

# REVENANT #21

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Revenant #21, November 2003 produced for SFPA mailing #236 by Sheila Strickland  
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As usual, I'm typing at the last minute. This time, the delay was the arrival of the extended edition of "The Two Towers". I tried to avoid reading reviews of it before I saw it so I could enjoy the new bits without knowing what exactly would happen next. I expected I'd enjoy it and I did. Without giving away too much, my impression was that many of the inserted bits came from the book, although not always exactly in the same place in the story. Once again, they have four different tracks of commentaries. The only one I've listened to so far is the one with the director and screenwriters. It's fascinating to hear Peter Jackson as he points out which parts of a scene were filmed on location, which parts in the studio, which parts were filmed as pick-ups, and even which shots were pulled from another part of the movie all together!

Still on the subject of LOTR; I'll be one of those silly people going to Trilogy Tuesday. For those of you who haven't heard of it, that'll be on December 16, when a few theaters will show the extended edition of "The Fellowship of the Ring" in the afternoon, followed by the extended version of "The Two Towers", followed by the premier of "The Return of the King". It'll be one very long afternoon and night.

Toward the end of October, I went to the first wedding I've been to in years. The groom was a former student worker at our library. Jesse started working there while he was in high school and worked there all through college, except for his first year when he went to a college in central Louisiana. He transferred to LSU after a year, though, and came back to work with us. After he graduated a couple of years ago, he went to work at the computer division of the LSU library but kept in contact with us. Through several years we watched with interest his relationship with Heather and knew they'd be getting married one day---and the day finally came!

The wedding was held at a conference center/reception hall in St. Francisville; a half hour's or so drive north of here. The grounds are beautiful, though with the wedding in late afternoon, we didn't see much of them. The wedding itself was unique. Jesse is Jewish and Heather is Catholic; so they wanted a rabbi and a priest to officiate. The rabbi was fine with that, the priest first said fine; but then had to pull out of participating because the wedding was to be held outdoors. According to Jesse, the bishop was the one who vetoed it; the priest could have been involved if the wedding were held inside a building (not necessarily a church); but outdoors was not allowed. As it happened, they had to move the wedding indoors because of rain! The ceremony combined elements of Christian and Jewish tradition. Four of Jesse's friends held up the chuppah; one of Jesse's grandfathers read from the Torah; one of Heather's friends read from the Christian Bible; Jesse broke the glass; and the parents lit two candles from which Jesse and Heather took one flame to light one candle.

The wedding flowed right into the reception since they were both in the same place. The food was lovely, the music was good, and the wedding cake was chocolate! A fun night. The

drive home had a few hair-raising moments, though. One of my co-workers rode with me, and as we left the reception, she said, "Turn right," which I did; and we quickly realized that was the wrong way. There was nowhere to turn around immediately available, but we didn't panic. "Oh, well," we said, "look at those tail lights ahead; we'll just follow those and get out to the highway." We drove. The fog was rolling in; the rain was misting. It was very, very, very dark. The road was narrow. The lights disappeared. I don't like driving under such circumstances and Veronica kept talking about all the deer she's seen in this area that jump out in front of cars. I could just see a deer crashing into my car; totaling it and doing us no good! At long last, we found a place to turn around; and got back to where we started; then made it home safely.

November has been my month for Louisiana writers. On the 8th, I went to the Louisiana Book Festival. The weather was glorious, and the turnout was all the organizers could wish. Andrew Fox, whom I saw at Deep South Con, was scheduled to attend; but his wife had just had a baby and he couldn't make it. I did buy a copy of *Fat White Vampire Blues* (his book), though, and am currently reading it. During a panel on comedy in horror, someone described as "Ignatius Reilly meets Anne Rice." So far, I'd call that a pretty apt description.

Robert Asprin was also there, though I didn't recognize him at first glance. He was dressed in a suit, had a graying beard, and his hair was long and pulled back in a ponytail. His bit was billed as a book talk; and he did talk about his latest book, but segued into talking about writing in general and how to go about submitting your work. Interesting and inspiring stuff. It made me go back and re-start that whatever it is I did something on last year. Whether it turns into anything, I'll have to see; but I've been having fun with the little I've done.

The best panel was the one on *French Quarter Fiction*, an anthology of stories set in the Quarter. All of the writers on the panel now live in New Orleans; John Biguenet's family has lived there for generations; Poppy Z. Brite was born there, moved away, but lives there again now. Much was made of the fact that although the Quarter is relatively small, it's had a large number of writers who have lived and been inspired by the place. I didn't get the book at the festival; but I plan to be getting it. If New Orleans is a different planet, the Quarter is the most interesting part of it.

