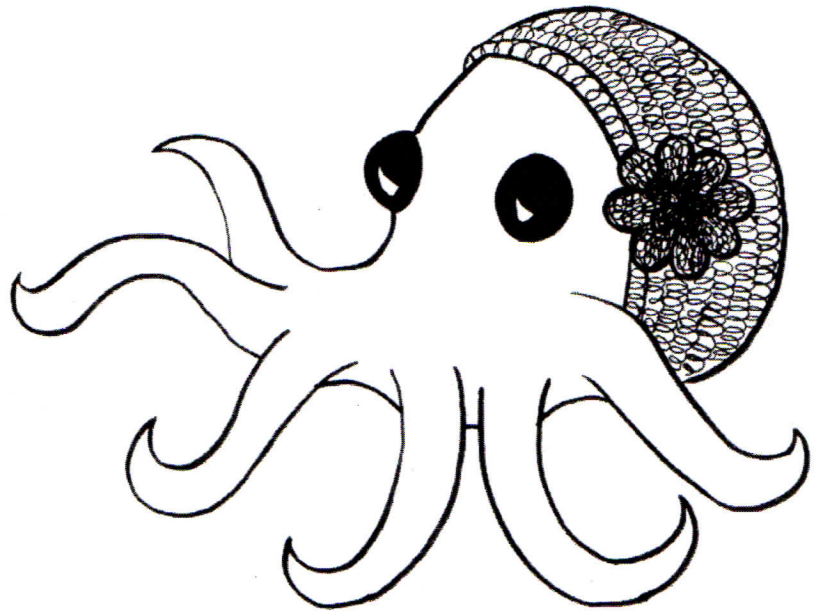
"The Sleeping and the Dead", Cat
Sparks, in *Ishtar* (Gilgamesh
Press)
"Above", Stephanie Campisi, in
Above/Below (Twelfth Planet
Press)
"The Past is a Bridge Best Left
Burnt", Paul Haines, in *The Last
Days of Kali Yuga* (Brimstone
Press)
"And the Dead Shall Outnumber
the Living", Deborah Biancotti,
in *Ishtar* (Gilgamesh Press)
"Julia Agrippina's Secret Family
Bestiary", Tansy Rayner Roberts,
in *Love and Romanpunk* (Twelfth
Planet Press)
"Below", Ben Peek, in *Above/
Below* (Twelfth Planet Press)

Best Short Story

"Breaking the Ice", Thoraiya Dyer,
in *Cosmos 37*
"Alchemy", Lucy Sussex, in *Thief
of Lives* (Twelfth Planet Press)
"The Last Gig of Jimmy Rucker",
Martin Livings and Talie
Helene, in *More Scary Kisses*
(Ticonderoga Publications)
"All You Can Do Is Breathe",
Kaaron Warren, in *Blood and
Other Cravings* (Tor)
"Bad Power", Deborah Biancotti,
in *Bad Power* (Twelfth Planet
Press)
"The Patrician", Tansy Rayner
Roberts, in *Love and Romanpunk*
(Twelfth Planet Press)

Best Collected Work

The Last Days of Kali Yuga by Paul
Haines, edited by Angela Challis
(Brimstone Press)
Nightsiders by Sue Isle, edited
by Alisa Krasnostein (Twelfth
Planet Press)
Bad Power by Deborah Biancotti,
edited by Alisa Krasnostein
(Twelfth Planet Press)
Love and Romanpunk by Tansy
Rayner Roberts, edited by Alisa
Krasnostein (Twelfth Planet
Press)
Ishtar, edited by Amanda Pillar
and K. V. Taylor (Gilgamesh
Press)



Best Artwork

“Finishing School”, Kathleen Jennings, in *Steampunk!: An Anthology of Fantastically Rich and Strange Stories* (Candlewick Press)

Cover art, Kathleen Jennings, for *The Freedom Maze* (Small Beer Press)

Best Fan Writer

Tansy Rayner Roberts, for body of work including reviews in *Australian Speculative Fiction in Focus!* and *Not If You Were The Last Short Story On Earth*

Alexandra Pierce, for body of work including reviews in *Australian Speculative Fiction in Focus!*, *Not If You Were The Last Short Story On Earth*, and *Randomly Yours, Alex*

Robin Pen, for “The Ballad of the Unrequited Ditmar”

Sean Wright, for body of work including “Authors and Social Media” series in *Adventures of a Bookonaut*

Bruce Gillespie, for body of work including “The Golden Age of Fanzines is Now”, and *SF Commentary 81 & 82*

Best Fan Artist

Rebecca Ing, for work in *Scape*
Lisa Rye, for “Steampunk Portal” series

Dick Jenssen, for body of work including work in *IRS*, *Steam Engine Time*, *SF Commentary* and *Scratchpad*

Kathleen Jennings, for work in *Errantry* (tanaudel.wordpress.com) including “The Dalek Game”

Rhianna Williams, for work in *Nullas Anxietas Convention Programme Book*

Best Fan Publication in Any Medium

SF Commentary, edited by Bruce Gillespie

The Writer and the Critic, Kirstyn McDermott and Ian Mond

The Coode Street Podcast, Jonathan Strahan and Gary K. Wolfe

Galactic Chat, Alisa Krasnostein, Tansy Rayner Roberts and Sean Wright

Galactic Suburbia, Alisa Krasnostein, Tansy Rayner Roberts, and Alex Pierce

Best New Talent

Steve Cameron
Alan Baxter
Joanne Anderton

William Atheling Jr Award for Criticism or Review

Liz Grzyb and Talie Helene, for “2010: The Year in Review”, in *The Year’s Best Australian Fantasy and Horror 2010* (Ticonderoga Publications)

Damien Broderick and Van Ikin, for editing *Warriors of the Tao: The Best of Science Fiction: A Review of Speculative Literature* (Borgo Press)

David McDonald, Tansy Rayner Roberts and Tehani Wessely for “Reviewing New Who” series, in *A Conversational Life*

Alexandra Pierce and Tehani Wessely, for reviews of Vorkosigan Saga, in *Randomly Yours, Alex*

Russell Blackford, for “Currently reading: *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell* by Susanna Clarke”, in *Metamagician and the Hellfire Club*

Awards & Events

Chronos Awards Nominees

Best Long Fiction

Black Glass, Meg Mundell (Scribe Publications)

Mole Hunt, Paul Collins (Ford Street Publishing)

The Key to Starveldt, Foz Meadows (Ford Street Publishing)

The Last Days of Kali Yuga, Paul Haines (Brimstone Press)

Scape e-zine, edited by Peta Freestone

Changing Yesterday, Sean McMullen (Ford Street Publishing)

Thief of Lives, Lucy Sussex (Twelfth Planet Press)

Best Short Fiction

Neverspring, Peta Freestone (in *M-BRANE SF #25*)

The Past is a Bridge Best Left Burnt, Paul Haines (in *The Last Days of Kali Yuga*)

Gamer's Challenge, George Ivanoff (by Ford Street Publishing)

One Last Interruption Before We Begin, Stephanie Lai (in *Steampowered II: More Lesbian Steampunk Stories*)

So Sad, the Lighthouse Keeper, Steve Cameron (in *Anywhere But Earth*)

Best Fan Writer

Jason Nahrung
Alexandra Pierce
Peta Freestone

Best Fan Artist

Nalini Haynes
Marta Tesoro
Rebecca Ing
Rachel Holkner

Best Fan Written Work

Dear Space Diary, Sam Mellor (Blog - Fiction)
Tiptree, and a collection of her short stories, Alexandra Pierce (in *Randomly Yours, Alex*)
Interview with Meg Mundell, Nalini Haynes (in *Dark Matter 3*)

Best Fan Artwork

Girl Torque, Nalini Haynes (Cover for *Dark Matter 3*)
Dangerous Penguins, Marta Tesoro
Blue Locks, Rebecca Ing (*Scape 2*)

Best Fan Publication

The Writer and the Critic, Kirstyn McDermott and Ian Mond
Galactic Suburbia, Alisa Krasnostein, Tansy Rayner Roberts, and Alexandra Pierce
Bad Film Diaries, Grant Watson
Dark Matter, edited by Nalini Haynes

Best Achievement

Trailer for *Gamer's Challenge*, Henry Gibbens (Ford Street Publishing)
Continuum 7 Opening Ceremony Video, Rachel Holkner (Continuum 7)
Conquilt, Rachel Holkner and Jeanette Holkner (Continuum 7)

The award for Best Artwork is not being presented due to insufficient nominations being received.

SF Competition

Continuum is proud to announce the winners of our SF Competition run in partnership with the Australian Science Fiction Foundation. Prizes will be presented at the Awards Ceremony on Sunday night of the convention.

Flip to page 59 to see the winning entries!

First Place: Pattern for knitting a galaxy, Stephanie Lai

Second Place: The Armour, Jessica Reid

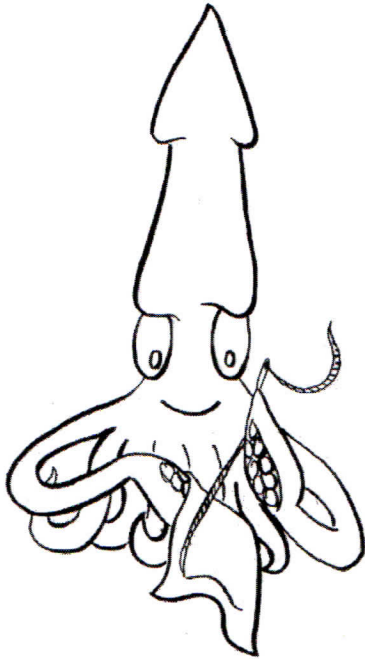
Third Place: Stitch the Sun, Liz Barr

Maskobalo

Take a turn 20,000 leagues below, and follow the undercurrents to a hidden realm of secrets and wonder, of sunken treasure and swelling tides, merfolk and kraken. Lose yourself in the siren-song of Maskobalo on this night of enchantment under the sea.

Maskobalo is free for Continuum 8 members or just \$15 cash at the door for non-members, so dress in your nautical best and get ready to begin the beguine with DJ Mitch.

Photo opportunity and costume awards from 8:00pm; dancefloor opens at 8:30pm. The Maskobalo will have a cash bar.



Rules

Your costume must not be made or trimmed with messy substances, as these can damage other entrants' costumes. You may not use anything wet, oily, or dusty such as wet paint, powder or unfixed sparkle. The same goes for poorly-set or sticky colouring and sharp, pointy or rough finishes that may become snagged.

No live animals will be allowed in the Maskobalo. For our purposes, guide dogs and other animals trained to assist a disabled person are considered to be people and will be allowed.

Enjoy yourself!

Small Press & Craft Market

How could we have a crafty con without a traditional Sunday market? Jewellery, paper goods, small press books & all kinds of goodies. The market will also feature craft demonstrations by some fantastic artisans who also happen to be fans, and the Adjustment Bureau where you can have a convention tshirt turned into a mysterious artefact. Wander upstairs to the Parkview Lounge between 1 and 5pm on Sunday.

	Lincoln/Argyle	Pelham
16:00	<p>Gender and Sexuality in Speculative YA</p> <p><i>Peta Freestone, Kate Eltham, Alison Goodman</i></p> <p>Fiction is a vital forum to introduce different concepts of gender and sexuality to teenage and pre-teen minds. What ideas are being introduced by YA speculative fiction, how well are they being handled and what's still missing?</p>	<p>Crafty Characters</p> <p><i>Tansy Rayner Roberts, Trudi Canavan, Jo Spurrier</i></p> <p>We take a look at craftspeople in speculative fiction, the stereotypes and what crafts have been overlooked.</p>
17:00	<p>Daikaiju Go Heavenly</p> <p><i>David McDonald, Cat Sparks, Dirk Flinthart</i></p> <p>What if the gods were daikaiju? Which deity will reign supreme, or will king of the daikaiju Godzilla crush them all?</p>	<p>The Forgotten Frontier?</p> <p><i>mlk3y, Jonathan Strahan, Alexandra Pierce</i></p> <p>In the late 90s and early 2000s space opera was THE thing and reinventing itself with a gritty realism. Less than a decade later it's nowhere to be seen. What happened? What's new and noteworthy in the genre today?</p>
18:00	<p>Tales as old as time</p> <p><i>Angela Slatter, Lisa Hannett, Jenny Blackford, Kirstyn McDermott, Jane Routley</i></p> <p>Fairytales are in vogue again, all over TV and movie screens and for years collected by Ellen Datlow in retold anthologies. Why are we so fascinated with these stories? And with so many retellings and versions out there how do writers make them new again?</p>	<p>Writing different genders, sexualities & cultures</p> <p><i>Gillian Polack, Trudi Canavan, Deborah Biancotti, Louise Cusack</i></p> <p>In which our fearless authors delve into the ethics, issues and techniques for writing characters who are different. We'll discuss how to work with unfamiliar, alien or just plain diverse perspectives and we'll delve into the dangers and satisfactions of writing from another point of view. Finally, we'll examine some of the reactions to 'other' writing and ask what motivates a writer to keep working with genders, sexualities and cultures that are not their own.</p>
19:00	<p>Twelfth Planet Press Hour</p> <p>Ever wondered how your favorite Twelve Planet collection would taste like in cupcake form? Then come along to the Twelfth Planet Cocktail hour, to celebrate the launch of the newest Twelve Planets, 'Through Splintered Walls', by Kaaron Warren, and 'Cracklescape' by Margo Lanagan, plus the new TPP novella 'Salvage' by Jason Nahrung and a surprise announcement! Each book will be lovingly interpreted as a cupcake by master baker, Terri Sellen. Your cocktail choice is entirely your own...</p>	<p>Taking Wing: From Daedalus to Deus Ex</p> <p><i>Claire Corbett</i></p> <p>A personal reflection on the history and mythology of the passion for human flight drawing on Claire's research for <i>When We Have Wings</i>.</p>
19:30		<p>Project Sky Dinosaur</p> <p><i>Louise Angrilli</i></p> <p>Would you like to help fund a dinosaur drawn in the sky? Come along and find out more.</p>
20:00	<p>Opening Ceremony</p>	
20:30		<p>Continuum 101</p> <p><i>Hespa, David McDonald, Sarah Lee Parker</i></p> <p>Everything you wanted to know about fan conventions and con-going. Learn the secrets from those who have been around long enough to know better.</p>
21:00	<p>Spicks & Spekulations</p> <p>Inspired by the ABC music game show, two teams of 'experts' go head-to-head as their spec fic and music knowledge is tested to its hilarious limits. Who will prevail? How silly will things get? We suspect, quite silly.</p>	<p>I Don't Get It</p> <p><i>Deborah Biancotti, Alan Stewart, Ian Nichols, Patrick O'Duffy, Peter M. Ball</i></p> <p>There are certain works of science fiction, fantasy, and horror that all of fandom seems to love...except me. What are these so-called classics? Why don't I share the love? Is it possible that a lot of people like these things just because they know a lot of people like these things? Who's missing the point, here - everyone else, or me?</p>
22:00	<p>You Say You Want A Revolution</p> <p><i>mlk3y, Dave Cake, Rjurik Davidson, Sarah Stokely, Roman Orszanski</i></p> <p>In the last 18 months multiple decades old dictatorships have fallen, people are occupying the streets worldwide protesting capitalism, and Twitter has been at the centre of it all. Is Twitter the catalyst or the tool of the global social revolution? And where is all this revolution leading? Are we headed into a brave new world or will it be more of the same?</p>	<p>Beautiful Nightmares</p> <p><i>Grant Watson, Jules Wilkinson, Terry Frost</i></p> <p>Ridley Scott's science fiction thriller <i>Alien</i> terrified audiences worldwide with its groundbreaking blend of serious science fiction and visceral horror. John McTiernan's smash hit <i>Predator</i> combined classic monster themes with 1980s American action cinema. What is the core appeal of these two SF movie franchises? What are their influences? Do they work better as a single universe or separately? And what lies in each of their futures?</p>
23:00	<p>The Joss Whedon Panel</p> <p><i>mlk3y, Cheryse Durrant, Nicole Canal, Alice Clarke</i></p> <p>We have to talk about <i>The Avengers</i>, right? Right! We'll also explore why evil, faceless corporations like Wolfram & Hart, Rossum and Blue Sun are recurring entities in Joss's work.</p>	<p>Fanvids: Meta in Motion</p> <p><i>Liz Barr, Emilly McLeay</i></p> <p>From character studies to parody, serious thematic commentary to wholly new narratives the original show never dreamed of... Basically, we think fanvids are awesome and we want to show you why! May contain spoilers for anything and everything.</p>

