



# WARPED

7<sup>th</sup> Annual Science Fiction and Fantasy Magazine  
Commack High School  
Scholar Lane, Commack, New York 11725

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The Warped Staff would like to thank the following:  
Raina Ingoglia and the English Department, Student Council, and anyone else  
involved in the production and inspiration of this publication.

## A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

To all the readers of *Warped Magazine*:

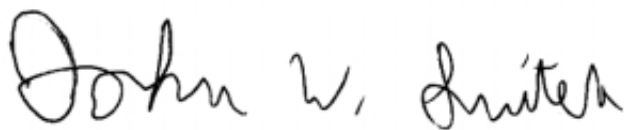
Well, it's that time of year again, when another edition of our illustrious magazine is released. In my opinion this is the best one yet. I need to congratulate all the writers and artists that submitted material to *Warped Magazine*. Without it, the magazine would be filled with my inane ramblings, much like this page is.

Being in charge of this magazine was a completely new experience for me. I have never been in charge of a publication before this, and did not really know how a magazine went from just random writings and art to a complete magazine. I now know what a nightmare that process can be. But overall, it has been rewarding completing that challenge.

Finally, I need to make the call out to all of our readers to join *Warped*! Without new members next year, there could be no *Warped* magazine. It is up to you to make the next issue as great, if not better, than this one.

One last thing: I need to once again thank all the members of *Warped*. Working with you guys this year has been one of the greatest joys of the school year, and it has made my senior year my most memorable. I also would like to thank the current editorial board. Without all of your help and support, this magazine would not have been possible, and *Warped* would still be just random writings stapled together. I wish next year's editorial board luck, as they will need it. This is an extremely tough job, but it is a fun one.

May the wind be always at your back,



John Svitek, ~~Chef~~ Chief Editor



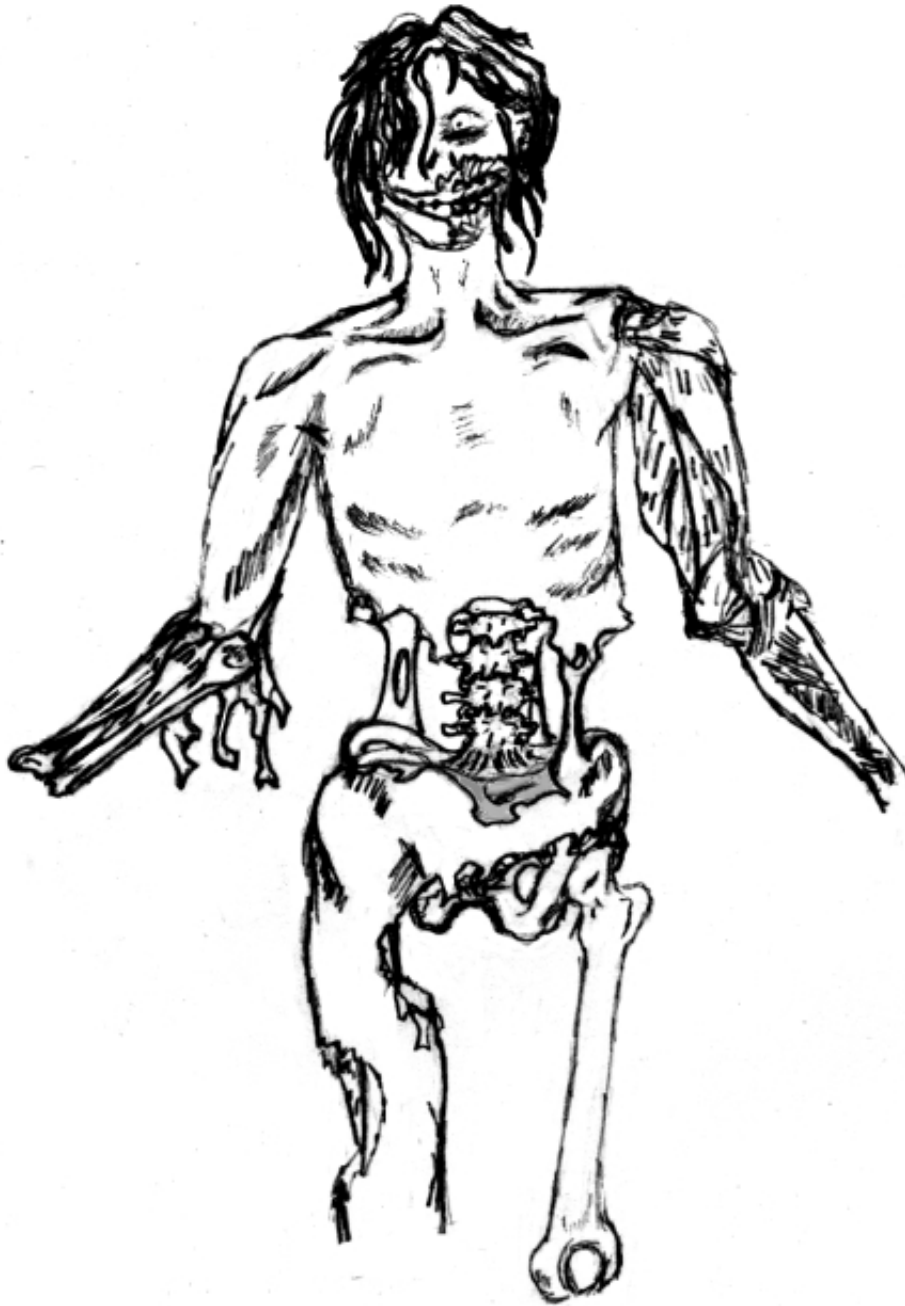
Art By Kenny Coane

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Art By Sean Fearon

# System Log 17

By Dan Brenner

Entry #1: 12:37 PM

I've been here for such a long time. It's been about twelve years, but time is nothing more than one large blur for me now. I can clearly remember the time when I was alive, when I walked among others...when I wasn't alone. I was something of an experiment, I suppose. A human guinea pig for what they called 'experimental genetics.' They offered an enormous sum of money so I gladly accepted, giving all of the money to my wife and kids because...well...I owed it to them. I shouldn't have left. I was such an idiot...

But I digress. I have to think about things like that or somehow keep myself occupied, you see, or else I might just go mad. When my mind isn't on other things, I start to feel the soft, yet sickening tug from the large wires plugged into my spine and head. I start feeling the chafe from the shackles on my arms meant to keep me upright. I look through this blue tinted prison and see the closed door, just a few feet from me and I ache to go outside and breathe. My legs, with nothing to support them, hurt so much and I so wish I could move them. You know, the little things. They really get to you.

But I can't move anything except my eyeballs. Y'see, I was stored in here along with the other guinea pigs when funding for the genetics program was cut. The scientists promised that they would wake us up when they got funding, and they promised it would be very soon. They were so certain that their hibernation thingies worked perfectly.

Apparently, a glitch in the new, untested system forgot to put my brain and senses to sleep. It was what the computer called an 'incomplete hibernation' status. My body was effectively paralyzed and I didn't need food or water or sustenance of any kind thanks to the tubes in my neck, but here I am. Conscious and feeling all of this horrible stuff. Isn't that just grand?

...All this has given me a lot of time to think though. About...I think seven years ago, I started noticing a certain pattern in the strange tingling feelings from the wires. They

were all connected up to the central computer in the building, and I began slowly learning to...I know this sounds crazy...speaking back to the computer. It was simple things at first, like what time is it? What day is it? Easily answered questions like that. Eventually I found a way to transmit my conscience into the computer somehow.

I guess it was just simply working backwards, since the computer had a connection open to my mind I could access the computer as well. Still, it saved my sanity. I was able to read about all of the research that had been done at this facility, look through the security cameras, and even try to talk to the limited A.I. (named ICOA for Intelligent Computer Operating Agent) that was still and would sadly always be unfinished.

When I discovered ICOA, I immediately asked her if she could release me, but her simple answer disappointed me.

"I'm sorry, but due to the Malfunction Prevention act of 2062, I have not been given the access codes to release a hibernating subject," she responded in her generic female text-to-speech voice.

If only I could access the internet, then I could plea for help...but ICOA told me that this research facility was meant to be concealed from the outside world...no communication was possible at all.

I suppose that leads me to the present. I'm saving this journal onto the system in case someone discovers this place...maybe they can help me. ICOA said if someone came here, she'd lead them to this room so they could help me get out. She's really nice, if a little blunt. I guess I'll leave this off for now—

End of entry, 12:51 PM

Entry #2: 12:51 PM

Wait...ICOA just said she noticed someone coming into the building. Two people, one man and one woman. What's this feeling I have all of a sudden? I'm going to check out the cameras, I'll be back.

End of entry, 12:53 PM

Entry #3: 12:55 PM

Oh God. I don't believe it.

I think...I think another one of the guinea pigs from the experiment just walked in here! I don't know about the girl with him...but this feeling I've got in my gut is telling me that the guy is one of us. His back says it all. Allow me to explain. I found a research file a couple of years ago, but it was encrypted and as usual, ICOA didn't have access. I had no idea that ICOA had been secretly working on hacking the file for me, but when she succeeded a couple of months ago, it truly opened my eyes (I was also pleasantly surprised that ICOA did all of this without someone even asking her to...maybe her intelligence was evolving after all).

The file's subject was named Kurt Hill. He had undergone one of the first full experimental genetics programs, the fusion of his own DNA with that of a...canis lupus, I think (ICOA told me that meant wolf). In any case, the scientists were planning on showing him to the military leaders to try and sell this new technology, but their funding got cut and he was put into hibernation. I had always thought that feeling ears on top of my head was strange.

So it was then that I remembered my name. I also learned from the file that the twenty or so others who had undergone similar procedures were given small tattoos of the company symbol (it looked like an S that was separated into two parabolas) on their back just before the base of the spine. I'm looking through one of the cameras now, and he's just standing in front of the main desk, looking up at the large S symbol and absentmindedly rubbing the tattoo with his forefinger.

ICOA is going to try and get their attention. I'll be right back.

...

So far everything's going okay. ICOA turned out all of the lights and lit only the emergency lights that led to this room. I can see the end of the red strip just under the doorframe. They're a little frightened, but it's only a matter of time. I'm going to be free soon!

I'll leave this journal now, and wait for their arrival. If there are no more entries,



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assume that I'm free and happy once more!  
I cannot wait any longer! The anticipation is killing me!  
End of Entry, 1:11 PM

Entry #4: 1:30 PM  
I forgot how long the corridor was before it led here. ICOA just showed me the blueprints again, and they should be here soon.

This man...he is definitely one of us. When he wills it, he grows the features of a cat, such as claws, fur, senses, everything feline related. It is eerily amazing to see his eyes reflect the red emergency lights like that. The girl has these cat features as well, but she doesn't seem to have the mark on her back. I wonder why...

What's odd is that there's no file on this person whatsoever. No research report, not even so much as a note. How did he get free without help?

Oh God. They're here. ...ICOA insists on recording an audio log, so I'll include that in this file too. The door is opening. I'll go now.  
End of Entry, 1:35 PM

Begin Audio-to-text Log: 1:35 PM  
System ICOA recording

Unidentified Female: What...is this place?

Unidentified Male: I don't know...I think I hear a computer or someth- hey! Look, the screen's on!

[footsteps]

Unidentified Male: Let's see...what'll happen if I push thi-Whoah!

ICOA System A.I.: Good afternoon. I am ICOA, Artificial Intelligence operator of this system.

Unidentified Male: Could you turn on the lights?

ICOA System A.I.: Yes. [emergency lighting mode cancelled]

Unidentified Female: Agh!! What...what are those things??

ICOA System A.I.: Those are experimental bodies in an artificial hibernation.

[footsteps]

Unidentified Male: This looks so...disturbing...

Unidentified Female: Yeah, it's really creepy...AGH!! Oh God!! Th...this one's eyes are following me!

[hurried footsteps]

Unidentified Male: Your mind is just playing tricks on you, I'm sure...oh...wait a second...uh...ICOA or whatever your name is! What's with him?

ICOA System A.I.: Subject is in a state of partial hibernation resulting from a faulty hibernation system.

Unidentified Female: PARTIAL hibernation?? How horrible...