That designation of New Orleans is not original with me; it came from Anne Butler who recently did a book talk at our library. She has a rather lurid past, though her current book is a lot lighter. Butler is the former wife of a warden (I think) at Angola Penitentiary, who one evening some years ago shot her several times and left her for dead. She recovered after several years and many operations. She wrote one book on her experience; but her latest is a fun one to read. *Lost and Found at the Plantation Bed and Breakfast* tells about her strange and marvelous adventures in running a bed and breakfast. The talk was poorly attended, but very entertaining. You might think running a B&B in the countryside near a small town would be dull; until you hear about the naked man in the driveway.

My last adventure was going up to Jackson, Louisiana for the Highland Games of Louisiana. Jackson is about as far north from here as St. Francisville, but a little way east. They had good weather this year for it. It was warm---almost too warm, sunny mostly, with some breeze. The event I spent the most time watching was the cabor toss---that's where the contestant has to balance and toss a 17-foot, hundred or so pound pole. The highest score is achieved if they can toss it end over end to wind up in the 12:00 position. Each team had one woman on it---their cabor is "only" 13 feet long and 75 pounds. One woman did make it to the 12:00 position. (And no, I did not try out for the team!) I spent only a few hours there until I

had to leave to get away from the heat and sun. I didn't think to put on sunscreen since it was cloudy when I left home; but I should have--- I got sunburned in that short time.

And on the same day, Louisiana elected its first woman governor. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco has been serving as Lt. Governor for the past eight years. She's a Democrat, but a conservative one; and I didn't see a lot of difference in her and her opponents views. Bobby Jindal got a lot of national media attention for being the son of Indian immigrants and for being so young--32. When he was working for Gov. Foster, people kept saying about him, "He's so smart," and he is. A tad too conservative for my tastes; though I wouldn't have been too disappointed if he had won. I'm a little surprised he didn't; he had endorsements from many media outlets, Gov. Foster (who's been popular), and the mayor of New Orleans. I'll be interested to see what he does next---whether he goes back to Washington, D. C. where's he been working for Bush or try for another political office in Louisiana.

## **Mailing Comments**

**Bob's Infected Nose/mike weber:** Good to see you back in the pages, again. Hope to see more pages from you in this mailing.

People drink skim milk for the calcium without the fat of full fat or low-fat milk. I don't drink milk--I think I had lactose intolerance as a child and still can't stomach the stuff; but I try to eat yogurt and cheese to keep my bones from dissolving.

**New Port News/Ned Brooks:** Ct Hlavaty on the ambiguity of road warning signs: I think "wait on" can be used as "wait for" in American English; though the latter is more common. "Wait on pilot car" could also be interpreted by a literalist as "Go to the pilot car and sit on it and wait"!

Ct Randy about net sedge vs grass: Weeds are just the plants you don't want. Some people plant morning glories for the flowers; some people want to get rid of them, which is why you can buy "weed" killer that will kill morning glories.

**Old Iron Butt is Back/Guy Lillian:** I'd love to see Deep South Con back in New Orleans. A 90 minute drive to get there as opposed to seven hours? Sounds good to me. The only drawback is the hotel Crescent City Con uses and would probably want to use again. They use the lobby bar for a con suite and there's not much room in there for sitting and socializing. The lobby can substitute as a social venue, though again, there's not a lot of room.

**Travelers Tales/Steve Hughes:** Lovely pictures; thanks for running them. You mention seeing "Lord of the Rings" as one motive for wanting to see New Zealand. I read an article recently about the number of people from California who worked on the movie and were so taken with the place that they've moved there. It seems the movie industry there is under populated with people of their skills so they've been able to find work easily enough. The culture clash has been a different matter. The trouble begins when the Americans buy a house on the beach and want to fence it off the way they were accustomed to doing in California. The local custom is to allow more public access to beaches. With the growing popularity of New Zealand as a tourist destination and film location, this sounds like a problem that's going to increase.

**Twydrasil and Treehouse Gazette/Rich Dengrove:** Ct Randy Cleary and imperfections at weddings: Jesse and Heather's wedding that I mentioned in my natter had imperfections that could have mattered to a perfectionist. But I don't think either one of them minded; it was still a lovely wedding. I notice you said it was the sisters of the groom at your friend's wedding who were disturbed about the imperfections. If the bride and groom don't care, why should anyone else?

On "Pirates of the Caribbean": "Someone complained that Depp was overacting as Captain Jack Sparrow. But isn't that the way you do pirates?" I'd agree. In fact, I think one would have to overact to be a proper pirate. Buckling your swash takes a lot of flamboyance.

The gremlins must have been at your zine this time around---my copy at least missed a line or two between pages 20-21 and 24-25. It doesn't seem to be more than a line or two, because the change is not too drastic.