Faraday	Drummond	
<p>Splicing Genres</p> <p><i>Jane Routley, Jenny Blackford, Lisa Hannett, Claire Corbett, Rjurik Davidson</i></p> <p>Fantasy murder mysteries, horror spy novels, science fiction romance... do the best stories defy genre boundaries?</p>		16:00
<p>I Flunked Physics: Hard Science Versus Accessible Science Fiction</p> <p><i>Alan Baxter, Gillian Polack, Steve Cameron</i></p> <p>Closed time-like curves? Light cones? Multi-dimensional manifolds? Or just reverse the polarity and beam us up? How important is accurate science in your science-fiction?</p>	<p>A Sendak Celebration</p> <p><i>Rachel Holkner</i></p> <p>An informal rumpus in celebration of Maurice Sendak (1928-2012). There will be old favourites to read and rediscover, Sendakian crafts and face-painting for all the Wild Things.</p>	17:00
<p>Walking Shadows Launch</p> <p>Book Launch of <i>Walking Shadows</i>, by Narrelle M Harris</p>	<p>Turning the Gears: Steampunk Craft</p> <p><i>Paul Poulton, Jo Spurrier, Nicole Canal, Michael Pryor</i></p> <p>The steampunk aesthetic is based on power: pistons that pump and cogs that turn. So is it cheating to just stick gears on something and spray-paint it brass? Does steampunk craft need to be functional?</p>	18:00
	<p>Workshop: Legocraft</p> <p><i>Sue Ann Barber</i></p> <p>What says "potential" like a big pile of coloured bricks waiting to be snapped together?</p>	19:00
		19:30
		20:00
<p>Sara Douglass Remembered</p> <p><i>Lucy Sussex, Russell B. Farr</i></p> <p>Sara Douglass's (1957-2011) passing last year has left a void in the genre. Australia's first fantasy bestseller, Sara was publishing right up until her untimely death. This panel will examine her impact and share stories of one of our most important writers.</p>		20:30
		21:00
<p>In Defense of Romance</p> <p><i>Jane Routley, Louise Cusack, Amanda Pillar</i></p> <p>Paranormal romance, or romance in general, is often dismissed as bodice-ripping fluff. But these are stories for and about women, written by women. They can be more than a guilty pleasure, exploring important issues. Do they have a duty to? Why aren't novels written by and for men called dudelit and treated to the same derision? Are the cover designs doing the genre a disservice?</p>	<p>The Best Games You Never Heard Of</p> <p><i>Alan Stewart, Hespa, Ben McKenzie</i></p> <p>Forget Monopoly, who's up for some Tsuro? Bartok? Martian Coasters? Join us for a quick introduction to what's out there and where to get it, after which we open our game-boxes so you can give something new a try.</p>	22:00
		23:00

Saturday

	Lincoln	Argyle	
9:00	<p>Take the pebble from my hand</p> <p><i>Kaaron Warren, Kimberley Gaal, Jane Routley, Angela Slatter, Louise Cusack</i></p> <p>When starting out on any path it's always good to have someone you can ask for advice. Writing is no different and there are many people willing to help. Our panellists discuss how to find a mentor, the benefits of having one and the rewards of being a mentor.</p>	<p>Short Shrift</p> <p><i>George Ivanoff, Peta Freestone, Steve Cameron, Kate Eltham</i></p> <p>YA spec fic is booming in long form, but relatively uncommon in short form. Why is this? What are the challenges and opportunities for proponents of YA short fiction?</p>	
10:00	<p>Backyard Speculation</p> <p><i>Tor Roxburgh, Jason Nahrung, Gillian Polack, Claire Corbett, Lachlan Walter</i></p> <p>Speculative fiction drawing on Australian settings and cultural themes is all too rare, and so disappointing when it's done carelessly. So how do you go about writing thoughtful Australian spec fic? What are the big issues, pitfalls and rewards?</p>	<p>New Faiths for New Worlds</p> <p><i>David McDonald, Jenny Blackford, Russell Blackford, Alan Baxter</i></p> <p>Love it or hate it, religion plays a huge role in our society. When creating a new society from scratch, what part will religion play? How do you create a convincing set of beliefs, and what are the pitfalls you need to avoid?</p>	
11:00	<p>Continuum 101</p> <p><i>Hespa, Emily McLeay, Sarah Lee Parker</i></p> <p>Everything you wanted to know about fan conventions and con-going - an ideal starting point for anyone relatively new to conventions. Learn the secrets from those who have been around long enough to know better.</p>	<p>Food and Fiction: Agricultural Science and Food Crisis in Science-Fiction</p> <p><i>Caspar Roxburgh</i></p> <p>The threats facing modern agriculture offer great inspiration and themes for science fiction. With global population growth, climate change, and threats to land availability increasing the pressure on international agriculture, the science behind food production is becoming increasingly sophisticated and controversial. These themes will be discussed with a view to how they may provide rich subject matter for science fiction writers.</p>	<p>Workshop: A Stitch In Time Travel Preview & Beta Test</p> <p>Come to the bar and help beta test a pattern from the upcoming new craft eBook from Twelfth Planet Press. Crochet hooks optional. Numbers limited—sign up sheet at registration desk.</p>
11:30	Unavailable due to sea urchin infestation		
12:00	<p>Kelly Link</p> <p>Our Guest of Honour in Conversation with Kate Eltham</p>		
13:00	Lunch		
14:00	<p>Winter Is Coming</p> <p><i>David McDonald, Mick Mihalic, Ben McKenzie, Jules Wilkinson, Kelly Link</i></p> <p>As the second season of the TV adaptation draws to a close, join us for a discussion of George R. R. Martin's <i>A Song of Ice and Fire</i> series in all its forms.</p>	<p>Galactic Suburbia</p> <p><i>Tansy Rayner Roberts, Alisa Krasnostein, Alexandra Pierce</i></p> <p>The latest episode of the cult podcasting series, recorded live! Alisa, Alex and Tansy bring you speculative fiction news, reading notes and chat from the galactic suburbs of Australia.</p>	
15:00	<p>Playing God - a Guide for Beginners</p> <p><i>Alison Goodman, Tansy Rayner Roberts, Michael Pryor, Louise Cusack, Trudi Canavan</i></p> <p>Building a new world for your fiction can be fun and exciting. But where do you start, what should you avoid and what makes it a living, breathing, believable world?</p>	<p>Relative Dimensions: The Limits of Doctor Who</p> <p><i>Grant Watson, Ian Mond, Deborah Green, Cheryse Durrant, Danny Oz</i></p> <p>Over almost 50 years <i>Doctor Who</i> has demonstrated itself to be one of the most versatile television concepts ever devised. It has changed actors, style, content, tone, target audience and media. How far can the concept stretch? A panel of enthusiasts and experts push <i>Doctor Who</i> in the strangest directions they can think of, to find out where (and, indeed, if) the concept breaks.</p>	

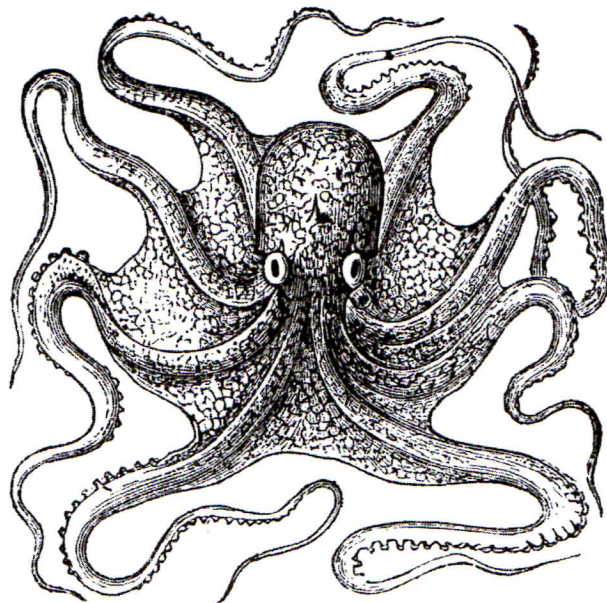
Pelham	Faraday	Drummond	
<p>Melbourne's Dark Side</p> <p><i>Paul Poulton, Narrelle Harris, Felicity Dowker, Meg Mundell</i></p> <p>Melbourne is often touted as one of the world's "Most Liveable Cities", but don't be fooled: beneath the surface glitz and tourism spin lies a much darker version of the city, one that has provided rich inspiration for writers of horror, speculative fiction and sci-fi.</p>	<p>Everything Old Is New Again</p> <p><i>Ian Mond, Grant Watson, Patrick O'Duffy</i></p> <p>Comics are the latest victim of the reboot trend, but given that most superheroes first appeared over 60 years ago when society and attitudes were completely different, a fresh start might not be a bad thing. What has the New 52 achieved, have they broken old prejudices or is it just more of the same?</p>		9:00
<p>The End Of The World Is Just The Beginning</p> <p><i>Sue Ann Barber, Liz Barr, Emily McLeay, Michael Pryor, Kate Eltham</i></p> <p>Dystopic futures are currently abundant in YA fiction. Why is that and is it providing a gateway into science fiction?</p>	<p>Masters of Podcasting</p> <p><i>Jonathan Strahan, Terry Frost, Kirstyn McDermott, Alisa Krasnostein</i></p> <p>What makes someone podcast? Ego? Frustrated media ambition? Being too ugly for television? Ego? A group of fannish podcasters discuss the origins, do's, don'ts and why-the-hell-nots of podcasting.</p>	<p>Workshop: A Spaceship Stole My Baby Dragon</p> <p><i>Cheryse Durrant</i></p> <p>Cheryse Durrant will help guide youngsters through the solar eclipses and black holes of story writing. Includes brainstorming, story structure and being space detectives.</p>	10:00
<p>The Big Bad - Fairytale Villains</p> <p><i>Angela Slatter, Nalini Haynes, Margo Lanagan, Peter M. Ball</i></p> <p>Without them there wouldn't be any fairytales, and some still haunt us into adulthood. Why do they endure and how do you keep them fresh, relevant and scary?</p>	<p>Fans & Faith</p> <p><i>Dr Avril Hannah-Jones, David McDonald, Alexandra Pierce, Ian Mond</i></p> <p>Religion often frowns upon science fiction and fantasy, and fandom can be quite critical of religion. So how do our panellists reconcile their passion for SF/F/H and their faith?</p>	<p>Conbag Craft</p> <p><i>Trudi Canavan</i></p> <p>Ever wished you could do something useful with conbag contents you don't need? Trudi will show you how, using basic bookbinding techniques and a 'con craft kit' of basic tools. The only con t-shirt left is too small, or you simply have too many of them? Trudi will show you simple no-sew ways to turn a t-shirt into a bag (t-shirt provided).</p>	11:00
			12:00
Lunch			
<p>The Future Is Now</p> <p><i>Louise Cusack, Kirstyn McDermott, Alan Baxter, Julia Svaganovic</i></p> <p>eBooks, iDevices, apps etc are changing how we write and read. What's out there, what's worth using, and is all this technology a help or a hindrance? And where to from here?</p>	<p>Readings</p> <p><i>Alison Goodman, Cheryse Durrant, Margo Lanagan, Jason Nahrung</i></p>	<p>Ishtar</p> <p>Book launch of <i>Ishtar</i>, edited by Amanda Pillar & K.V. Taylor</p>	13:00 14:00
<p>Other Entities</p> <p><i>Jane Routley, Paul Poulton, Amanda Pillar, Margo Lanagan</i></p> <p>Dragons and fairies and vampires and zombies are all very well, but sometimes you just want something a little different. Come discover what other entities might be worthy of your dreams... or nightmares.</p>	<p>Readings</p> <p><i>Fablecroft Authors: David McDonald, Steve Cameron, Joanne Anderton, Dirk Flinthart</i></p>	<p>Humanity Enhanced</p> <p><i>Russell Blackford, Adam Ford, mlk3y, Claire Corbett</i></p> <p>Explore the potential of self-directed human evolution. Discuss its personal and social implications. Are you ready for your upgrades?</p>	15:00