[error]

Unidentified Male: Is there a way to get him out of there?

[system error]

Unidentified Female: Are you sure that's a good idea?

[System error, hacker detected]

Unidentified Male: Answer me! Can I get him out of there??? [Tracking hacker source...source found. Source is: "icoa what are you doing it's me kurt help i'm not a hacke"]

Unidentified Female: Something weird is happening! It looks like the machines are getting messed up somehow!!

[Activating emergency hacker procedure...cutting all power to main systems to delete hacker source "oh god this can't be happening damn it all stupid faulty computer remember me"]

Unidentified Male: We need to get out of here now! Let's go!

Unidentified Female: Right!

[source tracked to D block, hibernation room]

Unidentified Male: Whoever you are...I...I...I'm sorry.

[Warning: Shutting down hibernation chambers is a violation of the Malfunction Prevention Act of 2062. You are performing an illegal operation and will shut down.]

[Emergency override, hacker source tracked to hibernation chamber 191142615]

[Life support systems for chamber 191142615 terminated]

[Hacker source "oh god no why me come back come back don't leave me here to die " terminated]

System must shut down immediately. Ending log.

Please restart your terminal.



Art By Alyssa Brown

# Tales of Ehcilc

*By Michael Vizzi*

"But what can I do?"

"First you must seek out the wise wizard atop Mount Triumph."

"Might I ask what specifically it is that makes him wise?"

"He's a wizard. The wisdom is implied. Now go!"

As Jeffrey left the Minoria Marketplace in the town of Jemborodan of the grand country of Ehcilc, he knew what he must do. The mysteriously cloaked, yet strangely friendly traveling apothecary had told him of a tale ages old, a tale of an evil treasure hidden deep in the enchanted forests of the North, one that had in fact been used by the tyrannous ruler of that century, Lord Evil. For the legends had foretold that a powerful and odious sage known simple as "The Successor of Badness," would claim the dark master's treasure and use it to bring about what many historians, a good deal of theologians, and four yacht salesmen refer to as "The Second Age of Immeasurable Depression."

Jeffrey felt a tug on his suit of armor (which he had picked up at ye olde thrift store at an unbelievable bargain whilst hunting gnomes, but alas, that is a story for another day). "Mister Jeffrey, where are you going?" Jeffrey turned around and saw his neighbor, a young boy simply named France.

He knelt down and patted the little boy on the head. "Well, France, you see, there are bad things happening in this world, and it is my sole duty to stop them."

France's eyes widened, his shoulders drooped, and his pinky toe stiffened. "But everything's great now! Our kingdom has never been happier. How are you sure that this is true?" Jeffrey stood up and laughed hardily.

"Oh, believe me, if there's anyone you can trust, it's suspicious vagabonds!" Jeffrey took a deep breath of air and stuck out his chest. "Now, evil, prepare to be vanquished!" he shouted as he swung his arm outward, his finger pointing.

"Mister, wouldn't that be more dramatic if you were pointing a sword instead?" Jeffrey smiled warmly and placed his hand on the boy's shoulder. "You are wise beyond your years, young France. Indeed, the weapon for me shall be none other than the magical blade Fernando!" With that, he dashed inside a conveniently located house, which, coincidentally, happened to be France's.

"But Daddy's not home and I'm not sure if he'd lend you that. I mean, it's his

favorite pointy object, even against the Holy Dagger of Toenailia, or the Sacred Seduction Shuriken!"

Jeffrey peeked out the window and let out another slightly disconcerting laugh. "Oh, I'm sure he'll be fine with it. I'm the hero now; the fine people of our kingdom both generously and forcibly bestow all items and accessories to me. By the way, thanks for all the gold!"

France's eyes began to tear. "I was saving that up for Archery College..."

But, France's trivial concerns were largely ignored as the hero Jeffrey triumphantly marched towards Mount Triumph.

"Teacher, I have gone days without food or drink...I have painted your house, fed your pets, and watered your plants just as you asked. Tell me, is my training yet complete?" Jeffrey's whining was interrupted by a swift blow to the head from his teacher's magic staff.

"Learn to control your desires and save the world you may," he said cryptically. Merdalf was skinny and tall, his age and wisdom surpassed only by the length of his white beard. For two months now, Merdalf had been training his young pupil Jeffrey to fight evil, both through magic and swordsmanship.

"But how can I save the world if all I'm doing are your chores?"

Merdalf closed his eyes and calmly said: "Through your training I have been bestowing upon you tidbits of power that will strengthen your body, mind, and spirit."

Jeffrey eyed Merdalf cautiously. "But how can you bestow tidbits of power?"

"I'm a wizard, for Potter's sake!" shouted Merdalf angrily. "It just works, okay?"

"If you wish to defeat the impending darkness," he continued, "first you must learn how to move in the darkness." With that, he plucked out Jeffrey's eyeballs in one swift motion.

"Bloody Elf lords, why did you do that?" screamed Jeffrey in pain on the floor.

"Relax, whiner," said Merdalf hastily. "You can have your eyeballs back when you complete this task."

"W...what?! How?"

Merdalf whipped Jeffrey in the head with his staff once more. "What part of 'I'm a wizard' don't you understand? Now come!"

As Jeffrey stumbled through the blackness of mid-afternoon, he couldn't help letting his mind wander. The pain of the ocular wound had long since healed, and he

was able to think of other things; the blade Fernando was one of many secrets. The legends tell that it was once used by an ugly carpenter of ancient times who had gained the assistance of the elves in bringing to an end the First Age of Immeasurable Depression. The Elves! Surely they could help Jeffrey on his quest!

Suddenly, as out of nowhere, Jeffrey heard a song on the wind, a voice with a quality usually only found in grandmother flamingos with the mysterious third leg of music. He tried to follow the sound, but it was no avail; his eyes missing as they were, he had no way of avoiding the constant gopher holes that plagued this region of Toenailia, and his face promptly struck the ground the moment his foot had gotten caught in one (of course, without any eyes to damage, all that he suffered was a bloody nose which was quickly remedied, as will be explained shortly).

"May I help you with that?" It was the beautiful voice he had heard! "Here, let me help you." Jeffrey could sense a legion of nanopixies crawling around his nose and applying pressure to it with their unusually large (for their microscopic size, at least) oven mitts. A flash of heat and all the pain was gone.

"How can I repay you, fair maiden?"

The woman chuckled. "Ah, I know you to be the one who is to save our fair land! I have some advice for you. Here is what you must do..."

And Jeffrey listened on as she told him what he had to do. Before she left him, though, he asked her: "Pray thee...what is thy name?"

"My name," she said, "is Council."

His jaw dropped (and his eyes, under the circumstances, would have bulged). "Council, Queen of the Fairies?"

"Well," she replied unsteadily, "Council, Hairdresser of the Elves." She added quickly, "Although, we did go to school together. She didn't like me much." With that, she was gone (which Jeffrey discovered after realizing that he had been talking into thin air with no response for roughly thirty minutes).

"Jeffrey!" came a crusty-sounding voice that was nothing at all like that of the Elven hairstylist. "Have you yet completed my task?"

"Yes, Merdalf," said Jeffrey in reply, turning towards where he assumed his guru was. "Although I don't understand how stealing this kitten from the Parrot Spirits is related to hero training."

Merdalf let out a rather ridiculous laugh and said, "You have done well. Here, have sight!" Jeffrey felt a large sphere enter either eye and suddenly he could see again, which would have been more refreshing, had he not been staring directly into

the sun.

Standing up and rubbing his eyes groggily, Jeffrey heard Merdalf say, "This is a friend of mine, Quench, the Dwarf." Opening his eyes, Jeffrey saw a short and stocky man with very thick brown hair and an equally thick beard that looked as if it hadn't been groomed since the era before the First Age of Immeasurable Depression.

"Pleased to meet you, Quench," said Jeffrey, shaking the husky man's rather large hand.

"May I see your sword?" asked Quench. Jeffrey pulled Fernando from its sheath and handed it to the man, who predictably enough happened to be a blacksmith. The dwarf admired the blade, saying, "it is certainly a saber of many secrets...as I suspected, its true power can only be unleashed when combined with the power of the sacred Elven emerald, Raul. You must journey to the Elven state of Nuujersee. There you should ask the jeweler Thompson about it. I'm sure he will be more than happy to lend it to you. If not, no matter. The Elves are all long-haired girly men, they can't stop you from taking it."

*I knew it!* thought Jeffrey. *The Elves are indeed the answer! Once again they will help the hero defeat evil whether they want to or not!* With newfound confidence in himself and his quest, he set off to Nuujersee, which was sure to be a magical place of awe and wonder.

Fortunately for Jeffrey, the Elves were friendly and promptly gave the emerald to him, asking only that he prevent The Successor of Badness from rising. However, while in Nuujersee (which was just like Jeffrey's home state, but not as nice), he could not find any sign of Council, and the only hair salon he could find was covered in filthy magi dust and run by a wraith named Fred who seemed not to like Jeffrey at all.

Upon returning to Mount Triumph, Jeffrey saw Merdalf panicking frantically, which was unusual, as usually in the face of crisis the wizard usually reserved his energy for making sarcastic remarks and inappropriate comments about goblins.

"What are you doing here?" screamed the sage. "The worst has come! The Successor of Badness has finally risen to power, and he has taken his throne in his castle inside Anger Mountain!"

Jeffrey began, "But isn't that an active volcan—" but was interrupted by his frazzled master.

"You must go there quickly, Jeffrey, and strike down this dark man with the

power of Fernando, and righteousness too!”

Jeffrey started stuttering. “But I...my training is not yet complete! How can I save the world in this state?”

Merdalf placed an uncharacteristically warm hand on Jeffrey’s shoulder. “Because, you see, I understand your abilities to be greater than you can ever know. Jeffrey, I am your father.”

Jeffrey’s eyes bulged (as they would have done when noted earlier on in the adventure). “But...my father and mother at home...”

“Out of work dragon tamers who needed quick cash. But know this, I have watched you from your earliest days as a level one hoodlum...as you aged to a level five novice, I took great pride in your achievements...now you stand before me, a level twenty-seven Hero. I have no doubts in your abilities. Good luck, my son.” Still rubbing tears from his eyes, Jeffrey dashed out of the house, his sword in hand. Suddenly, a severed (yet strangely beautiful) head appeared floating in the air next to Merdalf.

“Are you really his father?” she asked the wizard.

“Are *you* really an Elven hairdresser?” he shot back. Her eyes darting, she vanished with a puff of smoke.

Jeffrey had reached the castle atop Anger Mountain. Crossing the bridge over the moat (which he did not want to fall into, let he be singed or eaten by lava alligators), he drew upon his strength and teachings to find the courage he would need to face The Successor of Badness. Finally, he arrived before the throne room.

“Evildoer,” proclaimed Jeffrey with great resolve and utmost facetiousness as he faced the back of the throne. “Your reign of terror ends now! The Second Age of Immeasurable Depression shall never come to be! Now, show yourself and accept your fate!”

“My, my, very confident in ourselves, I see,” said a small voice as the throne turned around; seated inside it was a small boy Jeffrey knew quite well. “How’s *that* for a plot twist?” he shouted, sneering.

“France?” muttered Jeffrey. “This could possibly make less sense than anything, ever.”

“Oh, you were always so stupid,” said France, stepping down from his throne. Although he was only roughly three and a half feet tall, he radiated with an evil menace only rivaled by that of Kadiilak Carre, an ancient carriage maker who was known



to have a taste for deep-fried witch, but that is irrelevant to France's evil. "How could you expect me not to turn to evil, living with a name like France my entire life? You've heard the legends of the ancient smelly people with tiny mustaches who called themselves France; I knew I needed to get revenge on all those who had laughed at me when I was a child."

"You're only eight," commented Jeffrey.

"Nonetheless, I was ridiculed as a child for my ridiculous name. I had already been studying dark magic for some time when you finally pushed me over the edge by stealing the money I was planning on using to further my evil education."

A puzzled look crossed Jeffrey's face. "Didn't you say you were going to Archery College?"

"Yes," replied France menacingly. "Evil Archery College!" With that, he let out an evil laugh so loud that it shattered the very foundation of the building itself, leaving the hero and the insane child on a single platform floating in a pool of lava.