**Frequent Flyer/Tom Feller:** You mention going to DragonCon; how was it? They have quite a list of guests. If it wasn't up against WorldCon, I might be tempted to go one year. I'm not sure I'd like so massive an event, though.

You say that Anita noticed Juliet has a much closer relationship with the Nurse than with her parents; I think that reflects the way the children of the aristocracy were brought up. Once the child was born, it was handed over the nurse until it was old enough for teachers (for the boys) or whatever social skills teacher for the girls. Juliet is young enough that she's just beginning to go out in public, so her Nurse is still the mother figure.

**Spiritus Mundi/Guy Lillian:** Unfortunately for me, I hardly know P. L. Montgomery. I know what a loss it is to her friends and family, though; and what a loss to the SF community. Our generation of fans is beginning to get hit by mortality, and the face of fandom is changing.

Ct Jeff on helping me with the collation thus getting your mailing earlier: should I be accusing you of ulterior motives? Remember, you can't read it until it's all put together! (Or at least that's the arbitrary rule I'd impose.)

Ct me: I could get my degree elsewhere, I suppose; but not in Louisiana---LSU is the only site in the state with an MLS program. Some universities do offer courses online; but it might be difficult to do the entire program that way.

No, I didn't think you and Rosy looked stiff at the Torcon Hugo Ceremony; just very dignified and formal.

Sorry I couldn't make it to Huntsville to see you and Rosy as Fan GoH; but it was too soon after Torcon. My finances hadn't recovered; plus it was a weekend I was scheduled to work and I didn't want to take another working weekend off so soon after the Toronto trip. I work every other Saturday and every fourth Sunday. We have only a certain number of Sundays we can take as vacation; and I try not to abuse the willingness of my co-workers to take on an added load of work when I'm off. It's once drawback of working with the walk-in public---not only does the work pile up on your part of the shelf; the work walks in and demands service right away! Since I didn't see the slide show at Constellation; are you planing to show it elsewhere? I notice DSC for next year is soliciting for program ideas.

**Peter, Pan & Merry/David Schlosser:** Ct me on the "Patriot" Act: It's been a while since I studied it, so I won't swear to it; but I think the FBI would be able to grab records on a certain

book or a certain person. One objection to the Act is that the feds don't need "justifiable" suspicion to demand those records.

**Guilty Pleasures/Eve Ackerman:** I'm sorry we didn't manage to connect up at Torcon. I managed a brief "hi" to Janice because she was on a panel I wanted to see; and it would have been nice meet you, however briefly, as well. I should have used the "Voodoo Board", but somehow I had the idea you weren't planning to attend. Oh, well. Next year in Boston?

**Oblio/Gary Brown:** Nice bit of autobiography there. It's probably something everyone should do at different times in their life; write the events first while they're still fresh in your mind; then later go back and write what happened with the perspective of what the long term outcome was. So certainly, tell us more.

Great news about "Far Side" and "Opus" returning to newspapers. I haven't seen any "Far Side" panels, but "Opus" showed up in the Sunday paper today. I recently saw some of Breathed artwork in the movie "Secondhand Lions". The little boy in the movie grows up to be a cartoonist and the cartoons of his shown on the screen and in the background are drawn by Breathed. I saw the artwork at the beginning of the movie and thought it looked familiar; then realized whose it looked like; then decided it must be his; then the credits confirmed my guess.

Thanks for the kind words on my potential abilities as OE. I hope to do a good job.

I don't know whether SFPA will last until mailing #400, but that's "only" 27 years off. I'll be in my 70's; so I hope I'll still be around. Whether I'll want to be doing a zine or not is another matter, of course!

You asked Guy this, but the librarian in me has to answer---*Holes* is indeed a popular children's book. It won a Newberry Medal, in fact; an award given to the best children's book of the year by a committee of the ALA. The Medal doesn't only go to the "good, worthy, serious lit stuff", the winners are usually very entertaining to read even for adults. It's gone to several genre works in the past; *The High King* by Lloyd Alexander, *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle, and *The Hero and the Crown* by Robin McKinley all won it.

**"Yngvi is a Louse" and Other Graffitos/Toni Weisskopf Reinhardt:** I'm not exactly a doughnut aficionado; but I pretty much concur with you on the Tim Horton's/Krispy Kreme eat off. I had a Tim Horton's maple something or other while in Canada and it was very good; but fresh Krispy Kreme doughnuts will give you a sugar and fat rush to last for hours.

Ct David Schlosser on Eric Clapton and the bad associations his music gives you: I didn't remember the death of his son that way and went back to look at the report at the time. The reports I read had the boy and his mother at a hotel with Eric Clapton in the same city, but another hotel. These were reports written right after the fact; but none of them mentioned the mother being high or Clapton being there at all.