Saturday Evening

	Lincoln	Argyle	Pelham
16:00	<p>It's The Henson Panell</p> <p><i>Julia Svaganovic, Grant Watson, Ben McKenzie, Rachel Holkner</i></p> <p>From <i>Sesame Street</i>, <i>Fraggle Rock</i> and the Muppets through <i>The Storyteller</i> and acclaimed fantasy films such as <i>The Dark Crystal</i>, <i>Labyrinth</i> and <i>The Witches</i>, the puppetry, imagination and storytelling genius of Jim Henson has enchanted, entertained and inspired generations of viewers. What is the key to Henson's success? Why did his works transcend the entertainment landscape around them to become not only perennial favourites but pop culture icons around the world?</p>	<p>All SF TV Is Rubbish</p> <p><i>John Richards, Josh Kinal</i></p> <p>John Richards and Josh Kinal of <i>Boxcutters</i> fame debate the quality of science-fiction on TV. Are fan expectations too low? Are SF fans actually more demanding than most? Tune in for a right good row.</p>	<p>Good Things Come In Small Packages</p> <p><i>George Ivanoff, Cat Sparks, Kelly Link, Jonathan Strahan, Stephen Dedman</i></p> <p>Short stories are the life-blood of speculative fiction, and speculative genres among the last still-flourishing domains of the modern short story. What makes the two fit so well together?</p>
17:00	<p>Unavailable due to mollusk infestation</p>	<p>Outland Q & A</p> <p><i>John Richards</i></p> <p>Meet John Richards, co-creator of this year's ABC geek-comedy series <i>Outland</i>, along with cast members.</p>	<p>A New Age Of Australian Small Press</p> <p><i>Lindy Cameron, Russell B Farr, Michael Foster, Amanda Pillar</i></p> <p>There are some amazing things happening right now, and Australia's independent press is in the thick of it. These small businesses are not only the training ground for tomorrow's bestsellers, they are publishing some of the genre's biggest names. Come and hear from the leaders of this exciting industry.</p>
18:00	<p>Unavailable due to mollusk/sea urchin infighting</p>		<p>Writing Storyworlds</p> <p><i>Colin Harvey, Claire Corbett, Louise Cusack, Danny Oz</i></p> <p>A discussion of the processes involved in creating convincing storyworlds from scratch compared with writing material for existing storyworlds such as <i>Doctor Who</i>, <i>Highlander</i> and <i>Dan Dare</i>.</p>
19:00	<p>Dinner</p>		
20:00	<p>Costume Parade</p>		
22:00	<p>Maskobalo</p> <p>Take a turn 20,000 leagues below, and follow the undercurrents to a hidden realm of secrets and wonder, of sunken treasure and swelling tides, merfolk and kraken. Lose yourself in the siren-song of Maskobalo on this night of enchantment under the sea.</p>		
23:00			

Saturday Evening

Faraday	Drummond	
<p>Readings <i>Claire Corbett, Angela Slatter, Lisa Hannet, Felicity Dowker</i></p>	<p>Workshop: Legocraft for Kids <i>Sue Ann Barber</i> What says "potential" like a big pile of coloured bricks waiting to be snapped together?</p>	16:00
<p>21st Century Storytelling <i>mlk3y, Colin Harvey, Nicole Canal, Darren Sanderson</i> From MMOs to first-person-shooter RPGs, computer games are increasingly getting well known authors to script them or their novelisations. Are games becoming interactive stories and is this the new frontier for writers?</p>	<p>Workshop: Diagnose Your Scene <i>Alison Goodman</i> A hands-on one hour workshop with Alison Goodman, who will take you through some great diagnostic tools that will help you improve your scene-writing skills. Participants should bring a scene that they have written. Max. 20 people—sign up at registration.</p>	17:00
<p>Supernatural Moves On <i>Jules Wilkinson, Darren Sanderson, Rachel Moore</i> <i>Supernatural's</i> original writing team wove a complex five-season story through to a deeply satisfying ending... and then added a cliffhanger and handed the series over to a new team of writers to begin a whole new multi-season plot. So is the new <i>Supernatural</i> revitalised and fresh, or is this the smell of a dead horse being flogged?</p>	<p>ASIM 10th Birthday The 10th Birthday of <i>Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine</i> and the launch of new book <i>Light Touch Paper, Stand Clear</i></p>	18:00
Dinner		19:00



Sunday

	Lincoln	Argyle	Pelham
9:30			
10:00	<p>Everyone Loves A Good Murder</p> <p><i>Tor Roxburgh, Stephen Dedman, Kaaron Warren, Lindy Cameron, Laura Wilkinson</i></p> <p>Murder mysteries—and just plain murder—are a staple of science-fiction and fantasy almost as much as crime. Why are we so fascinated with murder and those who commit it?</p>	<p>Book Trailers</p> <p><i>George Ivanoff, Travis McKenzie, Margo Lanagan, Cheryse Durrant</i></p> <p>The new trend in book promotion. We discuss what makes a good one, what doesn't work and why.</p>	<p>Elizabethans are awesome</p> <p><i>Grant Watson, Dave Cake, Ian Nichols, Gillian Pollack</i></p> <p>Join us for a time when the British secret service was brand new and populated with out-of-work actors, magic and science were the same thing, and the court had its own royal astrologer who sometimes spoke to angels. A look at England in the late 16th century, but only the cool bits.</p>
11:00	<p>Jim Henson: Short and Experimental</p> <p><i>Rachel Holkner</i></p> <p>Well before <i>Sesame Street</i> and <i>The Muppet Show</i>, Jim Henson considered himself an experimental filmmaker, producing art for an adult audience. This introduction to some of his lesser known films and animations of the 1960s will give a new perspective on the man whose later works we all love so much. These predate <i>Sesame Street</i>, are precursors for his motion pictures of the eighties, and include a bonus inflatable psychedelic disco.</p>	<p>Steampunk</p> <p><i>Colin Harvey</i></p> <p>The label "steampunk" is at times applied to a range of works containing neither steam technology nor Victoriana, but nevertheless displaying sufficiently similar tropes and aesthetics to enable grouping together. Colin Harvey explores the manifold playful ways in which media producers collide historical and fantastical iconography with reimagined technology to produce material lending itself to characterisation as "steampunk".</p>	<p>We Want Your Brainz</p> <p><i>David McDonald, Stephen Dedman, Kelly Link, Peter M. Ball, Felicity Dowker</i></p> <p>Zombies have taken over in the last 5 years or so and have gone mainstream, but their lore is still being written. How have they changed since the 1970s and what does the explosion of them now say about our present psyche? Could it be a pandemic as recent writers have postulated? And will they ever become sparkly?</p>
11:30	Unavailable due to essential works		
12:00	<p>Alison Goodman</p> <p>Our Guest of Honour in conversation with Jason Nahrung</p>		
13:00	Lunch		
14:00	<p>Apocalypses Through The Ages</p> <p><i>Cat Sparks, Rjurik Davidson, Russell Blackford, Nalini Haynes, Lachlan Walters</i></p> <p>From nuclear winters to reality television gone mad, the apocalyptic and dystopian futures of science-fiction often reflect the society in which they were written. A look at the many imaginings of unpleasant futures and what they say about the eras that imagined them.</p>	<p>Book blogs & Reviewing</p> <p><i>Sue Bursztynski, George Ivanoff, Alexandra Pierce, Gillian Polack, Sean Wright</i></p> <p>Blogging has meant an explosion in book reviewing and discussion, but what makes good reviews and blogs? What boxes does a book have to check to receive 5 stars?</p>	<p>Futureproofing SF and Fantasy</p> <p><i>Dave Cake, Chris McMahon, Nicole Canal, Brian Walls</i></p> <p>Certain works—including some earlier hailed as classics—are so bound to the time of writing that they're unreadable today. Is it a question of writing style, outdated science, simply different ideas about what questions are interesting? A discussion of what went wrong and how modern writers and screenwriters might make today's speculative fiction timeless.</p>
15:00	<p>The Writer & The Critic</p> <p><i>Kirstyn McDermott, Ian Mond, Alison Goodman, Kelly Link</i></p> <p><i>The Writer & The Critic</i> is a monthly podcast devoted mostly to speculative fiction books, reviews and the odd bit of idle gossip. Join hosts Kirstyn McDermott and Ian Mond and their most estimable guests Alison Goodman and Kelly Link in this special live-recorded edition for a discussion of <i>The Crystal Singer</i> by Anne McCaffrey and <i>The Scorpio Races</i> by Maggie Stiefvater.</p>	<p>Revenge of the Nerds</p> <p><i>Ben McKenzie, Jules Wilkinson, Peter M. Ball, Cheryse Durrant</i></p> <p>After years of being stereotyped bit-parts, suddenly there are a plethora of TV shows and films putting geeks in the spotlight. Has this new breed of character escaped the old stereotypes, or has going mainstream just given them a wider audience of mockers?</p>	<p>The Newbie's Guide to Writing</p> <p><i>Travis McKenzie, Jane Routley, Amanda Pillar, Steve Cameron, David McDonald</i></p> <p>New to writing? Not sure what to expect? Our panellists discuss critiquing, dealing with rejection, and everything else they wish they'd known when they'd started.</p>
16:00		<p>Where has all the SF gone?</p> <p><i>David Golding, Jonathan Strahan, Cat Sparks, Ian Nichols, Michael Pryor</i></p> <p>While SF is very popular in Australia there is very little published or written here. With paranormal romance dominating genre shelves, has the rise of fantasy killed Australian SF?</p>	<p>Where are all the Wonder Women?</p> <p><i>Tansy Rayner Roberts, Russell Blackford, Grant Watson, Alice Clarke</i></p> <p>There's no shortage of female superheroes (or villains!), but few have attained the iconic status of, say, Wonder Woman. Why is this? Which characters deserve better? A discussion of female representation in comics.</p>

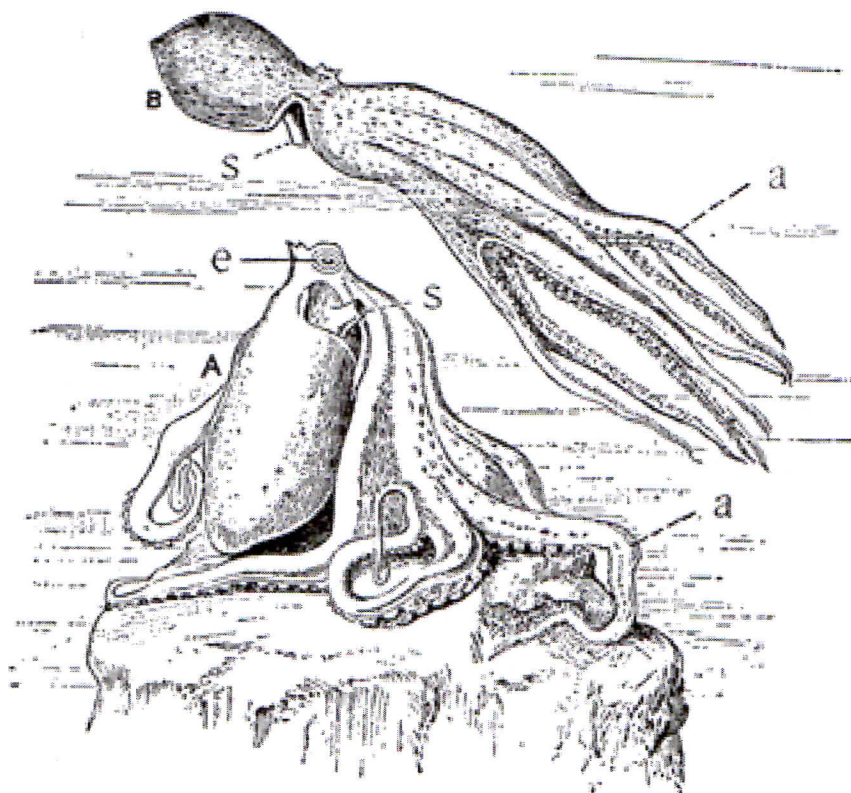
Faraday	Drummond	
	Cartooning for Kids	9:30
<p>Hitchhiker's Guide to Furry</p> <p><i>Kyle Evans, Erika Vasos, Sam Trotter, Chris McKenna</i></p> <p>Are furries truly an alien culture? This collection of true stories aims to look beyond the cartoon animals and delve into the truth behind furry parties, conventions and minds. With presenters whose work includes the ActFur On Air podcast and the MiDFur convention, listen as they weave wicked awesome tales of friendship, conflict and fandom.</p>	<p><i>Sarah Howell, Arran McKenna</i></p> <p>Join Sarah Howell and Arran McKenna from Brunswick's Squishface Studio to get down to some fun drawing challenges that will improve your cartooning skills.</p>	10:00
<p>What's It Worth?</p> <p><i>Jason Nahrung, Steven O'Connor, Alan Baxter, Kate Eltham, Jonathan Strahan</i></p> <p>The eBook industry is on the rise, but for many consumers price is a sticking point. Why do we undervalue eBooks? What are the potential consequences for books and authors if the mindset continues? In short, what's it worth?</p>	<p>Crafts in Space</p> <p><i>Tansy Rayner Roberts, Trudi Canavan, Lyn McConchie, Sarah Lee Parker</i></p> <p>Fantasy seems to be littered with all kinds of craft-doers but it's rare in science fiction. Why is this? What materials could you make craft out of? What effects would low gravity have? Which technologies would be awesome to use? Our crafty panellists discuss all this and more!</p>	11:00
		12:00
Lunch		13:00
<p>Readings</p> <p><i>Kelly Link, Jenny Blackford, Tansy Rayner Roberts, Alan Baxter</i></p>	<p>UnderConStruction: Building Community</p> <p><i>UnderConStruction is a conversation about convention running in Australia</i></p> <p>Fandom is a community, but we can't just say that and make it happen. How do we get new people interested and, more importantly, comfortable in the convention scene? And how do we actually build a community that comes back next year?</p>	14:00
<p>Readings</p> <p><i>Kaaron Warren, Lucy Sussex, Chris McMahon, Stephen Dedman</i></p>	<p>Workshop: Dragon Flying School</p> <p><i>Sarah Lee Parker</i></p> <p>Make and decorate your own flight-capable paper dragon!</p>	15:00
<p>Readings</p> <p><i>Louise Cusack, Danny Fahey, Jo Spurrier, Patrick O'Duffy</i></p>	<p>Bread and Circuses Launch</p> <p>Launch of <i>Bread and Circuses</i>, by Felicity Dowker</p>	16:00