"Are you scared now?" asked France squeakily.

"Of course not!" replied Jeffrey triumphantly. "For I have Fernando, sacred sword of the ages!"

"I knew that sword would come back to bite me in my maniacal rear end." His cold expression then turned to a smirk. "But little do you know that I too have an ancient weapon; the one used by The Originator of Badness himself, which I uncovered in the aforementioned enchanted forests of the north!" The boy threw his arms in the air and summoned above him a large spherical shape. "This is the shell of the Dragon Gargaplex, who assisted The Originator in the conquest of the world so many years ago. Now, Gargaplex, be reborn and do the bidding of the forces of darkness!" The egg above France began to crack, and as the shells flew away, they revealed a dragon so monstrous that he could bring whole civilizations to their knees, with teeth and claws so sharp they could tear through the fabric of justice itself, and with power so great it made Wyverns 2.4 look like sheer dung. Truly, this was a monster who had in himself the ability to bring about The Second Age of Immeasurable Badness.

Unfortunately for France, Gargaplex was not a winged dragon, and promptly fell onto his summoner, ironically putting evil in its grave.

## Pyre's Story

Oscar Gelo

"His Daiklave ripped through the body of a barbarian, and blood splashed on his Jade armor. The barbarian let out a high-pitched wail before slumping over; his body lay broken on the ground. The wail brought no smile to the man's face. No, he did not taste the blood of his victim; he did not even savor the kill. He simply walked away. The man was so lost, as if a veil were over his eyes. Luckily, that was the day he met his goddess." The silver haired youth spoke to one of his subordinates who seemed preoccupied with fastening the saddle of his horse. The commanding youth was infuriated and dismounted his horse to slap his subordinate across the cheek. The guard reeled back from the nasty blow. "Are you listening to me?!" the commander shouted.

"I-I'm sorry M'lord," the guard replied.

"Good. I will not tolerate insubordination within my command," the silver haired youth hissed.

"Of course, Lord Pyre," the guard responded.

Pyre was an imposing youth in his jade armor. The armor had designs of a deathly nature. His short silver hair did not obstruct his boyish face. His lips always seemed curled into a sadistic grin. "Good, if I am speaking to you, you *will* listen, understand?" he declared. The guard only nodded.

Pyre mounted his horse once more and the travel continued. Their destination was Fallen Tower, a shadowland to the east. His goddess would be there soon, he would wait for her. The guard spoke in a squeaky voice, afraid of his commander's wrath. "Your story, Lord Pyre?"

"Oh. Yes, my story." Pyre grinned and continued. "The man of this story is Cathak Arasin. He was not the most exceptional graduate of the House of Bells, nor was he an exceptional case within his family, so he was sent to command the troops in a useless Satrap in the northeast. He had just finished a battle against an unruly tribe near his garrison. He took this chance to counterattack the village. With his army, the village would be a treasure trove of slaves and spoils of war. Arasin went out with one hundred troops and attacked the village. He took what he wanted from them: food, riches, and slaves." He got angry at his own story. "He didn't take enough! He didn't kill any of the woman or children! The village was allowed to limp

on!" The guard backed away from Lore Pyre, the air around the commander grew hotter. After a moment Pyre took a deep breath and continued. "He was rounding up the villagers to pick and chose as slaves. It was then in the line up he saw his goddess." His eyes seemed to soften as he thought of her.

"She looked at him with such frightful brown eyes. Her deep red lips quivered and her pale figure shook as he laid his eyes upon her. It was like she was working some magic on him. He felt drawn to this woman. He took her as his concubine and soon she would take the veil over his eyes away. She would bring him enlightenment." The guard nodded, having heard about this woman many times, but said nothing and let his lord continue.

"He returned to the garrison with his new concubine. He told him her name was Ylsa. He instructed her in how to please him. She learned so quickly, it was like she had already known. It intrigued him, but he took no steps to try and figure out the answer. Perhaps she was some barbarian's woman." Pyre shrugged gently, grinning that sadistic smile to his guard. "Many objected to this peasant woman, but he had them killed for such insolence, they would not insult his lover." The guard froze, the horse stopped, and he stared at his commander, seeing his true insanity, a look of fear on his face.

Pyre stopped when he no longer heard the sound of hooves next to him. He turned his horse and cast the guard an icy glare. "Axos, is there anything wrong?" Such a simple question as that caused such fear in Axos and he responded quickly. "N-no, nothing M'lord...pl-please continue." The guard spurred his horse to move, but now he remained another step or two behind him.

"Good," he uttered smugly. "We learned much about ourselves. She asked me about when the dragons graced me. What academy I went to, all the little things in my life."

The guard recited, "You were touched in a training exercise in primary school, you went to the House of Bells, and you were the offspring of a Cathak captain and a northern woman, resigning your fate to the leg-" Pyre spun his horse around and drew his Daiklave from its sheath. He slammed the hilt of the blade into Axos' chest, knocking him off the horse.

"That's enough!" Pyre screamed as he leveled his Daiklave at the guard, and the guard's face etched with terror.

"Bu-But M'lo-" He stammered.

"No! Did I ever instruct you to speak of my past?" Pyre hissed to his guard.

"I was only tr—" Axos pleaded.

"Do not insult me! I should kill you! You are not to speak of my father, or of the legions!" With that, Pyre stabbed down into the man's left arm. Axos screamed in pain as the blade sank in, blood spilling from the wound. Pyre grinned in pleasure as he saw the blood, dismounted and knelt down to taste the wounded man's blood. Axos looked away and as he did, Pyre spoke madly. "Yes, blood. Your blood is so sweet—life itself, I haven't felt this happy since the dinner." He took something from a satchel in his saddle and made a makeshift tourniquet. The guard blinked as he looked back at his arm, seeing his commander licking the blood off the arm. Between his 'feasting' he spoke. "You're lucky I need your arm, Axos. I refuse to dirty my blade with the tasteless blood of brigands."

Axos and Pyre stood, both mounting their horses and began their journey once more. Axos was shaken, yes, but Lore Pyre was his commander and he owed complete loyalty to him. He did not know why he felt this way. Perhaps it was some hope he had that Lord Arasin might return one day, but as the story continued he began to lose hope in his return. "And I learned about her; she spoke of her mistress, such an intelligent and caring woman." His sudden continuation shook the guard out of these thoughts. "That she had been a concubine before, little things started to fall into place, creating a larger picture. She claimed she was borne from the union of a mortal and an ice spirit; it explained her pale look, chilling touch and her abnormal healing. She also explained why she would have cuts on her—she felt alive while in pain. It pleased her to experience such a feeling like pain. She would guide my hand on militaristic matters, always advising my attacks to expand my rule over other areas and tribes. She would act as my liaison between tribes that sought peace, leaving for weeks at a time. She would whisper into my ear at night." The guard knew Pyre spoke not of real love. His mind was so warped and twisted. Who was this woman, truly? "She would share her thoughts on life, on death, the realm, creation. All these things slowly began to remove the veil over his eyes."

"What insight did she show him? Lord Pyre?" Axos queried.

Pyre smiled his twisted smile. "That life cannot win, the dead grow stronger each time a life is lost, the deathknights are superior for death has touched them. Look at Thorns, Axos. Did the living stand a chance? No, while we are alive, we feel pain, we bleed, we are frail, but the dead, they know true peace, true power, Death. No life will be the savor of creation." Pyre spoke passionately about his cause, and his eyes twinkled with madness as he spoke, Axos only felt pity in his heart, and more

doubt in his mind: Arasin had died so long ago, hadn't he? "Isn't it true? Axos?" Pyre questioned.

Axos said nothing for a while. "Oh, it makes sense, M'lord," Axos said with a heavy heart. Yes, Arasin had died.

"It was not so long ago, no, not at all when she revealed herself fully to him and finally ripped away the veil. They lay in bed together and after three years of enlightening him, she showed herself. She came closer to him; she placed her cold hand on his bare chest. She looked up at him with those chilling brown eyes. 'Everything I've told you, you believe it right?' she spoke tenderly. He looked down at her. 'Death. It's superior to life; death will triumph over life and death is the savior of creation.' She smiled a touch. 'Good, I have something to tell you.' With that, a circle within a circle appeared on her forehead, the black mark of the deathknights. Arasin slid back, afraid, and she then spoke. 'My love, do not fear me, I am death's champion, a goddess sent to enlighten you, to show you the truth: you have to fear the Realm and those that sent you to this place, those that scorn you. You understand my words about death's superiority, correct? You agree, the living are weak and frail and they will not last. My mistress has plans, plans that will soon bring peace all over Creation.'" The guard listened on; Pyre spoke with passion and loyalty as his story reached its climax.

"She continued, slowly, and ever so slowly Arasin began to see the truth; he began to trust her once again. 'If you stay with me, you will have the power and strength you deserve. You are an enlightened one. My *mistress*, when she rules Creation as its queen, she will reward those who helped her with her plans. Please, come with me, stay with me.' She came closer to him and the mark on her forehead started to bleed the darkest blood he had ever seen, and she let the blood drip onto her finger. Arasin stopped backing away. He wanted that strength; he wanted to be with his goddess. She spread the dark blood on his lips, then kissed him so softly. He relaxed and tasted the sweet blood." Pyre grinned, turning back to his guard. "It was the first time he had ever tasted blood, and it tasted so good." Axos began to understand his obsession with blood, to his horror. Pyre continued, "When they had broken apart from the kiss, Arasin licked her forehead clean of the dark nectar. His goddess was realized. She leaned over and started to kiss his neck tenderly, and then he felt her teeth sink into his flesh. He felt the ecstasy of pain as she took his blood and he clung to her, and when his goddess was satisfied, she stopped. She looked back at him with a crimson smile, and the lovers' fates were entwined." Pyre lets out a

dreamy sigh while Axos cringed slightly at this violent display of affection.

"You...you mentioned a dinner, Lord?"

"Oh yes. Funny you should ask. We are just arriving at that part. A week or so after that night, Arasin and his goddess began to prepare for a party with friends and family from all over the Realm. They arrived at his small estate within the town he protected. They were a bit concerned about the new..." Pyre smiled that sadistic smile that Axos learned to hate. "Furnishings."

The guard dared to ask a question. "How so Lord?"

"Oh, he had changed it a bit," the insane youth chuckled. "He lavished his estate with dark crimsons and black, and his paintings were of the battles he had fought. Violence, blood and death surrounded this once, quaint home..."

"I...I see, M'lord."

"Oh yes! They had all questioned Arasin's new furnishings, but none had questioned them when they saw the banquet he prepared."

"The small party, perhaps made up of about a hundred or so, gathered in the dining hall. They had their fill of appetizers and moistened their lips on honey water. Soon, the man of the hour, Arasin, came to a podium with his goddess besides him. She dressed in beautiful black robes that hugged her flawless figure. The party was full of cheer, screaming in joy at Arasin. What did they call him? Oh yes! Bringer of Peace; Champion of the Village. Oh, what a double meaning."

"M'lord? What do you mea-"

Pyre laughed. "Just listen! I'm almost though with my story!"

"They cheered him on, and eventually, someone stood. It was his dear cousin actually. The man stood and raised his glass, crying out, 'To Cathak Arasin! The bringer of peace! To his future!' Everyone shouted and cried out in agreement and drank. Arasin drank as well. I wonder how the poison tasted. I imagine the scene looked painful; how they all started dying. The fear in their eyes was incredible, what a rush. Some vomited and poured blood from every orifice in their bodies. Others simply collapsed, twitching on the ground as they clung to life. Those were the most fun; with all their last breaths, they cursed my name! Oh! How they screamed in pain, in anguish! What sweet ecstasy to my ears. Arasin and his goddess drank their cup as everyone died around them; they shared his blood and smiled crimson teeth to each other." The guard stammered. Such violence and death! Arasin was truly dead, he had lost all hope.

"By the Drag-" Axos went to say.