**Passages/Janet Larson:** Interesting coincidence that you and Gary Brown would both do autobiographies in the same mailing. Anytime you want to go into more detail on your fannish career, feel free to do so; I find it fascinating to see how people follow one thread of fandom, then another while living their "normal" lives. It also shows that many fans interweave several interests; therefore can't really be divided into tidy little groups like "media fan" or "fanzine fan".

Lasik surgery is tempting. I'd still need glasses for reading, though; and since I do so much reading of screens and book shelves in my work; I'd be wearing them all day anyway, just as I do now. Which means, I'll just keep on putting it off!

Ct me on being in Montreal: Did you see much of the city while you were there? I've been there very briefly twice and I want to go back to see more of it. It's a lovely city; much more foreign to my eyes than Toronto is. The Botanic Gardens are a marvel---I've been there twice and still haven't seen all of it.

Good to hear the news on Samantha. And don't worry about her being "only" average in speech. If she does that well in three months; she'll soon be a typical Lake Wobegonian above average child!

**Tennessee Trash/Gary Robe:** What a great trip you had out west! I've never seen that part of the country, and this is an incentive to see some of it. I loved those "before" and "after" pictures of the John Muir Trail expedition. I note you're the only one smiling in both pictures! I can't say too much about the other members of your party though, I would have been just as grim at the end. I never knew starfish came in different colors, either. The things you learn in SFPA.

**Wave to the Nice Mountain, Dear/Jeff Copeland:** Very nice cover. First off, let me congratulate you on two good years as OE. You and Toni are the only two OE's I've had experience of; but I think you've both done a fine job. The two of you have set quite a standard to live up to.

Your mention of Allie heading up to college with a load of stuff contrasted to your small amount of stuff reminds me of a report I half-heard on NPR. It seems college dormitories are having to upgrade their electrical systems because students are bring so many electrical items. One young man had a complete entertainment system (DVD player, TV, CD player), plus computer, printer, electric toothbrush, razor, and on and on. I listened to that and thought how when I lived in a dorm room, I had a radio and a tape player.

Nice quotes on librarians by Spider Robinson. He and Ray Bradbury are two writers I know of who've acknowledged the good librarians can do. Now if only we could convince John Ashcroft of that...

I like your take on the virtues of apas verses web spoutings. There a few newsgroups I try to scan; but I get so tired of the petty sniping and people writing that, "I have no idea what the truth is in this case, and I can't be bothered to walk over to my bookshelves to look it up, but I seem to remember..." My reaction is usually, "If you don't know anything about it, don't clutter up the newsgroup!"

Ct Toni and Ashcroft and extending the "Patriot" Act: I haven't heard much about this of late; I do note they've been more vigorous in insisting that we really, really, really do need drastic measures.

Ct Gary Brown on "information specialist": It occurred to me that "information specialist" doesn't really describe a lot of what I do every day. An "information specialist" sounds like someone who would be helping people find that vital info they need for a report or their job. I do that, but I also help people find another author who writes like Janet Dailey; I call other branches to find that one copy of the video of "To Kill a Mockingbird" that's still on the shelf; I even order supplies and enter magazines in the local database! "Information specialist" just doesn't cut it; I'll stick with "librarian".

**Trivial Pursuits/Janice Gelb:** I can sympathize with you on the mess of the recall. And I know what it's like to shudder at the image the state is projecting. Louisiana has had its share of disgraceful political episodes; mostly infamously with the Duke/Edward election 12 years ago. This past election was such a refreshing change; I hope it's a good portent for things to come.

Interesting to read your take on "The Wreck of the Torcon". I've heard the blame is being spread left and right. I'm still on a public mailing list for Torcon and a couple of committee members are fighting it out in public there.

**Home With the Armadillos/Liz Copeland:** I'm sorry that you're still not back to normal. I hope that by now, things have improved considerably. Speaking of scars reminded me that I still have one on my throat from my major operation six years ago. It's from where they put the IV during my first stay in the hospital. It's faded enough to where it's not noticeable any more; but for a while there, I looked like a vampire had been chewing on me. One of my co-workers had an operation on her thyroid in the last year and she had a long scar, as well. Hers has faded pretty much so that I don't see it at all now.

**And to all:** Skimping on mailing comments again this time; but this needs to get finished and in the mail. I'm looking forward to the next month or so. Our library is doing a float in the Zachary Christmas parade; there's Trilogy Tuesday the week after; and my sister and family are coming down after Christmas. Further off is DSC in March. I hope to attend, but it's possible we'll be in the process of moving our library. We've been guessing April as a completion date, but the contractors are moving along on the building at a rapid pace. The new building is much anticipated and 4 or 5 times as big as the current place. The moving in will take about two weeks, so I hope DSC weekend won't be coinciding with that time.

And the next time I address you, it'll be as the new OE---wish me luck!