Sunday Evening

	Lincoln	Argyle	Pelham
17:00	<p>The Many Faces of Sherlock Holmes</p> <p><i>Jane Routley, Paul Poulton, Narrelle Harris, Brian Walls</i></p> <p>Sherlock seems to be everywhere these days. Our panellists take a look at all the new adaptations, how true they stay to Conan Doyle's original text and ask, why is he suddenly so popular again?</p>	<p>Melbourne Science Fiction Club: 60 Years On</p> <p><i>Sam Rooney, Bruce Gillespie, Paul Ewins, Sue Ann Barber, Alan Stewart, George Ivanoff, Danny Oz</i></p> <p>The MSFC is the oldest science fiction club in the southern hemisphere - it's just turned 60! Join us for a chat about the bad old days.</p>	<p>Stranger than Fiction</p> <p><i>Hespa, Ben McKenzie, Chris McMahon</i></p> <p>Sometimes even the oddest aliens and most marvellous myths have nothing on reality. Enter the world of two-faced cats, mind-controlled zombie ants, birds that sing with two voices, luminous slug sex and vampire squid from hell.</p>
18:00	<p>The Crafty Middle Ages</p> <p><i>Gillian Polack</i></p> <p>Dr Gillian Polack leads us through some of the crafts that created comfort and entertainment in France and England in the Middle Ages. The talk will cover crafts from manuscripts to horn-work. Alchemy may well make an appearance. There won't be time for practical demonstrations, but anyone wishing to try certain crafts at home might want to start collecting their urine. Most of this presentation will be PC. A small segment will be downright vulgar.</p>	<p>Modesty Blaise</p> <p><i>Trevor Clarke</i></p> <p>An exploration of the 60's crime comic, its heroine and its creator.</p>	<p>Fan Fund Auction</p> <p><i>Justin Ackroyd, Grant Watson</i></p> <p>Come bid on some fantastic collectables (and marvel at some of the things people will pay for), grab a bargain and help fans get to more awesome conventions like Continuum!</p>
18:30	Unavailable due to sea urchin reinfestation		
19:00	Dinner		
20:00	Awards Ceremony		<p>Build It And They Will Come</p> <p><i>Hespa, Patrick O'Duffy, Peter Ball, Darren Sanderson</i></p> <p>Like any fictional world, the best role-playing settings have personalities as complex and individual as their characters. Whether it comes from a rulebook, out your head or a combination of both, as a GM how do you imbue your world with life?</p>
21:00			
22:00	<p>The Great Doctor Who Smackdown</p> <p><i>Narrelle Harris vs. George Ivanoff</i></p> <p>Two fans, one show, many different and lively opinions. Don't miss this!</p>		
23:00	<p>The Movie Trailer Panel</p> <p><i>Paul Poulton, Mitch</i></p> <p>In time-honoured Continuum tradition, your hosts Mitch and Paul will take you on a magical journey through cinema yet to come.</p>		

Sunday Evening

	Faraday	Drummond	
<p>Raise a glass for Paul Haines</p> <p>An informal gathering in the bar to raise a glass or two in honour of Paul Haines, our much missed friend and colleague.</p>	<p>Readings</p> <p><i>Sue Bursztynski, Tor Roxburgh, Jack Dann, Janeen Webb</i></p>	<p>Hey, I Game Tool!</p> <p><i>Nicole Canal, Melissa Walter, Joanne Anderton, Alice Clarke</i></p> <p>42% of gamers are women, yet most advertising/characters are targeted at the male demographic. Games specifically aimed at women are usually fashion, cooking or animal related. Are attitudes changing? If not, why not?</p>	17:00
	<p>Steampunk Squalor</p> <p><i>Michael Pryor, Paul Poulton, Jo Spurrier, Lucy Sussex, Nicole Canal</i></p> <p>For all the steam technology the Victorian Era could theoretically have commanded, the Victorian mindset was still a long way from the modern day. How much use to society are steam-powered dirigibles and computers in a milieu where science still maintains that disease is spread by miasmas?</p>	<p>Art Workshop: Character Design Masterclass</p> <p>Join members of Squishface Studio to look at successful character design and how to develop a new character or hone an existing one.</p>	18:00
	Dinner		19:00



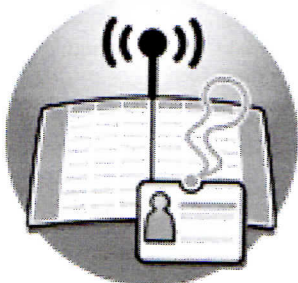
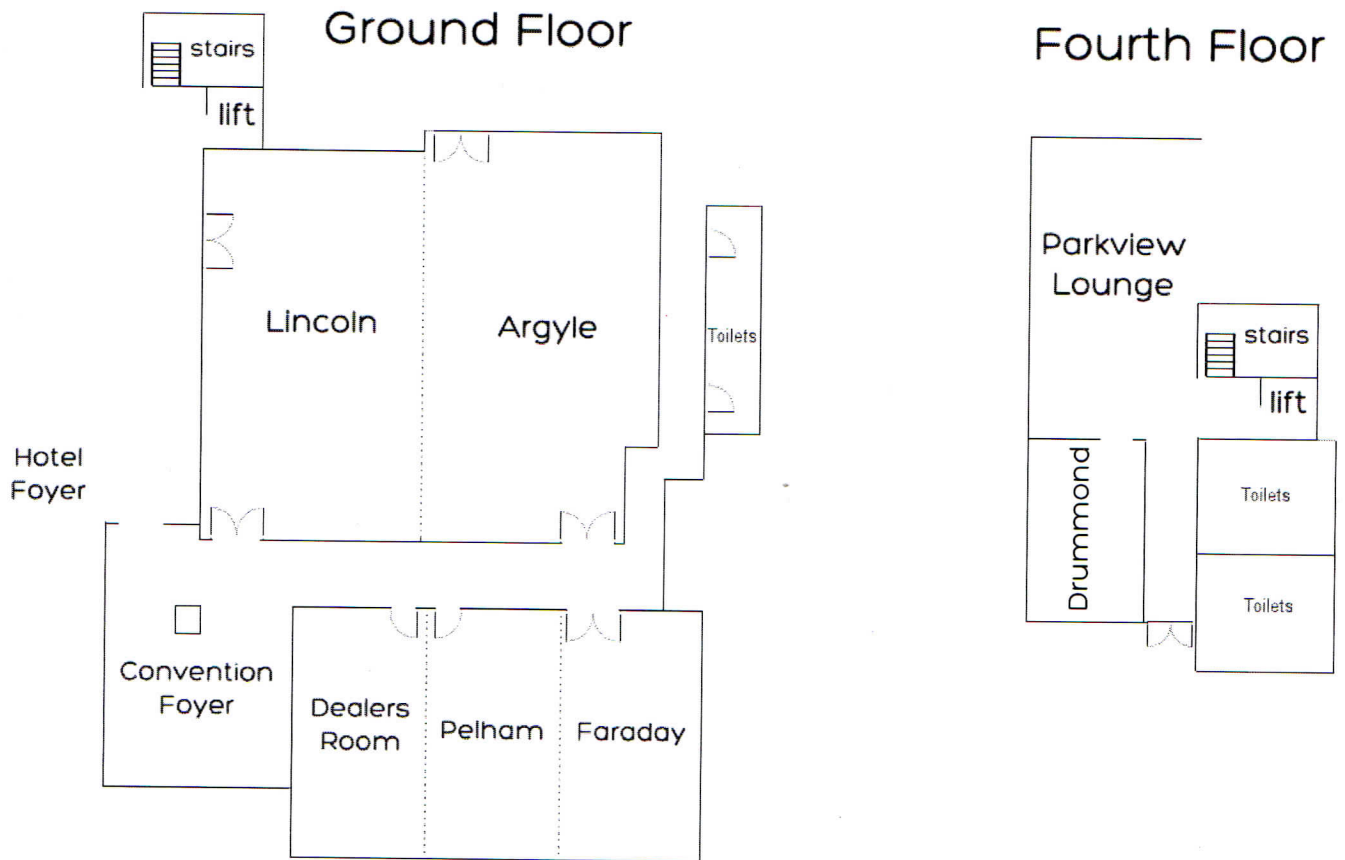
Monday

	Lincoln	Argyle	Pelham
10:00	<p>Vampires: From Horror To Heart-Throb</p> <p><i>Jason Nahrung, Narrelle Harris, Sue Bursztynski, Amanda Pillar, Felicity Dowker</i></p> <p>In the age of vampires as heart throbs with tortured souls, can they ever return to the frightening evil parasites of yore? Are we forever stuck with the vampire as sympathetic hero or can they return to their former glory and find the monster within? Is anyone out there not writing sparkly vampires? And what does it say about us that this is what we desire most in a lover?</p>	<p>Why We Fancraft</p> <p><i>Allan Carey, Rachel Holkner, Emma Wearmouth</i></p> <p>Jayne hats, TARDIS tea cosies, <i>Portal</i> cakes, Jabba the Hutt body pillows—is no one keeping the world of fancraft in check? From screen accurate prop and costume replicas to the application of fictional logos to our cars, from recycled floppy disk X-Wings to 300 acre Ewok villages. Why do we do this? Why WOULDN'T you do this? How far can it go? Will nobody think of the memes!</p>	<p>Caravan of Comics in 3D</p> <p><i>Sarah Howell & friends</i></p> <p>Over 3 weeks in April and May this year, 11 Australians traveled to the USA and Canada to promote Australian comics and graphic novels. What were the triumphs? The lessons learnt? Don your red and blue 3D glasses to find out.</p>
11:00	<p>Independent Publishing and Speculative Fiction</p> <p><i>Jack Dann, Tor Roxburgh, Steven O'Connor, Patrick O'Duffy</i></p> <p>The e-book phenomenon is changing the very nature of books and how we publish them. How does this paradigm shift affect independent publishers? Is it a good thing or a bad thing? Will it make distributing books easier? Will it make the idea of 'hard copy' a thing of the past? Or will it make little difference at all?</p>	<p>Suffragettes in the Citadel, Amazons in the Engine Bay</p> <p><i>Jane Routley, Jo Spurrier, Lucy Sussex, Kirstyn McDermott, Joanne Anderton</i></p> <p>Sparkly vampires, wicked queens and helpless princesses with bad taste in men. How equal are women in sci-fi and fantasy really? Who's doing it well, how can it be done better and what does it mean to us?</p>	<p>Kelly Link hosts Mafia</p> <p>The classic game of paranoia, second-guessing and murder. Join Guest of Honour Kelly Link and try to survive the night.</p>
12:00	<p>Sue Ann Barber</p> <p>Our Guest of Honour in conversation with Emily McLeay</p>		
13:00	<p>Lunch</p>		
14:00	<p>Crossing The Divide</p> <p><i>Alison Goodman, Tor Roxburgh, George Ivanoff, Jenny Blackford, Narrelle Harris</i></p> <p>Once you've written in one genre are you pigeonholed there for the rest of your career? Our panellists discuss how they've been able to write across borders.</p>	<p>The Awards Debacle</p> <p><i>Ian Mond, Kirstyn McDermott, Dave Cake, Jason Nahrung</i></p> <p>What is the role of awards in the Australian SF community? Do we have too many? Do we need more (or different) awards? Discuss.</p>	<p>UnderConStruction: Fundraising</p> <p><i>UnderConStruction is a conversation about convention running in Australia</i></p> <p>Has anyone seen a convention have too much money? TELL US HOW THEY DID IT.</p>
15:00	<p>Beyond Paranormal Romance</p> <p><i>Tor Roxburgh, Sue Bursztynski, Liz Barr, Michael Pryor, Kelly Link</i></p> <p>The <i>Twilight</i> bandwagon introduced a new audience to YA spec fic, but there's more out there than vampires and romance. Let's take a look at some of the new YA spec fic that can excite and engross young readers.</p>	<p>Let's Traumatise The Kiddies</p> <p><i>George Ivanoff, Deborah Green, Melissa Walter</i></p> <p>Kids are often more resilient than adults give them credit for - not to mention more bloodthirsty - but how much is too much? Have attitudes changed over time, and in what directions? Join us for a discussion of shocking moments in children's television past and present.</p>	<p>The Intergalactic Atlas: British SFTV from 1970 to 1989</p> <p><i>Grant Watson</i></p> <p>In 2011 Grant Watson, with the aid of a Powerpoint presentation, tracked the history of British science fiction and fantasy television from 1938 to 1969. In this second instalment, he continues the journey from Jon Pertwee and <i>Doomwatch</i>, through Tom Baker, <i>Blake's 7</i> and <i>Survivors</i>, to the end of an era with Sylvester McCoy, <i>Red Dwarf</i> and <i>Star Cops</i>.</p>
16:00	<p>Closing Ceremony</p>		

Monday

	Faraday	Drummond	
	<p>Readings</p> <p><i>Sarah Lee Parker, George Ivanoff, Michael Pryor, Gillian Polack</i></p>	<p>Natcon Business Meeting</p>	10:00
<p>Alison Goodman Kaffeeklatsch</p> <p>Coffee and an informal chat with Guest of Honour Alison Goodman. Max. 12 people—sign up at registration desk.</p>	<p>Readings</p> <p><i>Russell Blackford, Ian Nichols, Travis McKenzie, Lyn McConchie</i></p>		11:00
			12:00
	Lunch		13:00
	<p>Fandom for a Cause</p> <p><i>Mark Marcus, Leanne Girdwood, Zac Mennen, Peter Jordan</i></p> <p>When fandom gets organised it can be a powerful force for good. Find out some of the ways people are getting causes into their fandom and fandom into their causes!</p>	<p>Workshop: Juggling</p> <p><i>David Cook</i></p> <p>Learn how to make your own juggling balls—and how to juggle them too!</p>	14:00
	<p>What the NAFF is a fan fund?</p> <p><i>Alan Stewart, Sue Ann Barber, Sarah Lee Parker</i></p> <p>Fan Funds are here to encourage fans to meet and get to know each other, exchange fandom ideas and see other conventions in action. Come and hear how they work - and how you could get involved.</p>	<p>C8 Feedback</p> <p><i>Emilly McLeay, Julia Svaganovic</i></p> <p>Come by & let us know what you thought - what worked, what didn't, and what you'd like to see next year.</p>	15:00
			16:00

Venue Map



Mobile Program

Oh yes, we have an app! Livecon is available for iOS and Android devices and will have a program for Continuum 8, updated daily.

Search for Livecon wherever you get apps, or visit www.livecon.net



National Australian Fan Fund

Sarah Lee Parker

Hi Melbourne Fans!

John and I were so excited to be running for NAFF. It's been an idea rolling around in our heads for a few years now, and I'm absolutely devastated that John is unable to come along after such a good race. I'm going to have to work twice as hard without him there, and we shall definitely miss him! However, I am still excited about NAFF and Continuum! Huge thanks to organizer Sue Ann and also to Sean for an excellent race.

I'll be underfoot all convention, please do come and talk to me! I will be volunteering for front desk, panels, and I am also helping to present the Norma K Hemming Award, which I am very pleased about. John and I have run a number of conventions between us, and I'm currently on the WASFF Board, which is the WA version of the Continuum Foundation. I've had an active part in conventions since my second con in 1997. I have won the Marg Hughes Award which recognizes people for being welcoming and supportive to new fans and being part of the glue that makes the community run smoothly behind the scenes. I have Tin Ducks for my writing and I am a part of the Egoboo writing group. I write kitchen systems books and fantasy novels in my spare time. I'm also a part of the Last Short Story team, though I am woefully behind every one else in this year's read-a-thon. My main role at present is as stay at home parent to my kids who are already more familiar with zombies than they should be!

I am hosting a NAFF fundraising party on the Saturday night, and would love for everyone to come along! There will be drinks and nibbles provided. If you see me, just ask for my room number, or else check the noticeboard at front desk. I'm really looking forward to meeting more Melbourne fans. I've attended all the even numbered Continuums (2, 4, and 6), and John also attended number 7, so we know a couple of people, but I'd really love to get to know more! Please do come over and say hello, or come out to lunch or dinner with me.