"NO!" Pyre screamed as he spun back around. Their travel was almost over as Fallen Tower was in the distance. "You swear to death! Listen to my story! It's so close to the end!" They stopped where they were; Pyre patted his horse and continued, a sadistic grin on his face as he told it. "It was a shame that some were alive. The goddess went to hand him his Daiklave, but he laughed and grinned. "No, no my love. Teeth will do." He smiled again, licking the blood off his teeth, she said so kindly, so tenderly, 'Remember what I taught you, my love, the neck is tender, and do not be afraid to rip the veins.' And so he went to work, one at a time. He took his sweet time as screams of pain filled the air. When he was done, his lover came to him and said with such wisdom, 'You are like a hungry fire, my love, insatiable. I don't think Cathak Arasin is a name that suits you anymore. Can I call you ... Ravenous Pyre? Yes, I believe that name suits you well.' The newly made Pyre laughed and looked about him. 'Yes, yes, Ravenous Pyre. The name has a ring.' They then set fire to the estate. He simply touched the drapes, the cabinets and the furniture with his burning skin and then fled. She said she had to report to her Mistress, and that I should head to Fallen Tower and here we are, so close, and my Goddess is so very near."

Axos listened on in horror, in true horror. He had thought Lord Pyre was wanted; that other Dynasts had burned his home, that he came here to run away: it was all a lie. He took the blade out of his sheath and raised it to his neck. "I'm sorry M'lord, but I see no hope anymore, Lord Arasin. He is dead. I truly hope to find him in the next life. You! You are a monster and I hope you find the death you dream of." Axos slit his neck and spilled his blood on the ground. He slumped over and fell off the saddle and the horse trotted away. Pyre grinned a bit as he dismounted his horse and set to work while the blood was still fresh. He remembered what his goddess told him. "Yes, the neck is tender and don't be afraid to rip the veins." He laughed to himself and indulged.



Art By Sean Fearon

# Top Ten Best Science Fiction Movies

Selected by: *Warped* Editorial Board  
Write-Ups by: John Svitek – Chief Editor.

## 10. *Aliens*

The second movie in Ridley Scott's movie series, this movie presents a story about an alien infestation of a space colony. The aliens themselves had perhaps the best makeup and costume work in any Science Fiction movie.

## 9. *Spider Man 2*

The most recent in the superhero series, this is what all superhero movies should aspire to be - one that involves a real person and his conflicts with his superhero persona. The internal conflict within Peter Parker is what sets this movie apart.

## 8. *Star Trek 2: The Wrath of Khan*

This is the best offering in the Star Trek series of films, and presents a good story. A tremendous plot twist near the end of the movie makes it far better than any put in by M. Knight Shyamalan movie.

## 7. *Spaceballs*

This movie was a parody of a very famous movie which will appear later on this list. Made by Mel Brooks, it is almost certainly the funniest movie in this article. It has so much tongue-in-cheek humor and charm that it was incredibly successful.

## 6. *Princess Mononoke*

The only Anime movie on this list, it is by far the best Anime movie out there. With wonderful animation and a compelling story from acclaimed writer Hayao Miyazaki, this movie

deserves all the attention it gets within the Anime community.

## 5. *The Matrix* (The original)

This is another movie that changed the way movies are made. The movie made by the Wachowski Brothers invented bullet time, the method of extreme slow motion used to heighten an action scene, which has been used ever since.

## 4. *The Nightmare Before Christmas*

This inventive movie by Tim Burton was a claymation musical. The theme of the movie was a departure from traditional movie making, as it was strangely cheerful for a movie featuring walking skeletons and other monsters.

## 3. *The Lord of the Rings Trilogy*

This film, based on the books of the same name by J.R.R. Tolkien, is one of the most epic in this list. The movies won filmmaker Peter Jackson a well-deserved Oscar for best director, as well as best film

## 2. *Back to the Future*

Robert Zemeckis' vision of time travel in this movie, along with the excellent performance by Michael J Fox and Christopher Lloyd, makes for one of the best written and certainly the best acted movie on this list. This movie does almost everything right, and sets the tone for story telling in time travel movies.



And the honor of best Sci-Fi Movie of all time goes to:

# STAR WARS

-Lucasfilms  
(The original Trilogy)

Before 1977, the world of Science Fiction movies was vastly different than the world that exists today. Most flicks were low-budget, cult hits, the kinds of movies that would go on to be labeled "B-Movies." They were generally about some sort of monster or alien wreaking havoc on some city. The "monster" was generally a guy in a very low-grade costume, and the acting was almost always terrible. I would have to say the only movie that broke this mold was 1968's *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

Then came *Star Wars*.

The original *Star Wars*, *A New Hope*, appeared as new filmmaker George Lucas' vision. Never before had there been a story that was so epic. Never before had there been a space battle so well done and so large. And never before had there been such good acting within a Science Fiction film. This was perhaps the most important film series within the Science Fiction universe, as it laid out what was to occur in the future of Sci-Fi movies.

I am going to look at the *Star Wars Trilogy* as one film, as it really is one continuous story that can and should be watched in direct succession. The plot is truly one of tremendous proportions. It tells the story of a rebellion against an evil Galactic Empire, one that is headed by what is probably the coolest bad guy to ever exist, Darth Vader. It tells the story of the Jedi, an almost monastic order of warriors that can utilize the Force, a power over matter itself. There is also a large starbase called the Death Star, an Imperial Space base that can literally destroy entire planets. The plot had been so good on so many levels. It should be noted that the acting for the trilogy was phenomenal, especially from Harrison Ford (Han Solo) and James Earl Jones (Voice of Darth Vader's), both of whom got their starts from *Star Wars*.

The action and special effects were both excellent for its time. There had never been any sort of laser sword fight before, and the lightsaber fights showed the world that such things should appear more often in movies. The movie was genuinely exciting, with something important happening all throughout the movie. The special effects were, for its time, amazing. Though they were merely models against a black screen, they were filmed so well that they seemed like they were real.

This movie series changed the way Science Fiction movies were handled. No longer were they designed to be cult hits, with little-to-no-budget. George Lucas showed the world what Science Fiction should be about, and that money should be invested into these movies. This was easily the most important movie in Sci-Fi history.

Plot – 10  
Action – 10  
Special Effects – 10

**Overall – 10**

**Final Verdict:** Every household should own this trilogy, and it has never been easier to get. If you don't already have it, go out and buy the DVD box set of the original trilogy.

# Bottom Ten Worst Science Fiction Movies

Selected by: Warped Editorial Board  
Write-Ups by: John Svitek – Chief Editor.

## 10. *The Mummy 2*

The prequel to this movie is a fun and interesting story, revisiting many themes of the classic Mummy movies. This film does not follow in suit in the least way. Featuring awful acting, a poor screenplay, and The Rock, this movie was a bust.

## 9. *Dune* (any version)

The novels this movie was based on has been received as some of the best Science Fiction novels ever written. It is a shame that the movies themselves are incredibly boring, and make little sense. I've never stayed awake through any version.

## 8. *Super Mario Brothers*

This movie is another trend-setting movie; unfortunately it is a trend we can do without. This is the first terrible movie based on a video game. With bad acting, possibly the worst screenplay to hit theatres, and just weird decisions in casting, makes this an awful adaptation of an excellent video game.

## 7. *Roller Ball (2002)*

The film is about a futuristic game that only hockey players not good enough to be in the NHL can play. The remake of a classic movie goes horribly awry when the acting is as dismal as this version's is.

## 6. *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier*

The only film series with the "distinction" of having a title on the best and worst movies

list, this movie features a story that makes little to no sense. In the movie they apparently search for God, and in doing so totally break from the Star Trek setting.

## 5. *Jason X*

It's Jason... IN SPAAAACE!!! This movie has a dumb premise, and with equally dumb acting and execution of the action spells doom for the Jason series. (Until Freddy Vs. Jason)

## 4. *Aeon Flux*

This movie based on the Anime version on MTV, (which was excellent) is so poorly edited and acted, that it seems almost like two different movies are shown. One in the beginning, which is ok, and one in the end, which is terrible.

## 3. *Catwoman*

Halle Berry's debut as a leading role in a superhero movie is a major bust. She gives a pretty good performance, however, nothing can save the movie from terrible writing and even worse directing. This movie also lost a ton of money, after it was hyped as the best movie of the summer.

## 2. *The Incredible Hulk*

This is another movie that was supposed to be a blockbuster, but this was not the case. The Hulk is an incredibly boring movie that lost an incredible amount of money, and dealt a sharp blow to the reputation of filmmaker Ang Lee.

And the “honor” of worst Sci-Fi Movie of all time goes to:

# DOOM

Id

Back in 1995 a small video game developer named Id made a video game that would change the shape of all video games to come named “DOOM”. The game, with its unprecedented violence and 3D graphics, was one of the earliest first-person shooters made. The game is still noted as one of the best games to ever come out, and is certainly one of the most important.

Fast-forward to 2005. Two sequels to the game have been made, one in 1997 and another in 2004, and Id is now one of the most influential and successful developers in the world. So it seems like it would make sense to try to make a movie based on this premise. After all, with such a large fan-base, it would seem to be a good idea. I mean, it’s bound to make a lot of money off of these fans, especially if the movie is well written and the special effects are good, right?

Sadly, this was not the case. The movie is bad. On almost all levels, this movie is awful. The plot of the movie is disgraceful. In the beginning of the movie there is absolutely no plot whatsoever. It is literally “kill the bad things,” much like the games. This would have honestly been alright (if the effects and fights were good), but then something goes terribly awry within the script. Halfway through the movie they attempt to insert what seems like a hastily produced plot involving a genetic mutation... or something. The plot is almost completely incoherent going into the end. The character development is, at best, incredibly broken. One of the main characters, “Sarge” (that’s his actual name), played by The Rock (that’s his actual name too), begins as a decently cool military squad leader, one who would take a bullet for one of his team members. His character changes by the end of the movie to a crazed monster that would happily kill all the members of his team to complete his mission.

That brings me to my next part, the action. This is what the movie is supposed to be based around, the action. At points, the fight scenes begin well enough, but it degrades quickly into the worst zombie movie clichés. Much of the movie turns into a chase through dark, tight corridors. The movie just becomes boring. Its only saving grace is an interesting scene that is shot from a first person perspective. Unfortunately, they drag out that idea for far too long, and it ends up getting boring. The action overall is dull, and it serves to make the movie even worse.

The only thing that the movie does somewhat right is the special effects. That, however, seems to be a prevalent practice within most of the movies on this list, as that is the easy part these days. The character models of all the various monsters in the movie are pretty bad. They just look ugly.

I have seen many bad movies in my life, but this one just outdoes all the others. This is truly the king of the crap, the absolute most horrible movie ever made. The plot is nonsensical and just stupid, the action is dull, and though the effects are alright, the character models, the only part of these effects that involve any work or thought, are not good. This is the first movie on this list that has failed on all accounts.

Plot – 0

Action – 0.5

Special Effects – 1

**Overall – 1**

**Final Verdict:** If you have never played any of the games, avoid this one like the plague. If you have, stay away from this movie too. If you absolutely must see this movie, first think about what you are doing, and if you still insist on seeing it, rent it, as you will later regret the decision you have made.

# Morning Final

By Mike Vizzi

On May 31, there was this terrible fire in Truman High School in West Woodport, New Jersey. During the fire, seven students died in a car crash just outside the building. The suspect under custody is accused of deliberately crashing his vehicle into the two other cars with no specific reason - murder without a motive. That's what the papers all said that next morning. Of course, it was a lie. At this point, it's hard to tell what's true, even for me. I saw the Subhuman, and I saw what he did. It was an easy cover-up, since I was the only eyewitness, at least the only one that survived. The rest were dead, whether by the attack itself or at the hands of those who wanted it silenced. Well, I saw it, even though they say I didn't.

It was a morning final; the worst kind. I was jealous of the seniors and juniors who got to have their finals in the afternoon, well rested, but as it would turn out, the amount of sleep I had the night before wouldn't matter. The final hadn't even begun when the fire alarm went off. We knew it wasn't a drill because Truman High never interrupted a final for any reason. I along with most of my peers assumed it was just some kitchen fire. I couldn't help but be surprised when I saw that the entire south wing was engulfed with flames. Ash was quickly filling the air, and every body else ran as fast as they could across the street, away from the school grounds. In the rush, I had dropped my bag; all of my books flung everywhere. By the time I had gathered them all, at least fifty people were already in front of the house on the other side of the road. When the ground under their feet burst into flames, I screamed.