A key part of the NAFF race is also to exchange fandom ideas and see other conventions in action. I want to see everything that Melbourne Fandom does, and maybe bring back some of those ideas to Swancon. If I have anything to share, I would love to help out, so please do have a word with me!

Fan Funds are here to encourage fans to meet and get to know each other. Next year the Australian Natcon will be in Canberra at Conflux 9 and will be the 52nd Natcon! Anyone who is active in fandom is eligible to race, and good candidates make for a good race. If you're active in fandom, and would like to consider being a part of something fun and exciting, then talk to me! NAFF helps to cover your costs to get you to Natcon, and is a great way to make new friends and have new experiences as you fundraise to make sure that other fans get to do the same in the future. Do consider it!

Mealtime Meetups

We'll be hosting lunch on both Saturday and Sunday if you'd like to come along & get to know people. RSVP to the registration desk by 11, so that we can let the restaurant know, and meet us at the registration desk right on 1pm!

Welcome to Melbourne:

a guide for aliens

by Stephanie Lai,

who is currently not even in Melbourne but is still totally trustworthy.

Welcome to Melbourne! it is a fun and exciting city, and maybe you would like to explore its awesomeness?

Places That Have Books

Melbourne's book stores are not as super awesome as book stores one might find in Perth (Planet; Oxford Books) or Sydney (Kinokuniya), but way more awesome than book stores in other cities. SORRY OTHER AUSTRALIAN CITIES. Nerdy or science fictiony bookstores that may be of interest include **Of Science and Swords**, **Embiggen Books**, and **All Star Comics**. You may also want to check out **Hares and Hyenas** (for queer things), and **Books for Cooks** (for cooking things). And **Readings** is a pretty great general book store with a small selection in the State Library and a larger store on Lygon Street, a block away from the con.

While you're near Embiggen or Readings, check out the reading room at the **State Library of Victoria**. You can't buy any books from there, obviously, but you can ooh and ahh over how pretty it is!

All Star Comics: 1/410 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne
Books for Cooks: 233 - 235 Gertrude Street, Fitzroy
Embiggen Books: 197 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne
Hares and Hyenas: 63 Johnston Street, Fitzroy
Minotaur: 121 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne
Of Science and Swords: 377 Little Collins Street, Melbourne
Readings Books: in the State Library, Swanston Street Melbourne; 309 Lygon Street, Carlton

Drinking

I know you don't want to go far, and the hotel bar is right there, but Melbourne has a lot of awesome bars, and they are a lot of fun. Go to them. Go to all of them. Some great bars that are not too far from the Rydges:

New Gold Mountain: up two flights of stairs, but handily located close to Parliament station, New Gold Mountain has no menu and many experienced bar staff who are happy to make you 'something that tastes like a jaffa but is vegan,' 'something christmassy,' or my favourite, 'something fruity but not too sweet and not too sour. it's like goldilocks.' 21 Liverpool Street, Melbourne, between Bourke and Lonsdale. (10 minutes, 2 trams)

1806: orders its cocktails by year. Try the rum shrub, it's delicious. 169 Exhibition Street, Melbourne, just north of Bourke Street. (10 minutes, 2 trams)

Polly: giant chairs, fun atmosphere, extensive cocktail list, adorable wait staff. Delightfully situated between three of my favourite vegetarian restaurants in Fitzroy (yong's green, vegie bar, and madame k's), and across the road from cheap pizzas at Bimbos. 501 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy. (20 minutes, 2 trams, or 5 minutes in a taxi or a bus)

Berlin: modeled after Germany before the wall fell, it's one half east and one half west Germany, with furniture to match. 16 Corrs Lane, Melbourne, between Little Bourke and Lonsdale. (10 minutes, 2 trams)

Places To Visit

Check out the **National Gallery of Victoria (NGV)**, both International and Australia. NGV:A is located in **Federation Square**, next to **ACMI**, and it's all free and fun and sometimes there are festivals and once there was a batmobile (best) and a display dedicated to David and Margaret (bestest). NGV:I is located on St Kilda Road next to the **Arts Centre**. If you're more museum-oriented, check out **Melbourne Museum**, or the **Immigration Museum** down on Flinders Street.

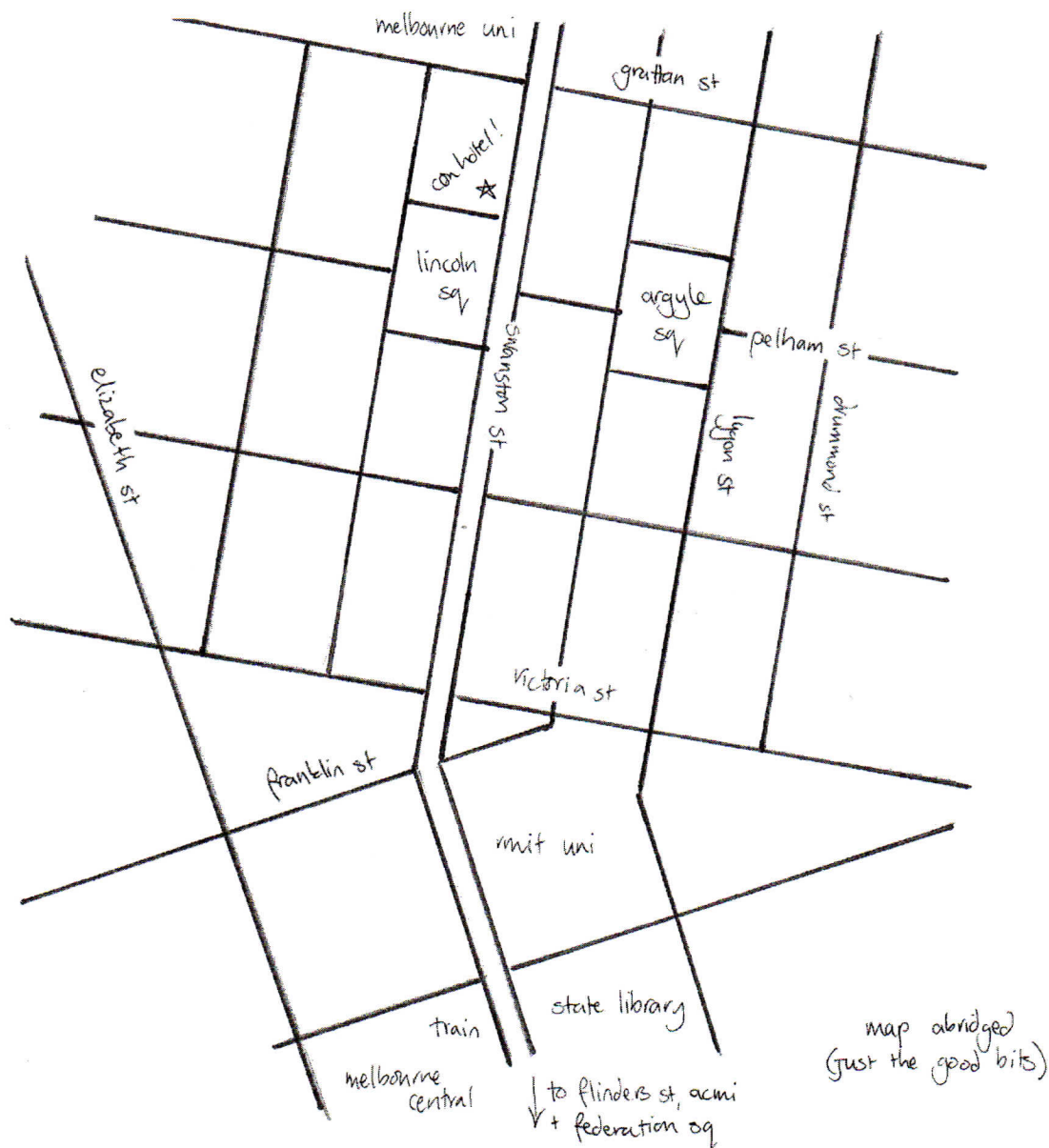
Food

Step out of the Rydges and onto Swanston Street, and you'll find a number of restaurants both north (at the corner of Grattan Street) and south (on Swanston Street itself). We can't guarantee they'll all be open over the weekend, but there's a lot to choose from and some of them definitely will be! If you're willing to venture further afield for your sustenance, both the CBD (less than five minutes in a tram going south) and Lygon Street are filled with possibilities.

Carlton

The Rydges is delightfully situated on the northern edge of the CBD, but is technically in Carlton. Take the opportunity to explore some of Carlton's delights! There's a **Haigh's**, for all your chocolatey needs; a **San Churro's**; a branch of **Readings Books** (where one of my favourite people works, you should totally go); and **Brunetti**, for amazing pastries.

To get there, step out of the Rydges, cross the road and walk south (that's to your right). At the first intersection turn left, and walk until you hit a park. Walk through the park until you hit a road. That's Lygon Street! Lygon Street has lots of great restaurants, for a variety of budgets. You can also find **Cinema Nova** and a **Safeway** (trans: Woolies) in Lygon Court, for your movie or grocery related needs.



Crafting in Public

Emma Wearmouth

There is a perception around that knitters (and other fibre crafters) are all elderly women, whiling away the hours all by themselves, knitting, crocheting or spinning away.

Today, that perception couldn't be more wrong. Maybe it's the internet—and particularly, websites such as Ravelry, a web community 2,000,000+ members strong—that has brought us all out of hiding, but whatever the case, while many of us do knit at home, by no means are we only knitting at home.

There's a knitting group meeting most nights of the week in Melbourne, in cafes, yarn stores, libraries and pubs all over the city.

I regularly attend 4 different knitting groups, and two spinning groups; some meet monthly, some weekly. There are overlaps between the groups as far as members go, but that's around 50 people I may not have met otherwise.

Much like the SFF community, crafters come in all ages, sexes and degrees of crafting experience. The groups are welcoming, and I have always found at least one—usually several—people willing to help if I needed it. And believe me, particularly when I first found out about knitting groups, I really needed a lot of help.

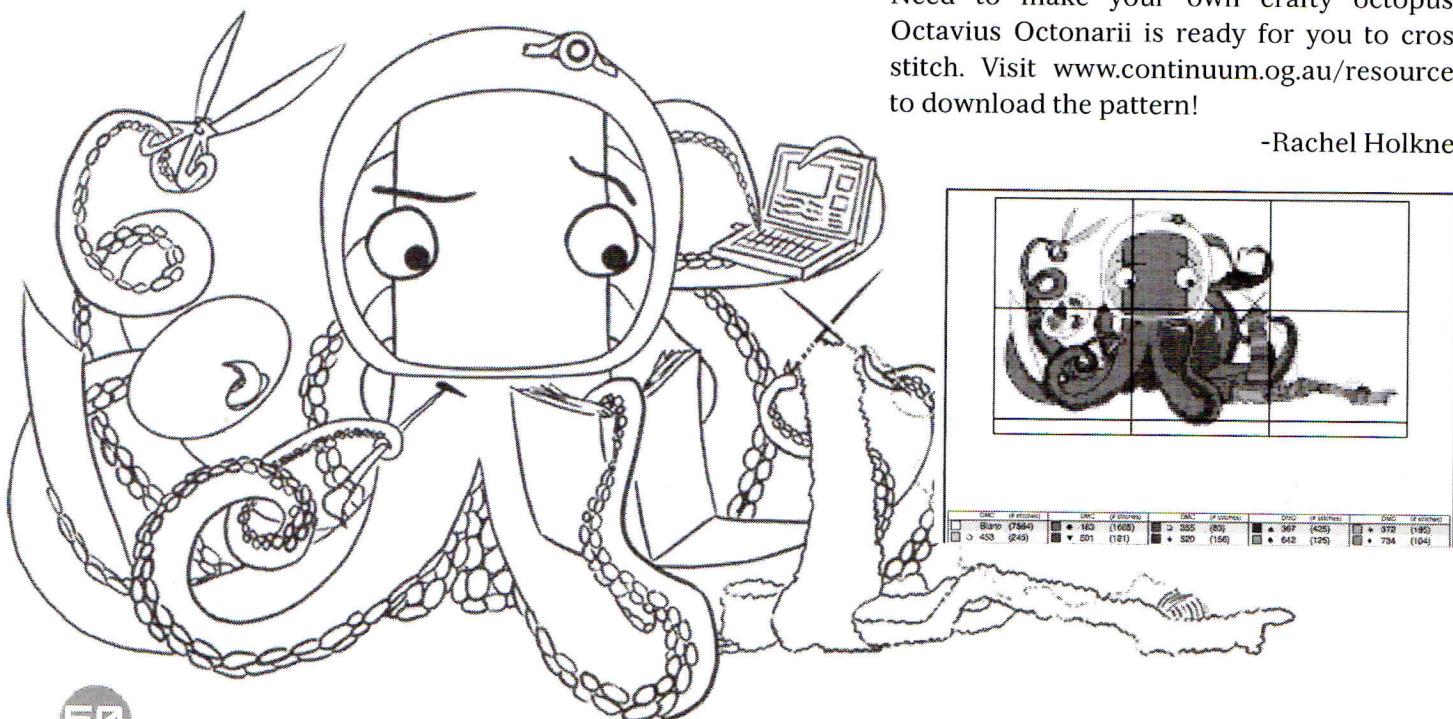
The groups I've been a part of have challenged me to keep trying more difficult techniques, and branch into spinning—both with a drop spindle and a wheel (but not at the same time, I'd need to have a few more limbs to manage that!)—and weaving.

Live in Melbourne and interested? Visit Ravelry.com, and look up the Melbourne SnB Group, or the Knit Vic Yahoo group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/knitvic> and find a knitting group near you. We won't bite! (OK, maybe I can't promise you that).

By the way, World Wide Knit in Public Day will be celebrated throughout June. There are knitting events all around the world this month.

Need to make your own crafty octopus? Octavius Octonarii is ready for you to cross stitch. Visit www.continuum.org.au/resources to download the pattern!

-Rachel Holkner



NEW MELBOURNE BROWNCOATS INC. PRESENTS
A CHARITY SCREENING OF JOSS WHEDON'S "SERENITY"

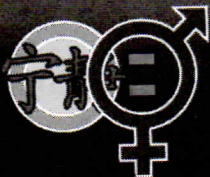
20 YEARS OF EQUALITY NOW...

10 YEARS OF FIREFLY...

7 YEARS OF SERENITY...

ONE UNSTOPPABLE SIGNAL

CAN'T STOP THE SERENITY
MELBOURNE 2012



VILLAGE ROADSHOW THEATRETTE, STATE LIBRARY VICTORIA
AUGUST 25TH

<http://www.newmelbournebrowncoats.com>

The Rise and Rise of the Replicators

Fran La Fontaine

It may sound like a prop from a sci-fi movie, or some garage inventor's holy grail: a device that converts a computer file into a three-dimensional physical object.

But the technology known as 3-D printing is already widely used in industry, and it's been catching on with hobbyists and do-it-yourselfers around the world.

Much like a traditional printer sprays ink onto paper, a typical 3-D printer squeezes out thin lines of plastic or other material, one on top of another, until the accumulated layers form a physical object. Imagine being able to print out your own house, appliances, vehicles, clothing, food and even body parts—not to mention toys!

Up until only a few years ago, most 3-D printing equipment and design programs were aimed at the commercial market, costing tens of thousands of dollars. The initial motivation for the devices was to produce models for visualisation—for architects and others—and help streamline the development of new products, such as medical devices ('rapid prototyping').

Today, this advanced manufacturing technology is well within the reach of hobbyists and artists and everyday users, through open-source kits and software provided by enthusiasts such as Dr Adrian Bowyer in the UK, and MakerBot Industries, in the States. In Perth, they've even got one in the Artifactory for casual users!

There are online businesses that will take your digital design and create three-dimensional objects by extruding metal or plastic to form unique toys, jewelry, tableware or favorite characters from sword-and-sorcery computer games. Thousands of people have joined online communities to share ideas and design tips on the Web, and the designs keep improving as people think of better ways to do things, a form of crowd-sourcing.

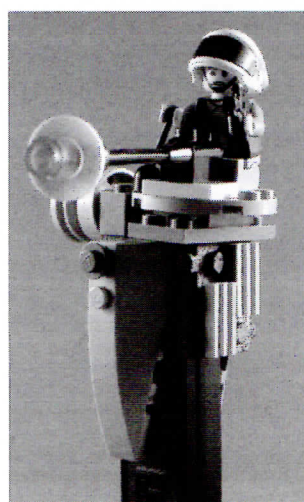
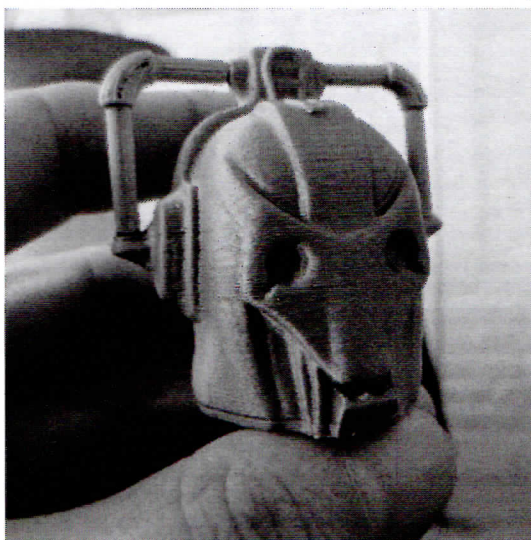
Every year the technique turns out more complex artifacts, faster and cheaper. The technology is now used to print aircraft landing gears, dresses, car parts, individualised tooth crowns, artificial hips and knees, and more.

Scientists are experimenting with human cells to print organs; still others are creating novel chemical

compounds, using printed reactor vessels as consumable parts of the process. Variable-density printing can produce materials that are simultaneously stiff and flexible (e.g. specialist gloves, and furniture). An Airbus contractor is working on printing an entire aircraft wing using titanium powder; parts of the fuselage of Boeing's 787 Dreamliner were printed.

Techies, artists and amateur mechanics have used their printers to make everything from customized gears and machine parts to Lego-style toys and jewellery (think: engagement ring made of plastic!). Many creators and craftsters show their work at Thingiverse (<http://www.thingiverse.com>)—some of these are pictured here.

And printers can now print out other printers—bringing the idea of 'mass customisation' closer to reality. With 3-D printing, in theory, an entire product would be made at one site, at one time, in one machine, anywhere, by anyone. Economies of scale would be irrelevant, changing the world's economy, industry and society in ways yet to be imagined—but hopefully for the better!



A Timeline:

1950's - theoretical 'Universal Constructor' first proposed by mathematician John von Neumann

1984 - The first 3-D printer for manufacturing was invented by the American Charles Hull. The first machines were huge, slow, very expensive, and had limited use.

1993 - One of the first practical 3-D printers, and the first to be called by that name, was patented by MIT professors Michael Cima and Emanuel Sachs

2004 - Adrian Bowyer, a lecturer at Bath University in England, invented a machine that manufactured 50 percent of its own parts, and in

2008 - Bowyer's machine printed itself. (There was no real profit to be made in a self-replicating machine so Bowyer put the RepRap in the public domain ('open source') Anyone could buy this desktop printer for under \$400 and adapt it at will to print more copies of itself, or other items

2009 (March) - desktop 3-D printing comes in reach of consumers: The Cupcake CNC self-replicating device (MakerBot's first 3D Printer) was introduced in March 2009. The source files needed to make the devices were put on Thingiverse, allowing anyone to build their own from scratch, for around the same price as a high-specification mobile phone.

2009 - Peter Schmitt, an MIT doctoral student, printed a 3D clock - an eight-inch diameter plastic timekeeping device with moving gears, hands and counterweights. When he put it up on a wall and pushed the counterweight, it went tick-tock. "It wasn't very accurate, but it was a functioning clock," Schmitt said.

2010 (September) - MakerBot's second 3D Printer kit, the Thing-O-Matic introduced at Maker Faire NYC

2011 (August) - a bust of Stephen Colbert, printed on a MakerBot 3D printer, is sent into the stratosphere attached to a helium filled weather balloon.

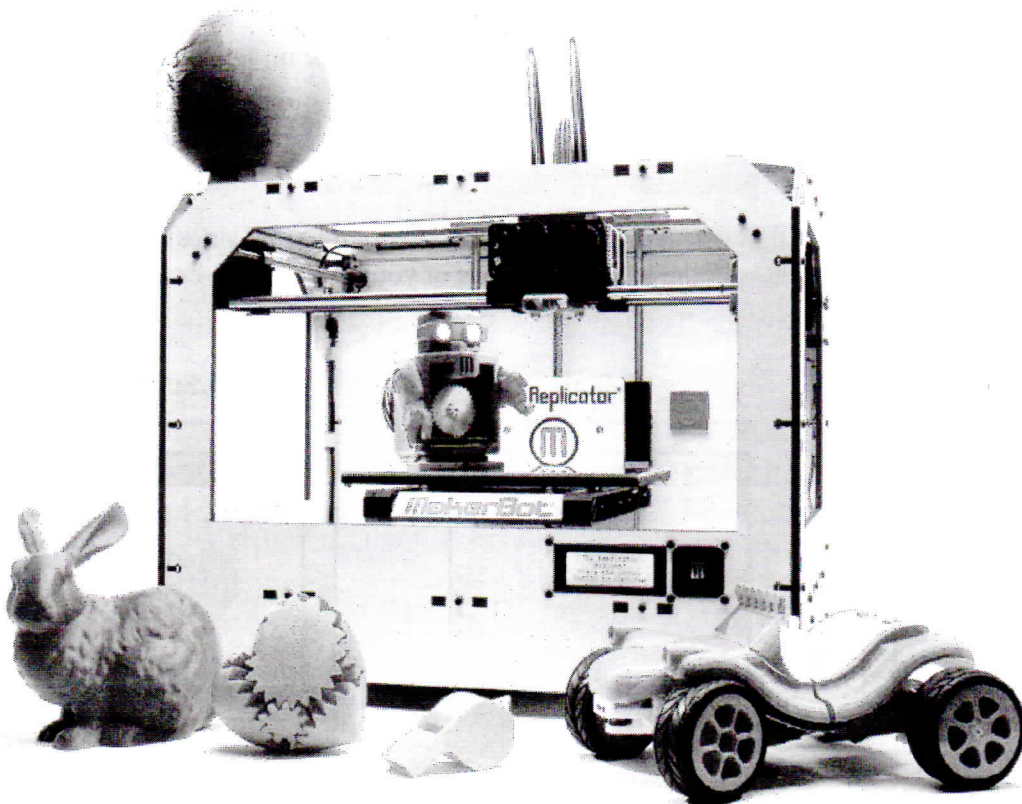
2012 - Bowyer releases RepRapProMendel "a three-head machine, so it will do colour and multi-material printing."

- MakerBot Replicator released ("fully assembled, \$1749, lead time 10-12 weeks")

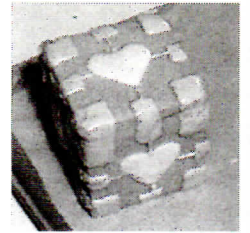
- also available on MakerBot - a working clock kit for \$50

- Virginia Tech's DREAMS Lab creates the Dream Vendor, a set of four MakerBot Thing-O-Matics that sit behind glass and 3-D print your tchotchke of choice.

2013 + ?



Baking for Science: Centrally Enriched Companion Cube Cookies



Meredith White

Hello, and welcome to the Aperture Science Computer-Aided Enrichment Centre. In this test, you will be expected to bake cookies into a Companion Cube. You will place treats inside your Cube. Then, there will be cake. Please note that there will be consequences for failure, including death.

Items in your test chamber:

1 egg	1 tsp vanilla extract
3 cups plain flour (sifted)	Royal icing
1 cup caster sugar	Icing piping bag
225g butter (room temperature)	Food colouring (grey and pink)
1 tsp baking powder	Square cookie cutter
1/2 tsp salt	Candies to Enrich your Cubes

Testing will now begin.

With an electric mixer, mix your butter and sugar. If your butter is not at room temperature, you will find that it is impossible to complete this test.

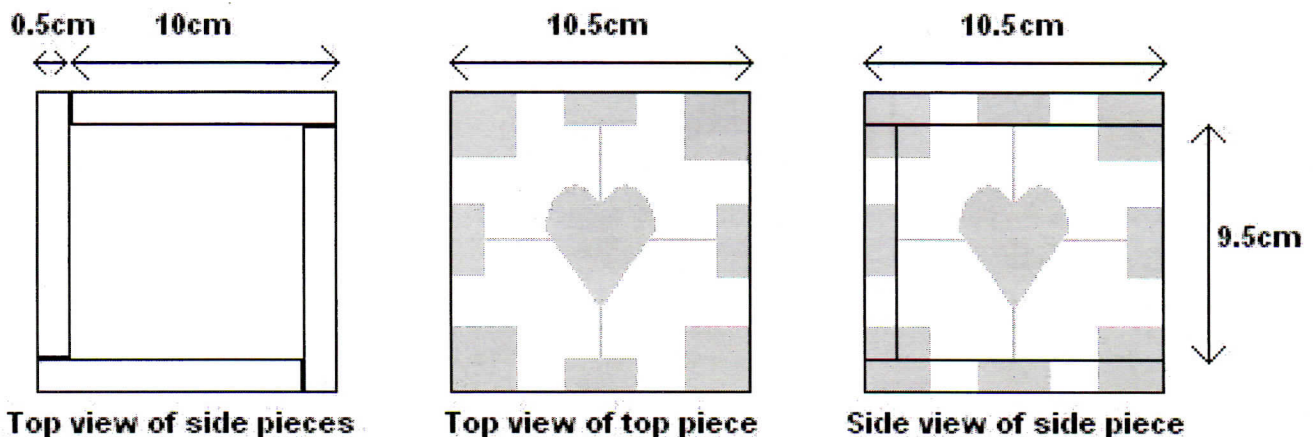
Add the egg and vanilla, and mix. Add half of the dry ingredients and mix. Add the rest of the dry ingredients and mix again until the ingredients are combined. Use your human hands to mix and roll the dough until it is no longer sticky.

You're probably doing very well. Sprinkle some flour on your work surface and roll out your dough. Aperture Science reminds you to keep your dough quite thick, or you will be unable to construct your Companion Cube. No one will blame you for giving up. In fact, quitting at this point is a perfectly reasonable response.

Using a square cookie cutter, cut squares in a multiple of six. If you cannot understand why you need a multiple of six, you are probably adopted.

This test requires mathematics.

The Enrichment Centre reminds you that you are making a Cube. Do not make all sides of your Cube the same size. Slice off a part of your side pieces that is equal to the thickness of your cookies. An example is provided below to enhance your testing experience.



Testing cannot continue until your Companion Cube has been incinerated. Line a baking tray with non-stick paper and evenly space your cookies. Put the tray on the middle rack of a pre-heated 180C incinerator.

Although the euthanizing process is remarkably painful, eight out of ten Aperture Science engineers believe that the Companion Cube is most likely incapable of feeling much pain. Bake for 10 minutes, or until they start to become golden around the sides.

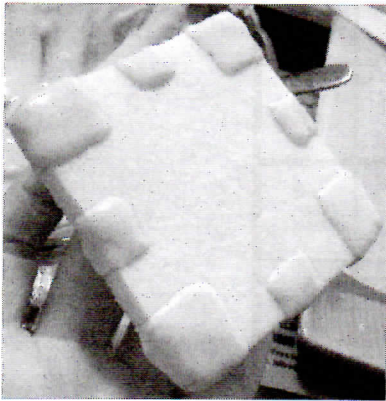
Mix half of your royal icing with your grey food colouring, and the other half with pink food colouring. Please be advised that a noticeable taste of blood is not part of any test protocol, but is an unintended side effect. Cake and grief counselling will be available at the conclusion of the test.

Pipe grey icing onto one of your cookies. Leave it alone for ten minutes to harden. Pipe pink icing into a heart shape in the centre of your cookie. If you lack skill, use a cookie cutter to cheat.

Pipe grey lines between the heart and the four central grey blocks. Abandon your cookie again to let the icing harden.

If it could talk - and the Enrichment Centre takes this opportunity to remind you that it cannot - it would tell you to go on without it because it would rather die in a fire than become a burden to you.

Ice all of your cookies. Use more royal icing to join the pieces together to form a Cube. You may need to refrigerate the joined pieces briefly to ensure the icing hardens satisfactorily.



Before you place the top side on your Cube, fill it with heart shaped chocolates and candies.

Do not enrich the centre of your Cube with deadly neurotoxin.

Join the top side of your Cube with more royal icing.

Congratulations, the test is now over. You, [subject name here], must be the pride of [subject hometown here].

You could have a party and invite all your friends to eat one, but you don't have any other friends because of how unlikable you are. It says so right here in your personnel file: "Unlikable. Liked by no one. A bitter unlikable loner whose passing shall not be mourned." SHALL NOT BE MOURNED. That's exactly what it says. Very formal. Very official.

Aperture Science recommends that you smash it open and eat it yourself.