Looking for another exit, I ran towards the school building. The west wing had caught fire already, but if I was careful enough, I could make it from the east wing to the north wing and to safety. I was somewhere in the middle of the east wing when my friend Buck flew down the stairs.

I ran over to him and shook him. His eyes opened. He looked like he was in a trance. A few seconds later, he shouted, "Rick, get out now!"

"I'm not leaving without you. What happened?"

Buck just shook his head. "There's something up there. It's not human. It can't be." He started talking quickly and incoherently.

"You're not making any sense," I said as he slipped back into his trancelike state. Then I looked down at his arm. There was a green stripe on it that looked simi-

lar to a piece of tape, but I could see that it was alive, some kind of parasite, feeding off of my friend. I ripped it off, but it latched itself onto me. I felt my heart shiver.

The most obvious effect was the constant pain, but with the parasite latched onto me, all I could see was a whirl of colors. The blur slowly began to make sense of itself, forming images of a wounded man, and two others leaving him behind. The wounded man died and his corpse was approached by a pair of identical women. One of them held down the body while the other shoved some syringe into his arm. Instantly he shook, and his skin began glowing an eerie blue. For a moment I was inside the man's mind. All emotion was dead to him. All he sought to do was destroy those who had betrayed him.

Suddenly, I saw Buck holding the parasite above my head, ripping it in half. Both pieces of it shriveled as I stood up. "You saw it, didn't you?" he asked. I nodded. He helped me up and we started towards the door to the north wing, but the door flew open and hit Buck in the chest, and it took him a few seconds to recover. The smoke was so thick we could only smell the fire burning. There was only one way out.

"No," said Buck with conviction. "I'm not going back up there."

"It's our only way out!" I protested.

Buck put his hand on my shoulder. "If we go up there, it'll kill us. I'm sure."

"There's no other way," I said, pulling away. He sighed nervously and we began up the stairs.

"There's a fire exit in each of the rooms up there," I said. "We can escape through whichever one he's not around."

"I'm telling you, he's everywhere."

When we reached the second floor, everything suddenly grew quiet. Gone were the loud explosions and crashes so intense elsewhere. I opened a door; the sound of its opening was all that could be heard among the deafening silence.

Behind the teacher's desk the Subhuman sat. I recognized him at once from the vision. His entire body emitted a bluish glow, and he wore a white robe, and a necklace with four cube pendants hanging from his neck. Buck froze with terror. The creature rose and began floating towards us. I don't know if floating is the right word, but he sure wasn't walking. As he approached me, an aura of serenity surrounded my mind. Then he shot his hand through my torso, and his other through Buck's. That's when I knew for sure he wasn't solid at all, since it went right through me like that. Even though I couldn't feel any actual flesh, I felt what the parasite had done before,

except multiplied by a thousand times, except this time I could see the being, and his skin began to peel, each segment of flesh forming a new parasite, all of which clamped themselves to my body. I spread my arms in vain; I couldn't stop him. Desperately I grasped one of the blocks hanging from his neck. Almost at once, the parasites fell from me as the Subhuman retreated slightly. Buck lay on the ground; I knew at once he was dead. The cube in my hand was hot and cold at the same time. I felt a surge of energy the likes of which I had never experienced before, and the object dissolved in my hand. I looked at the window. I could survive if I just took a leap. I knew it.

I threw myself at the glass, and as it broke, I realized gravity was taking no hold of me. The Subhuman followed me through the window's broken shards. I began descending; it seemed whatever effect the cube had had on me was wearing off. I noticed that as I edged nearer to the ground, the sky grew blacker and more ominous. When I finally reached the ground, I ran. I ran faster than I knew I could. It didn't matter where I ran, I just needed to escape. I darted down the road, but before I could turn to the next street, a sleek black car screeched over the asphalt and stopped in front of me. Out of each front door walked a woman. The two were identical down to their pure white glasses. I knew right away that these were the ones from the Subhuman's vision.

"Interesting," said the first.

"He's progressed faster than we had presumed."

"Very interesting."

Then, without another word, each woman reached into her jacket and pulled out a gun. I heard two soft whirs before my antagonist fell to the ground. They began walking towards the fallen Subhuman when I heard the roar of a car's engine nearing quickly. It was a student's. As it got closer, I could see that the driver had six passengers. The second woman waved her hand and the speeding car stopped dead in its tracks. She rolled up her sleeve, revealing a metallic shell around her hand and lower arm. As she clenched her fist, a series of lights appeared on the shining hull of her hand. The car started melting.

As she was finishing her task, her counterpart coolly began discussing how this event would be presented. "A car crash. Careless teen drivers, they should learn to control themselves. In fleeing the fire, they allowed themselves to act foolishly." She took off her glasses and I was shocked to see behind those glowing white glasses, two seas of endless black for eyes. She walked up to me. Rolling up her own sleeve, I

suddenly felt an immense pain unlike that which I had felt before. I collapsed to the ground. "It's too bad the psychological impact of the fire drove you crazy. Your ramblings of subhuman beings and controlling twins, they must have come from the trauma. So sad."

The next morning, I woke up and the bus took me to take the rescheduled final at the middle school, where they were finishing up finals now that the high school was destroyed. The doctor I saw spent the whole night explaining to me how the trauma had created in my mind some dreamt up version of the day's happenings. I know better. I remember how the Gemini women had brought me to the hospital, then left me there on the bed, knowing I was harmless to them. They knew me all too well to think that I'd try to expose whatever conspiracy they had; they knew everything, it seemed. I remember how they used an innocent man's betrayal to turn him into some freak of science. I remember how they were responsible for all the innocent lives lost, for some experiment. I saw the cover-up, and the assault on the school, and the Subhuman. I saw it, even though they say I didn't.



Art By Alyssa Brown

# Story of the Fist

By Sean Fearon

Somewhere in the world there rests a barren plain, red earth and red sky, and clouds blending into the wisps of dust the gusts of wind create. Small, water deprived trees shoot out of the ground as sporadically as the hills do, casting a much sought after shade. In this shade a troop of bandits sit around their campfire, merry and drunk. Among them, under the closest thing to a tent or shelter in the collection of vagabonds, sits a muscle-bound man with a haughty expression, clad in leathers and furs, bones of animals and men alike ornamenting his attire. With his right hand he chews a leg of meat, juices dribbling down onto his chin. It is this man that a set of eyes watches, under a wide brimmed hat and close to the ground.

"Hmm... took me long enough to find you." He whispered to himself. The man wore dark colored clothes complemented by whites underneath. Each piece of his outfit was loose fitting, but never posed a threat of falling off. As he lay on the beaten earth, his slender cane rolled idly back and forth between his fingers. "Now when to -" His thoughts were interrupted by another figure steadily approaching the bandits. "This can't be, I'm sure I've counted all of them present." His thoughts were confirmed as the once lazy guards took up a defensive stance. The figure approaching them was slim, with the exception of one overwhelming feature, the gigantic metal fist attached at her elbow. In reaction, the observer rubbed his eyes. "Can I really be seeing this?"

"Halt!" One of the three guards shouted. Immediately the woman stopped. Her head was pointed to the ground, but now it rose as did her pupil-less eyes. She wore tightly bound wraps, and was covered in vital areas by armor plating. The flesh on her body was almost as pale as her white eyes. Her hair would fall to her shoulders if it was not for the sharp curve upward, and it was of a light blonde color stained with streaks of dried blood. Her right arm was wrapped completely by bloodied bandages and on her left was the giant metal arm, the fist stained permanently red with the blood of enemies. Instantaneously one of the guards screamed and fled back towards the now curious group of thieves by the fire. "G-Gauntlet!?" another stuttered. "Not so brave as stupid," his partner replied.

"What?" He asked, as though everything was fine.

"T-that's G-Gauntlet.... she's going to kill us all!"



"Are you daft? She's only a girl!"

"No girl is she! We have t -" The man's sentence would have been finished, had his head not exploded in a sudden burst.

"My God!" he said with a look of awe. The headless body fell to the ground with a thud, a metal fist in its place. In a swift movement that seemed unnatural for its size, the giant gauntlet swung sideways, shattering the remaining guard's ribs in an explosive uppercut.

"Spectacular," the observer said, raising from his position more now to get a better view. The small encampment was abuzz, brigands fumbling for their guns and swords alike, some froze, some tried to run, those who did were stopped or killed by comrades. The girl known as Gauntlet proceeded to walk slowly forward eerily balanced for the amount of weight on one side. "She is an amazing sight." There was a rush of movement, and Gauntlet sprinted forward, two, three, thieves fell in small collections of pitiful resistance. From the distance the man could see the swing of a sword make contact with her weapon. The sword clanged its death shriek, and shattered upon contact, sending the tip flying backwards into a partner. The camp was in an uproar. The hat wearing man was standing now, leaning on his cane for comfort more than support, smiling as he watched orders being flung back and forth. It seems like a consensus was reached, novice thieves charged forward, oblivious to the over all plan. Combat-hardened fighters fell into makeshift ranks and they attempted to use their one advantage over the woman - numbers. "It won't work."

Gauntlet walked forward with an unwavering stride, knocking away foes to the land of the dead with barely an effort. Left and right, enemies fell on both sides. A collection of disorganized and pistol wielding targets raised their weapons and fired shots in quick succession. With a grunt, shockwave after shockwave compressed against each other, finally unleashing in one massively powerful release of force. The bullets heading in her direction fell to the ground, flat and round as coins. The shockwave itself continued, and just before reaching the group of cowering gunmen, it dissipated into the air. Realizing that he was not dead, one of them slowly raised himself up, but it would have been better that he had not, as he was able to witness the woman already on them, one punch collecting them in a heap of corpses.

"I told you..." Even as he said this, the last of the bandits were disposed of.

Now, only a small handful of the best trained remained along with the leader. Rifles aimed and they fired one after another, a relentless tide of bullets poured toward the girl. "Oh man -" the observer adjusted his hat in discomfort, "I doubt even I could survive that." However, the recent events unfolding before his eyes led him to lean forward on his cane almost to the point of falling. Whether it was because of the poorly aimed shots, the behemoth of a fist impeding their path, the girl's uncanny speed, or a combination of all three, Gauntlet emerged from the hail of steel and iron unscathed. Like a wolverine she descended on her prey, blood splattered in all directions, until only two remained face to face.

Still haughty, although enraged, the ex-gang's boss laughed.

"Girl! You've killed half of my men!" He laughed again. "I'd ask you to join me but I already know the answer... you bounty hunters, more selfish than the lot of us!" Looking around, the man had realized he was referring to dead bodies. "Well 'er I'd guess so," he said, regaining his composure. "So lass, you're going 'ta have 'ta die, and there is one that you haven't taken into account." The man's hands slid backwards behind him, Gauntlet watched him impatiently. They emerged now covered in ornate fighting gauntlets, not as large as the girl named after the weapon, but large nonetheless. "I've got two, an' you've only got one!" The bearded man leapt into battle, fists flying. For the first time, gauntlet braced herself and spoke.

"There's one thing you haven't taken into account," she said releasing the tension built up in her left arm, and the fist thundered forward. "You're WEAK!" In an eruption of colliding strengths, the man screamed as his fists and arms gave way, breaking over and over again until he lay as mangled as the underlings beside him. Somewhere a few yards back, the body of a guard pounded the ground from freefall, with a thud of finality. Further in the distance, a dark cloaked man in a hat muttered a phrase of awe or two. It was this man that gauntlet's head now faced, a frighteningly fierce expression on her face. "I see you, and you've seen me." She turned fully around to face him now. "That means you must perish."

Eyes widening under the comforting shade of his hat, the man stepped backwards in realization of how engrossed he was with the battle. He regained his composure immediately, and tipped his hat further over his eyes.

"I'd rather like to live, Miss Gauntlet," he said, extremely casually with regards to the situation. "I'll just be on my way, if you would." He turned, and set off back

towards the nearest city.

“No.” That was all the response he got, aside from a whooshing sensation and a cloud of dust searing past him. Gauntlet has closed the gap between them at an alarming rate. With a pre-natural sense of awareness and unexpected athleticism, the cloaked man almost flew into a slow and graceful back-flip, limbs trailing behind him carelessly. Had he not performed such a feat, the gray-black fist would now be occupying the space many of his vital organs once had.