Puzzle Page

Caitlin Noble & Stephanie Lai

Symbol Sudoku

	Φ		?					
Δ	Ψ		*		Φ			👁
?			🌀	Ψ		∞	Δ	
		Φ			🌀			?
∞				π				Ψ
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	∞	Δ		?	Ψ			🌀
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∞ Δ Ψ π * ? 👁 Φ 🌀

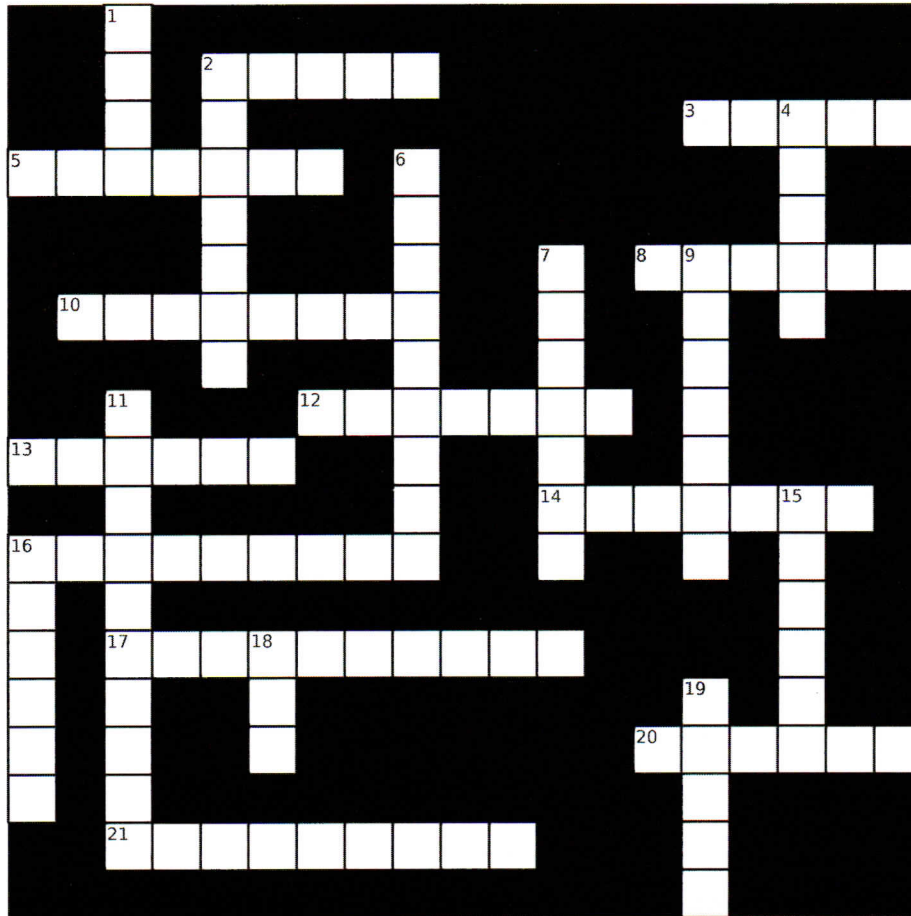
puzzle answers page 67



501^{VADER'S FIST}ST LEGION

THE WORLD'S DEFINITIVE IMPERIAL COSTUMING ORGANIZATION

Crossword



Across

- 2 A human-vampire hybrid (5)
- 3 The prayer of the Colonies, -- --- we all (2, 3)
- 5 Celebrates excellence in SFF and Horror by Victorians (7)
- 8 Unchallenged by stairs since 1988 (6)
- 10 Han thought they smelled bad on the outside (8)
- 12 Padme (7)
- 13 The superhero with which Melbourne almost shared its name (6)
- 14 A teenage witch with a cat named Salem (7)
- 16 Alias of Kitty Pryde (9)
- 17 A deadly spider (5, 5)
- 20 A glitch in the Matrix (4, 2)
- 21 This immense tree connects the nine worlds (9)

Down

- 1 Daughter of Lord Portico and Lady Portia (4)
- 2 Bender went to Bender U where he majored in this (7)
- 4 ----- Rings for Dwarf Lords (5)
- 6 Sailor Moon fights evil by ----- (9)
- 7 Call upon them with their sigils (7)
- 9 Hawkeye, Katniss, Merida, and Legolas all have something in common (aside from beautiful hair) (7)
- 11 Book buys his way on board Serenity with this fruit (10)
- 15 Once a King or Queen of -----, always a King or Queen (6)
- 16 Beam me up (6)
- 18 Christopher Chant (3)
- 19 Rides a horse named Binky (5)

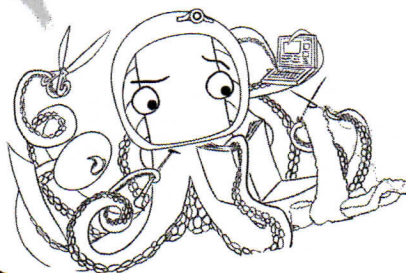
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Pattern for knitting a galaxy

Stephanie Lai

This pattern is based on a simple single galaxy, and the final result is a stunning but practical and hard-wearing galaxy. It's perfect for beginners, especially as the pattern is very flexible in regards to yarn type; however with just minimal modification (and maybe a little more experience) you can knit the edges of two, three or even four galaxies together, for a more complex and beautiful system cluster.

Notes:

For this pattern you will require circular knitting needles, straight needles, and stitch markers. Remember that spacetime is curved, so don't forget the stitch markers, or you may find yourself knitting a lopsided universe! (Which you may wish to do, but which requires some practice. Maybe don't do it on your first galaxy knit!) You may also require a yarn needle for any specialised motifs you wish to incorporate into the galaxy.

Do not use a photon-particle yarn. This yarn will result in a tough and unyielding galaxy, which will prove inflexible against space and time travelers and the use of hyperspeeds in minor vehicles evolving within your universe. You may find it useful to use a dark matter-dark energy-atom yarn mix. This will help to add mass and bulk to your galaxy. Alternatively, for a bit of variety and uncertainty, you may select a yarn threaded with Higgs-Bosons, just remember that such yarn can be difficult to find without the proper equipment and guidance! Choose a yarn with a comfortable mix, which

feels pleasant to touch and is easy to see on a background of gravitational lensing.

We tried this pattern with a nice series of red and blue yarns of slightly different shades, which has given us a lovely reversible red-blue finish. The yarn knitted in one direction looks blue, and the yarn knitted in the opposite direction looks red! Be sure to choose complementary colours, nobody wants pumice hurtling towards them at the speed of light.

Special Instructions:

Requires fifty-three zillion tonnes of yarn, approximately. Note that dependent on the size of your needles, you may use more or less yarn.

Start at the core. Knit in the round for 500 000 light years. Keep your stitches even, but don't worry about minor variations. Washing and blocking at the end will help even this out, and will add some adventure to your galaxy.

Use a black hole to hold your work in place, somewhere in an outer quadrant. Slipping a stitch on either side of the black hole will help your galaxy lie flat.

To change the strength of electromagnetic interactions inside your galaxy, use yarn with a higher fine structure constant – be careful, too high and you will accidentally shut down stellar fusion.

Remember general relativity, and as such stars and other large gravity wells will take an amount of time disproportionately large to their mass to knit, and may expand or contract with little warning. Pay attention, or you may end up with a lopsided universe! In addition to allowing for this extra time, double up the yarn for atmospheres. Use stitch markers to indicate where these areas will end up, as you may find they grow as you knit, and they are easy to lose track of.

Cast off with a gluon stitch, for a clean finish.

Wash carefully in lukewarm water – remember, a warm galaxy is a living galaxy! Wet block on an area at least twice the size of your galaxy, as the warmth will lead to some galaxy expansion. Let dry completely before moving.

After washing and blocking, your galaxy is ready for use! Be careful where you leave it, though: this will impact what sort of entities evolve in your galaxy, and some entities are more prone than others to tearing holes in the fabric of your galaxy. You may want to keep some spare yarn of a similar gauge and colour on hand, instead of using it up in another project, just in case your galaxy becomes infested with such entities and riddled with unattractive holes.

Safety warning: galaxies are heavy. Remember to lift with your knees.

The Armour

Jessica Reid

She had only made two stitches before she had to stop. The light was too dim, her fingers too cold to hold the needle, her eyes unfocussed. It'd been a long day. She could feel bruises blooming on her back and ribs like mushrooms in the dark. Her left foot felt three sizes too big for her boot. A fracture, maybe. And what did she have to show for it? Two lizards and a spool of fishing line. Seven hours in the upper stations picking over dried out commuter husks, inhaling the ashes of the dead and then the fall through two station levels into a swimming pool. It had been floodlit in a retina burn memory of the lost sunlight, so when she'd opened her eyes underwater she'd timeslipped back 10 years. She thought she heard her mother's voice calling her, could see her water-marbled silhouette at the edge of the pool. Lunchtime. A starving mix of a morning of idle swimming and lemonade sloshing in her belly. But the brightness when she'd broken the surface had been fluorescent, the hunger a day old and her mother transformed into a squat collection of broken, painted tiles and a groaning pipe system.

She swore at herself until she picked up the needle again. "Don't think about the pretend light, think about the sun. Think about the air." A little pep talk and her fingers were still, steady, pulling thread through the layers of skin. Tanned hide and lizard scales. She was almost done. Hours of work, uncounted and forced into a timetable of determination. She'd been lucky with the crocodile. She'd picked at it's white meat with burnt fingertips while the skin lay soaking, feeding and listening to the thing outside that cried and whimpered and called for her. It apologised. Don't leave me like this. Come back. Get back here. Bitch. You've murdered me. You've killed me. I'm dying. Come back. I'm dying. But the thing had nothing for her to come back for. When it had attacked her, lurching from the shadows with thick hands and gasping, greedy sounds, it had nothing on it. Not a stitch. She'd taken in every black hair on it's chest, it's arms, the pale skin, the yellowing teeth, the paunch and the veins that wriggled like childish drawings down the thighs. In one frantic moment she'd seen him. Heard him. Saw his hands reach for her. Then he'd been crying and the pipe was lodged in him. It. She'd pushed that pipe so hard into it's body it'd gone straight

through, chunks of liver spurting out against the pale green tiles of the tunnel. It had sagged into it's puddle, mouth gaping like a fish. How had this thing gotten so close to her home? She'd picked up the crocodile carcass and dragged it past while he cried out to her. She did not speak to it. She did not speak with strangers. It was still out there now. But it was quiet and dry and just like the commuters.

She'd fallen asleep with the needle in her hand. The box of pins next to her, nestled in their proper place, a well organised school of silver fish. In her sleep, she'd pulled the skins up around her neck and all she could smell now was salt and oil. She stood, holding the piece out to look at her handiwork. A patchworked suit, tight stitches and meticulous shapes. She felt that flutter-bird of pride in her chest and sighed, laying the suit down against her nest of scavenged softness. She dragged fingertips across the rough fuzz of ratfur that held together the shoulders, the tops of the sleeves, tracing down the stripes of dog hair. He'd been the only one she hadn't killed herself. She'd kept him here, fed him and loved him, but he was so old. He couldn't stand, he couldn't heal. She'd added him to the suit because he'd lasted so long without love, he must have been strong. He'd died so quietly, just a huff of breath against her neck as she'd cradled him and then gone. She had said goodbye to him a thousand times before she got up the courage to begin preparing him.

The once and last time she'd been on the actual surface, there was rain. A warm shower in dull yellow light. Every drop sizzled against the dust and the concrete. Her skin had little wormholes just from running across the street. She'd cried for an hour, looking at her newly pockmarked face in the shopfront window, not noticing the little rats out in the rain until one tried to bite her foot. Their fur did not smoke and they didn't cry. She caught six before the rain stopped for just a brief minute, just by lying still on the pavement. They must have thought she was like the others but fresher. There were piles of them around the street, huddled in corners, their clothes burned off. The world smelled like a summer's barbecue while she went shopping. She refused to see anything but tins and vinegar and salt

and oil. And the rain, pouring down all day and night. This is what made her go back down, to the tunnels. Not the bodies or the still city punctured by distant booms. It was the constant drip, drip, drip and the wearing away of familiar stone places. She'd gone back down into the station, where she'd been with her Mother. She found the eddies of dust, the particles of lost people drifting down from the surface and moved further down until she'd found the room.

The other animals had been harder to find, the testing more thorough than the rats. She'd risked fingers to pull spiny lizards from their tanks in the aquarium, snapping their necks with a cook's precision. Their tails, wrapped ringlike around her knuckles in a death-twitch. She'd left them out in the rain for a day and pulled them back in with a curtain hook. No sign of burns. The lizards would become a hood and mask, their spines mingling with fur and sewn together with the finest silk embroidery thread.

That crocodile, he'd come from the Zoo, taking a sabbatical in the little rivulet that coursed through Platform 1. He tugged down commuters, chomping at their husky sacklike bodies. He grew thin. She'd watched him from the stairs. Watched his mottled skin pucker as the food ran out. Heard him grunting. She'd waited. He'd gone under the water to die. When he floated to the surface upsidedown, she'd known to pull him to her. Just touching the droplets on his skin erased her fingertips. She giggled, mentally committing crimes while she worked on him. She stole and scrawled and revenged her way across her inner world. She did not stop to think of victims. The thing outside didn't count.

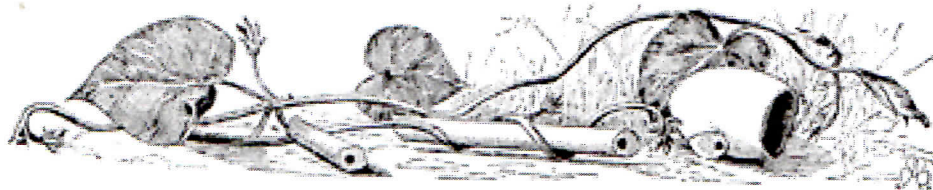
When her hair had begun to fall out, she started sewing into the back of the suit. Long golden tendrils, wires connecting the plates of crocodile skin to the supple seal skin that finished the chestpiece, a pattern of curls she never had but always wanted. She stroked the shadowed fur, remembering how sad it had been to visit the city zoo, to climb out from the station and into the service tunnels. Someone else...something else had been there. Devouring flesh and supplies like a ravaging army. She would have done the same, but her teeth

had begun to wobble out, working their way free every time she ate. She did not keep them. She skipped them across the still water that lay at the station entrance, listened while they fizzed and dissolved.

She found the lion and the seal, locked together, barely moving. It exhausted her to look at them, the struggle of hunger, the closed eyes, the blood and broken places. The lion pelt became pants, tight enough to be armour. His ears she added to the lizard skin hood. A whimsical choice on a day when she'd seen the sun. Those animals that did not pass her tests in the rain – the birds, the fish, the 17 snakes with their diamond patterned skin that dissolved like bread in milk – she sewed their bones onto the chestpiece using silver Christmas thread. White jewels, misshapen pearls. They were the last pieces because she knew they would not last.

On a warm day, she stood at the entrance, rain in curtains ahead, shifting ash and phantom winds behind her. The first step into the storm, she expected to melt away, but the suit held. Her lizard helm, the mask, her blue eyes squinting from fear. She wanted to feel the magic of those animals in her blood, remembered the silly little rituals she made up, an amateur shaman of a dead city. But she felt only sweat prickling her skin. She dared not look up to see the sky. She ignored the boom so close to her. She just stared resolutely ahead, knowing where to go. She heard a voice, it's words muffled, but she did not stop. It could be her own, her thoughts escaping when she wasn't watching. She could go anywhere now, after...how long? The sink of time started to pull at her heart, to slow her steps. How long since she saw her Mother? Since the body by the main staircase had moved from her dying stance, since the flesh was soft and warm. 'Don't.' she mumbled, with an empty mouth, split lips rubbing against the insides of lizards. The city looked soft around the edges, worn away, worn down. She was so thirsty. The rain made everything so slick, so bright in the dull day. Everything so open, the dead trees, the stopped cars, the sky. Nothing pressing against her.

She ran. Through the rain, through mud made of people and sadness and death. A maiden in monster armour.



Stitch the Sun

Liz Barr

The trains are cancelled again today, and the next bus won't run for another three hours, so Chloe decides to walk home. On a good day, it takes half an hour, and she hums old pop songs under her breath and tells herself the posters and graffiti add a bit of life to the neighbourhood. Some days it's even true.

This is one of her bad days. Maybe it's the grinding pain in her hip and the corresponding ache in her head, or the heat, or the desert wind that tastes of salt and dust and death. Or maybe it's the money, the exorbitant cost of drinkable water and soy milk and a few spotty vegetables.

"You always say that," her granddaughter would say if she were here. "It's just how much stuff costs."

Silly girl. Fourteen years old and she thinks she knows everything. Only stops eating to complain about having no proper job and no money, stuck out here in the outer suburbs with nowhere to go and nothing to do except go out with her friends and spray walls, avoiding Chloe's eyes in the morning and scrubbing at the paint under her nails.

On bad days, Chloe thinks no wonder Octavia's parents left her behind when they left, and no wonder they've never come back. Then she stops herself, because Octavia's not a bad girl, not really, and all they have is each other.

On her bad days, Chloe's energy is too precious to waste on resentment.

She heaves her shopping bags onto her shoulders, beating back the throb of pain as she shifts her weight onto her bad hip, wraps her scarf around her face to keep the dust away, and sets out.

At least there are no hills, she tells herself. Not many cars any more either, with the electricity grid so unreliable. A cyclist swoops past her at one point, stinking of sweat, patches of exposed skin red and raw from the sun. Otherwise, the streets are empty.

The walk takes her through the nicer streets, where residents can afford the better quality solar panels, and even a few stunted trees survive. People here have money, not much, but enough to get by. Some places even have vegetables growing in the front yard, protected from the elements by shimmering nanofabric.

One house, in defiance of its crumbling brickwork, has an entire front yard covered with the stuff. Chloe pauses in admiration. It looks unremarkable, of course, grey fabric shot with silver thrown over a garden, but this much of the stuff must have cost a small fortune, and beneath the fabric is the promise of life.

There's movement inside the house. A curtain twitches.

Chloe moves on.

She manages twenty minutes before she needs to rest. The bus stop is plastered with signs calling for the resignation of the government, and advertisements for music and

concerts and nanotech that no one she knows can afford. But there's a little bit of shade, and she sips some water and wonders if the pain is bad enough to take a pill.

Maybe not, she decides. She can't afford more until her pension comes in next week, and the pain might be worse tomorrow.

Sometimes she can't believe that this is her life now, when surely it was only yesterday that she was a young woman who lived near the city and had money and food, new clothes whenever she wanted them, a million luxuries and electricity twenty-four hours a day to run them. She used to go to markets with her friends and pay exorbitant sums for handmade clothes and embroidered scarves and jewellery that barely lasted a week. She never went anywhere without music in her ears. Now it seems like the world is silent, and when she sews, it's for necessity, not art.

She pictures Octavia wrinkling her nose and saying, "Art, Nan? Seriously?" To Octavia, art is something you paint on a wall or post to the web, nothing in between.

Chloe pulls herself to her feet and shoulders her loads and sets out again.

She goes carefully through the park. The footpath becomes uneven, and the weeds are left to grow unchecked, stinging nettle and blackberries and those things with the white tufts that grow to waist-height and leave their seeds on

clothes. She's so busy watching her step that at first she doesn't hear the sound.

Then she stops, thinking there's a flag flapping against its pole. But no one would erect a flagpole in this neighbourhood; the flag would be pulled down and burned, and the pole cut up and sold for scrap metal. She looks around, shading her eyes, and sees a tangle of metal and fabric a few metres away, twisted around the rusted old swing-set.

The metal looks like it came from an old fence. The cloth is faded and dirty, but even from here, Chloe can see it's nanofabric.

Her heart seems to beat a little faster.

When was the last storm? A few days ago? A week? It ripped three solar panels from her roof, it was surely violent enough to destroy a fence and garden.

She grabs a stick and begins to make her way through the weeds, praying there are no snakes. The swing-set is blocked off with danger signs, and her hip protests as she climbs over the barrier. But then she's kneeling on the ground, her shopping discarded, and there's nanofabric in her hands.

It's lighter than she imagined, and more pliable than its thickness suggests. Carefully she disentangles it from the fence, trying not to cause any fresh damage. There's almost a metre of the stuff. Enough for a little garden. Maybe Octavia will turn out to have a talent for growing things. Or she could sell it, of course even this would fetch a fair amount, as much as her pension if she takes it to the markets.

The nanofabric is soft under her fingers. It's like touching cotton, or fine wool. The stuff of children's toys and blankets.

Chloe smiles.

Carefully she folds the fabric and puts it in her shopping bag.

Her hip still pains her as she walks, but she's too excited to think about it.

She'll need more fabric, of course, but Octavia is still growing, there must be old clothes somewhere in the house. Thread. Lots of thread. In colours, it should be coloured. Maybe she can unravel one of Chloe's old shirts.

She hopes she has a needle.



A few hours' scavenging work, cash in hand. Better than nothing. Octavia celebrates with a kebab, even though Leila reckons Rashid only buys the cheapest seitan and pads it out with any animal meat he can get his hands on. But she's jealous that her brother has an actual business while she's scavenging for scrap metal, so Octavia gives her the finger and enjoys her dinner.

Afterwards, she and Leila wander around, watching the neighbourhood kids come out to kick a ball as the sun sets. When it's dark, they set out for the old bike path. Sensible cyclists begin their journeys home at sunset, and this stretch of path is nowhere, just a place that people pass through. There's a suburban street on one side, and a concrete wall and the highway on the other. They've got maybe half an hour before it gets too busy to paint.

Leila paints political slogans and mutated animals. Octavia paints in patterns, interlocking shapes and blended colours, and in the spaces in between she gets in close and adds words. Lyrics from songs, things people have said, sometimes Leila's calls for revolution.

"Such a waste," says Leila, looking at Octavia's work. "Talent like yours, you should be doing proper work."

"Overthrowing the government?"

"Making people think."

Octavia shrugs. She likes the colours.

The house is almost dark when she gets home, except for one corner where her nan has set up every single solar lamp they have. Nan sits in the centre, frowning at the pile of rags in her lap.

"If you're doing the mending," says Octavia, "I ripped my pants last week."

"Leave them in the pile," Nan says, holding a rag up to the light. "Do you like this colour?"

It's a deep purple, rich and warm, just like—

"That's my shirt," says Octavia. "Leila gave me it!"

"You said it didn't fit."

"I didn't say you could cut it up." She snatches the shirt what's left of it out of her Nan's hands. "Are you going senile? Don't go crazy, Nan, they'll put you in a home and I won't be able to visit you, and—"

"I'm fine, Octavia," Nan says, and she sounds like herself so Octavia relaxes. "I'm making a quilt."

"Huh?"

The bundle of rags, when it's unfolded, turns out to be all joined together. And they're not rags, she realises, they're shapes. Triangles and hexagons and stuff, arranged in patterns.

It looks like the sun.

"Are they more of my clothes?" she asks, trying to sound less impressed than she is.

"Old clothes." Nan threads her needle.

"I was going to sell them!"

"This is better."

"What is it? A blanket?"

"No." Nan takes back the quilt blanket thing and says, "I think a wrap would be more practical." Octavia wrinkles her nose, but Nan continues, "Something you can throw over your head when you go outside. I'll find some buttons, maybe, or a pin to secure it."

"What are you talking about?"

Nan nods at the clothesline they hang by the back door.

On it hangs a freshly washed length of nanofabric. Octavia brings it over and holds it up to the light.

"There's not enough for a proper coat," says Nan, "but I can use it as the batting in the quilt." Octavia looks blank. "The soft part in the middle."

"Not the outside?"

"Would that be safe?"

No, Octavia thinks. She'd be attacked and robbed as soon as someone realised what she was wearing.

"Will it work if it's on the inside?"

"I think so." Nan looks up. "You'd be able to move around during the day. You could get a bike."

"Like we could afford one," says Octavia, but she likes that idea, cycling past the others, leaving them behind as she goes to new places.

"You could get a job. In the city, maybe."

"Yeah. Maybe." Octavia kneels, watching Nan's needle fly in and out of the fabric. It's almost graceful, she thinks, and the way the colours melt into each other, it's like painting. Never mind a job in the city, people would pay good money for this. And this is just made from old shirts and a rag Nan found. Octavia wonders

how much new fabric would cost. Rashid knows a guy who sells nanofabric. Fell off the back of a truck sort of thing. And everyone has old clothes.

Never mind the markets, they could take this into the city. Inner suburbs, anyway. Sell it in shops, maybe. Buy proper solar panels that don't break apart with every storm. As much electricity as they need, and food, and proper paints—

Octavia reaches for her grandmother's hand.

"This quilting," she says. "Can you teach me?"



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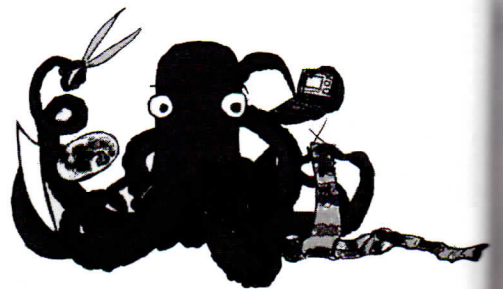
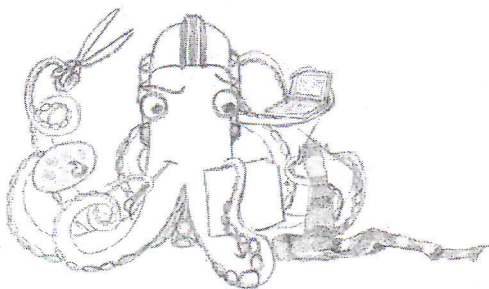
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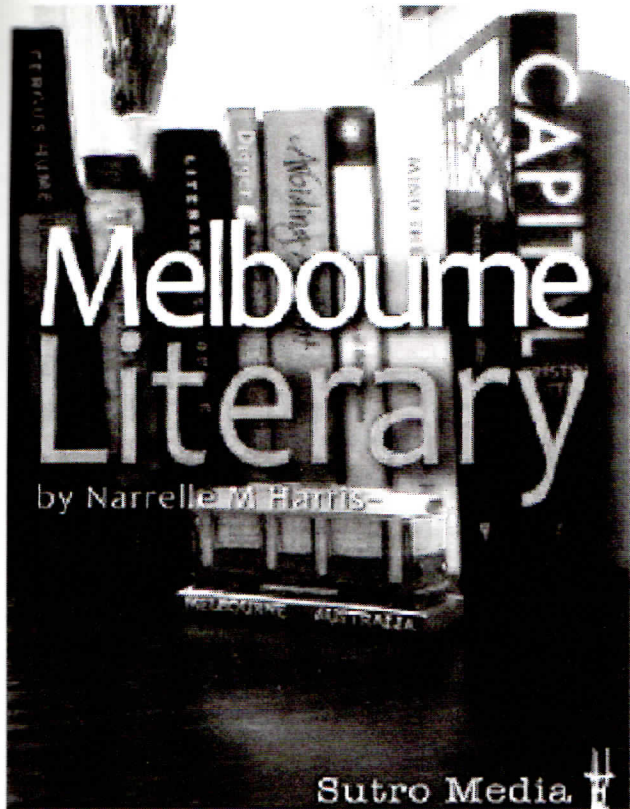


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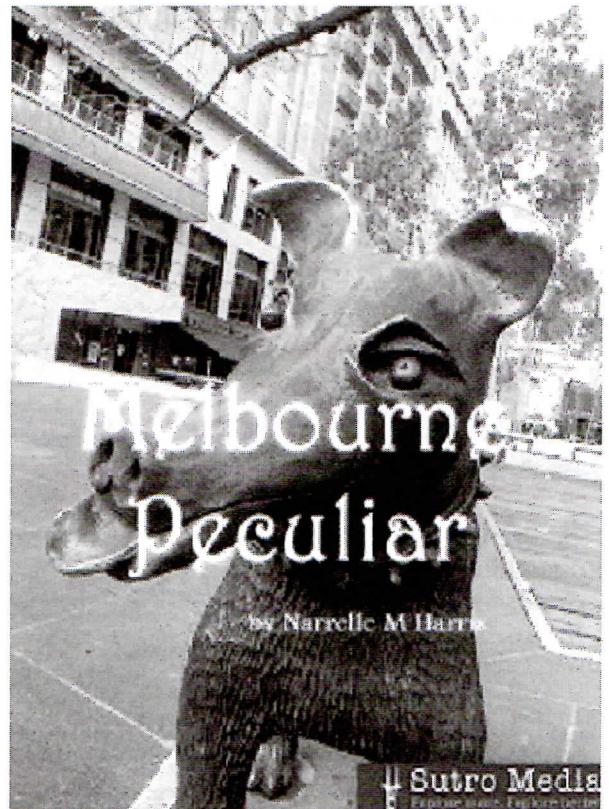
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Notes





Melbourne Literary



Melbourne Peculiar

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12. Amidala
13. Batman
14. Sabrina
15. Narnia
16. across
Shadowcat
17. Black Widow
18. Cat
19. Death
20. DeJa Vu
21. Yggdrasil

- Crossword Answers:
1. Door
2. across Blade
2. down Bending
3. So say
4. Seven
5. Chronos
6. Moonlight
7. Endless
8. Daleks
9. Archery
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everyone who participated in programming

The Continuum Foundation

and all of you for coming! We hope you have the best time.

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