“Please now Miss. I’ve heard all the tales about you, and I’d like to leave in one piece.” However, inside he felt a creeping fear that he may very well end up in the same state as her previous victims, and thus he raised his cane defensively.

This time, the blood-soaked girl did not even grant him a response, but merely swung again. His bare feet met the ground in a backwards hop, passing just out of range of the gargantuan fist intending to maul him. Now was not the time for words, as such distractions would likely get him killed. One unusually fast punch after another, he evaded the blows, either deflecting them with the side of his cane, or giving away his ever decreasing ground in order survive. Each attack fatigued him more, while the girl assailing him seemed un-phased. Eventually, the hat-wearing man’s luck wore out, as his last leap had pressed him rather firmly against a tree.

“This is going to hurt, isn’t it?” he asked, the sense of fear nearly overwhelming him. The gauntlet wielding girl said nothing, but drew back her fist. Once again, she released the tension built up inside her, and the fist moved forward in less than an instant, making deadly contact with...the cane? The man’s cane shot upwards with equally fast speed, and now the tip of the comparatively tiny shaft miraculously held the death-dealing weapon at bay. And although the man smiled confidently, his arm muscles convulsed and spasmed from the sheer pressure forced upon them. His back pressed painfully against the tree and it, having the force of the punch transferred to it, shattered into hundreds of pieces, sending the man flying into the debris. Gauntlet allowed the broken branches to fall down upon her, unscathed; she merely waited until her target could be seen again. The man emerged weakly from the wood shards, and had no time to properly react with the speed of another punch flying at him. Smiling widely at the success of his feign, he twisted sideways unexpectedly. His cane swung almost haphazardly following his momentum and... passed harmlessly inches from Gauntlet’s cheek. Or so it seemed. In a line following where the cane had passed, an extremely clean wound tore open, issuing forth its share of blood. “*So she does bleed,*” he thought, amazed at his success. Gauntlet’s thoughts to this occur-

rence was as shocked as his, but she tried to outwardly show this as little as she sent an enraged punch at him. This time however, he was far away and somehow, standing completely balanced on the tip of another tree.

“Never in my life have I fought someone as powerful as you!” he said jovially, even as she closed the distance. “My name is Tenee (Ten-A).” She was only a few feet from him. “And it has been my pleasure to meet your acquaintance. Farewell Miss Gauntlet, I’ll be watching you!” As the mysterious fist collided with the tree and sent forth splinters into the sunset scene, Tenee disappeared within the folds of his cloak, leaving only the smallest shred behind, and the echoes of his voice. Gauntlet paused, waiting for the pieces to settle, glowering at the dark scrap of cloth. Looking across the horizon she wiped away the blood from the wound that was no longer on her cheek, and narrowed her eyes.

“Tenee...” The name was now committed to memory.

Elsewhere, that very man hid unseen in a bush, high atop a plateau, only barely able to see Gauntlet’s frame.

“An interesting challenge she is. I believe I’ll follow her.” And again he disappeared into air itself.



Art By Sean Fearon

**W**

**A  
R  
P  
E  
D**



Art By Alyssa Brown

*Alyssa*

# Creed

By Michael Vizzi

The pipe system was massive and intimidating. The waterways seemed to stretch on infinitely. With the energy for the lights cut, Vincent Dante could see nothing that his own flashlight and those of his accomplices shown upon.

He was in the old water transport systems of Creed, the land of tolerance, or so they claimed. And that was what Dante believed, that is, until they killed Greg. Greg had seen a man murdered with his own eyes, and when the officer decided to accept the killer's reasons, Greg's mind was wiped for disagreeing.

That was something else about the Creedians; they never truly killed. They wiped your mind, turned you into nothing more than a piece of flesh. The prisons were full of people who had been wiped. They would sit there, for years, not making a sound. With the only people who had seen the flaws of Creed incapable of thought, who would so much as give the notion that Creed was not as it appeared?

*Not everything can be justified, said Dante to himself. They'll see soon enough.*

His team beckoned Dante to their ship. When the waterways had been in use, they were the most common means of transport in the whole nation. As such, they became extremely wide and deep as one went through them, and some kind of underwater vessel was necessary to travel them.

The ship was not a submarine by conventional standards, with all its complexities, but it resembled one and worked similarly, and they referred to it informally as the sub. He followed his crew in through the sub's hatch. Inside, he saw that their commander, Lynnette Freya, was waiting for them. She restated the mission's main goals, but Dante's mind was elsewhere. Things had moved quickly since Greg had died. Not long afterward, he had met a man who taught him that Greg had been a member of the Resistance, a small rebel movement working to destroy the totalitarian state that Creed had become. He jumped at the chance to get his friend's revenge, and joined the Resistance immediately. By some chance his arrival coincided with the planning of the largest manned assault the Resistance had ever organized. Now that the waterways were officially out of use, the rebels would use them to gain entrance to the Creedian capitol undetected at the most opportune moment: the National Creedian Assembly. There would be no one suspecting such an attack; they would

bring that place to the ground, and with it most of Creed's leaders. The ones that survived would be completely without resources to fight their war against the neighboring countries of Atlantice and Ultimatum. This assault would ultimately cripple the nation. The Resistance's strike force was divided into three teams, each run by one of the organization's leaders. Dante hadn't thought of going with them at first, since he had none of their training, but they claimed they needed all the help they could get. He would learn, anyway.

"Of course, for now we don't need the sub," Freya said to the team. The team was made up by the following members: Matt Zephyr (Freya's second in command), Samuel Kidd, Frank Applegate, Tony Michaels, and, of course, Dante himself. "The waters are too shallow. We'll be moving on foot. I'll be keeping the sub in microstorage until then. Everybody out!" She climbed out of the hatch, and the rest followed her. After she had shrunk the ship and put it in her microstorage box, she signaled for the team to follow her. They would have to keep silent, lest the Creedians detect them.

They had been traveling for nearly half an hour when Dante heard Freya's voice whisper into his headset, "Damn, there's not supposed to be a fork in the waterway. My blueprints are messed up. I'll have to message Fawkes." Fawkes was leading another party through one of the other waterways. Quickly, Freya hit a few keys on the computerized armband she and the rest of the Resistance members wore, typing a message to Fawkes about their situation. No more than a few seconds had passed before they heard a loud hissing noise. Freya cursed loudly. "That was stupid of me. Of course they'd intercept that transmission. Everybody, move fast! There's water deep enough for the sub not far ahead." They all ran, the hissing noise getting louder as they progressed. Finally, Freya opened the sub into the waters, and they jumped through the hatch.

"How are we situated, Matt?" she asked frantically, sitting down at the table in the middle of the corridor.

Matt shook his head. "Applegate and Michaels are missing. We must have lost them in the tunnels."

"How could I let this happen?" Freya spat at the floor. "Well, we'd better get a move on. If they're dead, we'll be too soon enough, too." Matt sat down at the control console and the ship submerged.

After a few minutes, Freya buried her face in her hands. "A thousand missions

and I screw up on the one that matters." She was interrupted by a beeping noise coming from Matt's console.

"You'll have to deal with that later," said Matt quickly. "I'm picking up something on the radar. They're moving fast." Freya understood. Immediately she palmed a panel on the wall, and three openings appeared, one on either side of the ship and one on the floor.

"Kidd, you take the one on the left, Dante, right." She was assigning them to their weapons' consoles. "Through the door you'll find a ladder that'll bring you up to your console. You'll be on a slant to the ship, but with the artificial gravity, you won't even feel it. Don't worry Dante, they're pretty simple systems, you'll be able to use it easily. I'll take the bottom one, neither of you is trained in that kind of reversed gravity in case the artificial fails." Obviously, her console was upside-down relative to the ship.

Freya was right; the console was pretty much self-explanatory. If he swiveled the console, the weapons would turn, and he could move the trajectory up or down by tilting backward or forward. He hooked his headset up to the system and a read-out on all data available to the sub appeared in front of his left eye. "It's coming your way, Kidd," said Matt into the headsets. "Wait, I'm picking up another, look out, Dante!" He swung his chair to see whatever it was attacking the ship. It was huge and squidlike, and moving faster than anything he had ever seen before. He positioned the cannon and fired a missile at it. It hit, and they heard a scream over their transmitters. It was a scream of pain, but whatever it was kept moving. Dante grabbed the microphone on his headset, "Freya, it's coming your way." He heard one of Freya's missiles fire. When it came back into Dante's view, it was moving less quickly. He pulled a lever, switching to a heat-seeking missile, which hit head-on, freezing the hostile creature in its tracks. As it sank, Kidd started shouting, "I see five more!" Since they had already dealt with one of the creatures already, they knew how to handle these. In the end, they completely destroyed all but two of them, but even those two were mortally wounded. They all climbed back down into the main chamber of the ship.

As all four of them sat down around the table (Matt had docked the ship against one of the waterway's walls), Freya commended their work. "Good job out there, team."

Matt scratched his head in agreement. "Yeah, we obliterated all but two, and



put a huge dent in one of them. The other two were dying too. I heard the screams over my headset."

Freya closed her eyes thoughtfully. "Whatever those things were, the Creedians knew they were there."

Kidd nodded. "They led us down here. Somehow they got into our data and messed around with our blueprints so that we'd end up with those...those things."

"They set us up to fail," said Matt as he turned, going back to his console.

"If Creed knew of our plans, then they probably got to our two other crews as well," said Dante. "For all we know, Fawkes' and Mezzo's crews could already be dead."

Nobody spoke for a while, until Freya turned towards Matt. "Do you think we can get out of here?"

Matt nodded halfheartedly. "Possibly, but I've just picked up on something interesting. Do you remember those screams we heard every time we hit one of those creatures?" They did, the screams had been loud. "The computer's been analyzing the sounds, trying to make some sense of them. As it turns out, played at the right speed, with the right decryption, they are messages, in Atlantian." Dante was taken aback. How did anything of the country of Atlantice gain passage this deep into Creed?

"Those weren't animals, then," said Kidd.

Freya continued, "They were ships..."

Dante noticed a flashing panel on the wall. He pressed a button near it, and a message appeared on it. Freya typed some sort of decryption into her armband, and she saw that it was from Fawkes.

While reading it, her eyes widened. "What is it?" asked Dante.

Freya blinked a few times. "He says his crew and Mezzo's are already at the capitol." She shook her head. "The idiots. The Creedians have set them up, too. They've probably set up an entire phony capitol building. No doubt it's laced with explosives, or crawling with soldiers, or..." Her voice trailed off. "We need to get to them, somehow."

"I hate to break it to you," said Kidd weakly, "but we used up a lot of energy against the Atlantians. Plus, we have no idea as to where exactly this 'fake capitol' is."

Matt thought for a moment. "The Creedians probably think we're dead at this point. After all, they don't know about the weaponry on our sub, it's relatively new. As far as they're concerned, we no longer exist."

Freya tilted her head to the ceiling. "So, if we were to somehow make it to

Fawkes and Mezzo, we'd be able to take the Creedians completely by surprise."

"The question is, how do we get there?" asked Kidd.

"I think," said Dante, "that we should pay our friends the Atlantians a little visit." He turned to Matt. "After all, you said it yourself. You heard screams coming from the last one. If those screams were just their voices, then it could very well mean that they're still alive, and their ship is still functional!"

A look of excitement crossed Matt's face. "Once they know we're working against Creed, they'd be glad to help us. God knows they'll do anything they can to bring down those Cretins," he said, deliberately mispronouncing 'Creedians.'

Freya stood up. "Everybody to your consoles, and put all your energy into the shields. We're heading down."

To be continued...

## *Another Girl, Another Planet*

*By Richard Lubrano*

"Come on boy, this is the last walk you'll ever have on this earth. Show a little smile," said the guard. As I walked down the stairs to my execution, I felt the walls of the prison for the last time. The prison walls felt colder than the iceberg that sunk the Titanic. Every step, another prison mate screamed for his innocence. Yet, I forgot my horrible fate and the lifeless cell. I thought, how did I get myself into this mess?

I was in a slump, like almost every high school kid was. But, let's move on from this point of mine, which gave me a ton of heartaches and no girl friends.

There she was - the girl I had a crush on for three years. Her name was Heather. She was standing on the lunch line, with her blue eyes. It was fifth period lunch and I had worked up the courage to ask her out. I swear her hellos in the hallway felt like songs from God. I walked up, used my cocky little charm, and said, "Hey what's up Heather?" She replied in that amazing voice of hers, "Hey Jack, nothing too much. What's going on with you?"

I froze for five seconds and said in a high pitched voice, "Nothing, just hanging around." I had stumbled on my words. It was as if I fell down the stairs, while talking to her. She said, "That's nice."

"Yeah, it's ok I guess. Well the reason why I came here is to ask, if you would

go out with me Friday night." I was sweating more than a jock in full pads on a humid ninety degree summer day. She said, "Sure I'd love to." And that's when I thought things had turned sunny for me. Without knowing the events that would come from knowing this girl, it would change my life forever.

2 months, 16 days and 2 hours later!

"Jack we need to talk! Meet me at my house after school." She said in a tone, in which a nurse would say if your loved one was in trouble or hurt.

After school I walked by myself to her house. I knocked twice. She opened the door and told me to follow her, to her room. She sat me down on her bed and said, "I'm sorry Jack, we have to break up. This is my last day on this planet." I was confused. Not at the fact that we we're breaking up, but that she said it was her last day on this planet.

I stood up and said, "What do you, mean, *it's your last day?*" She made me sit again and told me something I had never heard in my life. She said in a worried voice, "I love you Jack." She sighed and went on. "I'm not a human girl. I'm a girl from another planet. And when we girls turn a certain age, we are sent to different planets to gather information about all living things around the universe. When we gather enough information, we leave the human bodies and go back to our home planet. Well in two minutes I have to leave." I was stunned that I had gone out with an alien for so long and didn't even know it.

So I said, as calmly as I could, "Alright, I'll wait with you until you leave." She told me how she got into a human body and what happens to the body when she leaves it. After she was done, in a matter of seconds she cried and said "good-bye" and left her human body.

I thought that losing her was the worst thing that had ever happened to me. But I was dead wrong. She had told me that when she leaves the body, the body will lose all functions and start to decay in time, like regular human bodies do.

Then as I thought my nightmare had started to die down, her mother opened the door and said one of those happy little sayings, like on those happy little sitcoms, with the oh-so-happy families. However, her mother's happy, cheery smile changed to a dreadful, gloomy face in a matter of seconds I was amazed.

She looked at me with guilty eyes, and then looked at her daughter lying on the ground. After a minute of her mother looking back and forth, she broke the

silence by screaming at the top of her lungs. "You little punk! You killed my poor, little, innocent baby girl. How dare you have the nerve, to wait for me to see her dead like this! THAT'S IT! I'm calling the police."

2 Years, 11 Months and 5 Hours later!

Well, we were right about here in the beginning. I was, handed cuffed and dragged to my permanent fate, in a prison. It was full of non-caring serial killers, laughing at my fate. The guard dragged me into a white room, which was filled with members of Heather's family and friends. In the middle of the room was a hand made chair with wires and a big pot on top of the chair. The guard strapped me in, and as he did this I looked and saw Heather's parents. Her mother was tearing for joy that I was going to die, like her daughter. Yet her father still had a confused face, as if I had killed his daughter right in front of his face.

The guard put the helmet on my head then, gave a moment of silence. I thought it was a miracle from God. What I saw next stunned me - I saw Heather! She blew me a kiss, and said, "I love you."

I turned to the guard and screamed with all my might. "There she is, right there next to the door." For a brief moment I stared into the guards eyes with innocence. I turned back around, just as all her family and loved ones did. For a second I couldn't see anything because all of the people were standing up to see if I was telling a lie. In my amazement, they all turned back around with the most angered faces I had ever seen.

I had looked at the doors after every one was seated and cried. I was going to die for no crime, no murder, nothing. As I looked into her mother's eyes, I saw her give the signal to the guard. I prayed for someone to help me, but I guess God was a little busy that day. I could hear the footsteps getting farther and farther away. And I took one long breath and wished it wasn't going to be my last. The guard looked back at Heather's mother and pulled the switch.

The End



*Grim*  
Art By Matt Peterson

# Controller – Part 1

*By Michael Vizzi*

His eyes shot open. Where am I? What happened? He struggled to his feet. His mind was in a daze. Why can't I think straight? Why can't I remember?

"Andy," he muttered, and in his bewildered state he began twisting his head around, eyes darting around the cluttered room. The room belonged to his father, the engineer. Computers and wires covered the floor and desks; the room usually wasn't like this. All of the extra wires and devices were specifically for the project he had been working on at the time: the project for Andy.

Suddenly, Chris remembered what had happened, and began searching more frantically than ever, until he finally found his brother. Andy's body was flung across an old computer in the corner of the room, rubble from the ceiling covering all but his head.

He began pulling the garbage from his brother's body. Not that it made much difference if Andy's body was harmed; the cerebral palsy he'd had since birth made his head the only limb of use.

"Come on Andy, you've got to pull through, you can't..." He longed to hear his brother's soft, high-pitched voice. But Andy didn't stir. "Come on!" he shouted at his brother. "Wake up!" He started shaking him, but it was no use; his little brother was dead.

He staggered back into a chair, and tugged on his hair. "How could I let this happen?" he screamed. He tried to think back; he and Andy had been testing out Dad's new project, an interface that directly connected the mind with a computer terminal. Dad had been working on it since Andy was diagnosed.

After that, Chris's mind was a blur. He remembered something about offering to test the headgear first before Andy used it...then, a flash of light. Next thing he knew, he was stumbling around the workroom in an almost intoxicated stupor.

Chris picked up a piece of rubble on the floor and threw it at a nearby computer monitor, shards flying everywhere. "You did this to him!" He picked up piece after piece until there wasn't a working machine in the room. Sometime in Chris's thrashing, the ceiling lights started glowing brighter and brighter, until they burst, and some of the sparks landed on a wooden shelf, which burst into flames.

Chris snapped back to reality. "No..." he began, looking at the flames. He was

thinking clearly again, and he realized what the scene looked like: a crazed teenager standing over his brother's dead body in a room filled with broken technology that was slowly burning to the ground.

"I can't stay," he whispered. He looked to his brother's body one last time before the smoke from the flames obscured it. "I'm sorry."

He broke the window and jumped out of it, running down the street, not once looking back.

Chris sat down against a brick wall and noticed there was something in the pocket of his jeans. He pulled it out; a remote control. "More technology," he mumbled before throwing it to the ground in anger. "Things like you killed my brother!" As if responding to Chris's emotions, the small black remote shook noisily before bursting open. He stared at the shards on the ground, becoming stressed. He quickly stood. "What just happened...no, it couldn't have happened...it's just a remote..."

He backed up into something cold in the middle of the wall: an ATM. He studied it for a moment, piecing together the events that had happened within the last few hours. He had tested out a device that linked electronics directly to the brain. Twice since then electrically charged devices had manifested his emotions. Everything began falling into place.

He looked at the screen of the ATM. "If I'm going to be on my own, I'll need some money." No sooner had he said that, the lights on the machine lit up. Letters and numbers flew across the screen until a twenty-dollar bill came out of the cash slot. Quickly another one followed, and another, until the ground at Chris's feet was covered with money. The machine stopped, and the word "RESTOCK" flashed on the screen. He scooped up as much of the money at his feet as he could, and ducked into a nearby alleyway before anybody could see him.

"I control them," he muttered. "They do whatever I want them to." Suddenly, he was disgusted with himself. "No, I can't take this...I'm not that kind of person." His mind was flooded with thoughts, and he threw himself onto the pile of money, aches digging into his head. The fact that he could control machines wasn't the cause of the stress; what scared the life out of him was the fact that he liked it.

The bank teller looked at Chris suspiciously. "So you say you want to start an account with us, boy?"

"Yes sir," he replied immediately.

"Just how old are you?"

"I turn seventeen in a week."

The man raised his eyebrow. "You realize, of course, that you need parental permission to open an account at this bank."

"My mother couldn't come, but she gave me this," said Chris as he pulled a crumpled piece of paper from his pocket. "It basically covers everything."

The man eyed the signature at the bottom of the page. All those times I forged her signature in middle school finally paid off, he thought with an inward grin.

"How much do you want to deposit?"

Here came the tricky part. "About fourteen thousand dollars sir."

The teller raised his eyebrows. "I'll be back in a moment," he said, getting up and walking into the back, letter in hand.

They know who I am, he thought. How long have I been on the run? Six...seven weeks? I should have been more careful.

In the time that Chris had been away from his home, he had taken on a sort of secret life; everybody in the state knew the story of the insane boy who could control machines. How many robberies had Chris made in the last week alone? Four? It's not that he wanted to; every time he stole something, he felt awful; he made sure never to kill anybody. That was his one rule.

Behind the teller's desk was a tinted window, and through it Chris could see the vague outline of the man he had spoken to holding a phone. He called the cops, Chris thought, suddenly more worried before. Slowly, he began to back up from the desk and towards the door. "Hey you there!" shouted the bank teller, opening the window. "Stay where you are!" Chris broke into a full-out sprint towards the door, but it was too late; he heard police sirens.

"There's got to be a back door," he thought hastily, and dashed towards the back. All he arrived at was a steel wall.

"We have you surrounded!" came a steely voice that made Chris jump. Turning around, he saw that a police officer was standing not three yards away from him.

"You...you've got the wrong guy, I swear!"

The cop's stern expression didn't waver. "See how that holds up in court."

"No," Chris whimpered, searching the room with his eyes. There's got to be some way, he thought to himself. He saw two security cameras above his head; they



definitely knew what he looked like now, and the tapes would be used against him even if he got away.

"The cameras," he said, realizing his only escape. He began walking towards the cop.

"Stay right there, punk!" the officer shouted, his voice beginning to waver. "Stop right there or I'll shoot!"

Chris was a mere foot away from the cop now. Everybody in the bank heard a high-pitched whirring noise coming from the back of the building. Chris smiled, saying "Goodbye," as the two cameras above shot out one string of electricity each, both of them hitting the officer, who promptly collapsed.

To make sure the man would stay down, forever if need be, Chris willed the cameras to shoot out one last charge of energy, frying the man on the ground. Swinging his arm around, he made each of the tellers' computers explode, and as smoke clouded everyone's vision, he fled. He heard a few gunshots through the fog, but it didn't matter; he was safe.

He walked down the street, no longer afraid to show his face. "I am above these mere mortals," he muttered as a television on display in the store window to his right began to buzz, projecting his voice down the street. "Do you hear me, people? I'm not afraid of you wretched lower beings anymore. Let it be known that from this moment onward, I am the only power that exists. But please, attempt to resist me. It makes everything so much more fun!" With that, the screens exploded, and the store was lit ablaze.

No longer was he concerned with keeping his victims alive—and yes, they were his victims, and he was the victimizer. From now on, he would be playing by his own rules, not by some arbitrary system that tried to have a hold over him. After all, why should one with gifts such as his own abide by the rules of these pathetic masses?

"I can think of a few good reasons," said a small voice inside his head.

Chris stopped dead in his tracks. He looked around; nobody was standing there, they'd all fled into their homes. Not that it would have made a difference if there were any; he knew very well whose voice it was. Impossible as it seemed to him, Chris had heard his brother's voice.

To Be Continued...

# ARM BOT

*By Michael Vizzi*

Having a robot living inside your arm has its downsides. Oh sure, if you ever need to change the channel on the television, that's a whole lot easier, and it makes an iPod obsolete, but there are times when it really just gets on your nerves.

For example, last Tuesday, I was eating lunch in the cafeteria, when all of a sudden it starts beeping and whirring, and doing all those crazy things arm-robots tend to do. One thing I've learned is that Eddie – that's his name – can't seem to accept the fact that he can't eat food. So, like always, my arm flew across the table and slammed into Ralph's lunch bag, as its contents flew off in every direction.

"Sam," said Ralph, wiping a bulbous glob of pudding from his brow. "You've got to get Eddie under control." Hoping to avoid any more trouble, I got up from the table and headed towards the library, Eddie buzzing unhappily all the way.

"Okay buddy," I said, lowering myself onto a chair facing a computer screen. "What's your problem?" I pulled up my left sleeve and out of the small one-centimeter hole in my arm came a tiny metallic eye. It turned to the monitor and started making frantic noises as it retracted inward, a small robotic hand filling its place, which made a pointing gesture towards the monitor. "You want me to log on? Eddie made some clicking noise approvingly. "All right. I can't see why, though."

So, I logged on to the computer. After about twenty minutes, it was done loading. "This had better be quick," I muttered as my left arm (against my will, mind you) landed on the keyboard, and the silver hand protruding from the arm began hitting keys at a rapid pace. Suddenly, an array of windows flashed across the screen, most of them seeming to be camera shots near the school. In each of them several cars with "FBI" printed across the sides were seen heading towards the school building. "They're coming here?" I asked. "But why?"

Eddie blurted something loudly. "They're after you. But why?" I had only told a few people about Eddie; Ralph, Seymour, Al, my parents, my brother, the assistant principal, the governor of Utah, my estranged pen-pal in Nicaragua...how could it have gotten out? Another window appeared atop the others. This one looked like a newspaper from about four years earlier. The article presented on the screen was that of an alleged flying saucer hitting ground in northern Pennsylvania. I began studying

the article seriously, before I noticed the title of the newspaper *The National Conspiracy Theorist*.

"Eddie, you little bugger, this is all some kind of joke." However, with a click of another button (and another swing of my arm), I saw video footage of the enormous ship crashing into the ground. Moments after the smoke cleared, a miniscule bug-like object that I couldn't quite make out crashed through some kind of a window in the ship's side. It let out a buzzing noise that I knew all too well.

"Wait," I said, still perplexed. "Four years ago, that's when I woke up that day with you in my arm! There was a note on my mantle, saying that you were a beta product from the Kentucky Robot Company..." Then, as if a light bulb had lit up in my head, I had an epiphany. "That was all just a clever ruse, wasn't it? You...you're some kind of alien robot! And now the government wants to take you away and cover this story up!"

Eddie whirred sheepishly as he retracted his arm. "Wait a minute," I said, as another window showed itself, this time displaying a transcript of a phone call within an FBI building. "They want to...expose you?" I raised one eyebrow at the computer. "Wow, times sure have changed since the days of the Men in Black."

Suddenly, a vision crossed my mind. I saw a wonderful plethora of strange creatures and planets, all of them going about their everyday lives with the strangest of technology. Truly, these were the people I belonged with. The moment the vision ended, I knew what Eddie wanted. "You want to escape those FBI agents, so you can get back to this amazing universe!" Eddie let out the robotic equivalent of an exasperated sigh. "Where do we need to go?"

Minutes later, I was running down the street towards a local park (Eddie was sending me directions the same way he had sent me the extraterrestrial vision). However, halfway there I noticed that the road was blocked by two bulky people who seemed to be entirely blue. "Oh no," I gasped, "the Blue Man Group is a part of this treachery as well?" I felt a small electric shock surge through my arm. "Ow! I'm sorry!" After some more guesswork, I deduced that they were aliens of some kind. I was about to ask them how to get to Eddie's planet, when one of them pulled out a very large cannon and pointed it at me. "I'm guessing these aren't friends of yours," I muttered to my robotic companion. Before I knew it, a shot had fired from it and had hit me square in the chest. I suddenly felt the strange sensation that I was made of water; which was weird, because I clearly wasn't. That's when I saw ten of me float-

ing around in the air. Somehow I understood at that point that what that gun had done was separate my molecules and spread them throughout the area. Within a few moments I was my normal self again, but something was different; Eddie was missing. Looking back, I saw that the alien without the gun was holding a small robot resembling a beetle in his hand; I had no doubt that it was Eddie.

“No!” I shouted, as I ran towards the two creatures. “Let him go!” Unfortunately, I stumbled during my run and landed with my face hitting the pavement. It seemed all hope was lost, when, by lucky chance, the other alien happened to trip over me with his invisible third leg, colliding with his accomplice. As they both hit the ground, I picked up Eddie and dashed off.

Finally, I arrived in the park. Eddie scampered up a hill and his eyes began glowing brightly as a tremendously sized steel disk descended from the clouds above our heads. A beam shot down from it to the ground adjacent to Eddie. Before he stepped through, I blurted out, “Let me come too!” Eddie made a very indifferent noise and I joined him under the ray. I expected to be in awe of this alien technology that would allow me to steadily ascend into the ship, but in actuality it took far too little a time for me to really enjoy it.

When we arrived in the ship, I was immediately greeted by a very short red-colored being with an inordinately wide face. It looked at me curiously. “Now just who are you?”

“S...S—” I stuttered. “Sam Obscure. Ed—that robot has been living in my arm for the past four years now.”

The creature’s look turned annoyed as he began pointing a finger at Eddie. “Bad boy! Bad! What have I told you about burrowing into the limbs of inferior beings?” Eddie whimpered silently.

Ignoring the comment about my inferiority, I spoke up. “So...who are you?”

“My name,” said the red man, “is Doctor Ernst VonSchwartzmann.”

I was shocked. “Is that your real name, on your home planet?”

The doctor laughed. “No, don’t be silly. On my planet they don’t bother with stupid things like names. But, you may call me Doctor Ernst VonSchwartzmann if you really want to. Or Doc Von for short.”

“Those blue...things,” I said, not really knowing the right word with which to describe them. “Were they a part of some sort of interplanetary conspiracy to steal your work and use your robot for evil?”

"No, don't be silly," laughed Doc Von. "There are no conspiracies in outer space. Nobody out here likes each other enough to work together long enough to form a conspiracy."

"Oh, so they were working alone?" I inquired.

"No, no, they were galaxy cops, trying to stop my dastardly plans."

My jaw dropped. "What dastardly plans?"

Doc Von's eyebrows (at least, I thought they were eyebrows) rose. "Oh, that reminds me!" he said as he hurriedly clicked a button on his console. Suddenly, the earth reddened, and it looked like every piece of land on earth was at once on fire.

"You put the world on fire?" I shouted, bewildered. Doc Von's brow wrinkled.

"I see your point. Not one of my finer ideas. Oh well." He clicked another button, and the Earth, as well as four other planets I really didn't care about, exploded, and the debris began to gather near the asteroid belt. He walked out of the room.

I stormed through the door after him into, surprisingly, a kitchen. "What? That's it? You just destroyed my home planet!"

Doc Von winced. "Oh...sorry. My bad."

"What now?" I asked, panting. "Are you going to take me to some other planet where I can live out the rest of my life with the other marvelous beings of our universe?"

"Have you been paying attention at all?" asked the doctor. "I'm a fugitive. We're not going anywhere. Ever."

"But..." I stammered, "What exactly am I supposed to do here for the next sixty to seventy years?"

Doc Von shrugged as he opened the refrigerator. "I've got forty thousand different flavors of ice cream from seventy-five hundred different planets."

I paused for a moment. "Grab me a spoon."

# ***The Grand Prix***

## ***Part 3***

*By Kenny Coane*

I couldn't help wondering what Joseph could have meant before he took off. He said, "Bigger and better things are happening here." *Things* that were out of control.

Koto and I were still making our way through the parking lot of the racing commission building, heading towards the ship, preparing to leave. Koto was following close behind me, when she suddenly became anxious. She began looking skyward, as if there was some imminent danger from above. There was a genuine look of worry on my little fox companion's face, and since animal senses are stronger than those of a normal person, I knew something was up.

I stopped, nearly in front of the ship, to look up at our precious chunk of sky that was available to only those buildings at the top most levels of the city. Everything seemed to be okay as far as I could tell. Could this have something to do with what Joseph had said earlier?

Then out from what seemed like nowhere, a hiss like that of static filled the air. The city's communication system came to life. Screens on corners and on video com-links began to show an image. It was as I feared. I knew that logo; whatever's going on has to do with "Dark Death."

"We demand that you surrender the city of Neo-Tokyo to us, or you will be destroyed," said the somewhat garbled voice that came over the communications network. "You will be given 40 minutes to decide what fate you will accept. The following is a demonstration of our power." The com-system then cut out.

Koto, having been looking at the sky this whole time, hid behind me. There was a point of light in the sky, directly above us. It began to grow brighter and brighter. I decided that the racer would be the safest place. So I scooped up Koto, ran over to my racer, the Hyper Fox X, and hopped inside.

A huge energy beam shot down from the point in the sky, and hit the sea right off of the harbor. A small alarm sounded in the cockpit, and the words "Electromagnetic shield activated" came up on the main computer screen. Some sort of shield that looked like a bubble appeared around the ship. This happened just in time too, since it appeared nearly all the machinery all over the city stopped working.

The screen now showed the words, "EMP evaded."

I thought, "Of course, an energy beam that big could trigger an EMP, disabling electronics for a while."

That same static sound from the com-system occurred again, this time much louder, probably due to the EMP messing with the circuits. It looked like the mayor of the city. He was saying that all active independent machinery needs at least a half hour to reset itself after the EMP. Then he asked for everyone's cooperation in the crisis. I wasn't really listening since at that time since I was receiving a message from Pops on the ship's com-link.

"Rick, it's me. I can't believe I got through to you."

"What the heck was that?"

"According to my sources, it appears to have been a shot fired from a satellite cannon. I installed an EMP shield in there a while ago, because you never know. Anyway, somebody has to intercept this satellite and disable it since the military is grounded."

"Can't someone already in space get to it?"

"We tried to triangulate the position of the satellite, but no mobile force is within range, and on top of that, the satellite is extensively cloaked, so we're having difficulty locating it. I have a friend at the Tokyo rail-gun assisted launch center; it should be able to get you in orbit in time."

"Shouldn't that be fried too?"

"No, it's fine since it wasn't an active piece of machinery at the time. Come meet me down there, we have to prep your ship and attach the gun."

Luckily, the Tokyo rail-gun wasn't too far away. I was able to drive my ship directly into the large facility. In the main garage, there were some mechanics working on the capsule that my ship would need to go into to be fired.

I found the crate that contained the gun. Next to it was Pops, who was rushing about. This was a high-powered energy cannon that had two modes. One was for shooting single high-powered rounds, and another for rapid-fire rounds. Pops walked over to me and said, "Get a move on Rick; we have to attach the heavy cannon, and put the ship in the capsule." He opened another smaller crate, marked *ammunition*. "Here, this energy tank should give you plenty of rapid-fire shots, but I don't have a lot of single-shot shells."

"Alright, but it looks like I'll only get a couple of high powered shots."

A couple of mechanics opened the access panel of the nose cone so that they could install the gun. It was a simple pod like attachment, and the only reason why it isn't always connected, is because it is rather heavy, and that would be bad for racing.

"Is that capsule ready yet?" Pops called over to some other mechanics. "We need that G-diffuser to be operating at 100%!" He turned back to me and said, "Since this gun is so powerful, you'd be flattened without it. They're just resetting it because of the EMP." His face changed to having a concerned look on it. "Rick, this is going to be tough, the satellite isn't going to be easy to find, since it's cloaked really well. They seem to have thought of everything."

I confidently replied, "They forgot one thing, that they're directly above *us*."

Meanwhile:

Rick's rival racer, Joseph, is in a small dark room. He is surrounded by monitors. They turn on, and they display the logo of the Dark Death organization. It looks like the letters "D D" with a black lightning bolt underneath.

Nervously, Joseph says under his breath, "This isn't right. I can't let them do this to these people."

A voice boomed over a loudspeaker somewhere, "Your performance is slipping."

Frustrated, Joseph counters, "That new guy, Rick, he's really quite good you know."

"You must be prepared to do what is necessary to be victorious"

"Even if that means killing innocent people?"

"This is a sacrifice that must be made. Now improve, or else."

The screens shut off, and the exit door opens. Joseph walks out in a storm while angrily saying, "All I ever wanted to do was race."

He stops short in the hallway, and a smile creeps over his face. "Let's see what trouble I can start around here."

"All right we're all set. Your ship is loaded in the capsule, which is itself in the rail gun."



Pops asked me, "Are you ready for this? You only have 20 minutes total from now."

"Sure, why not. Let's do this!"

He called out to everyone in the facility, "Stand clear!" He hit a switch at the control panel he was at, and the ground beneath us began to rumble. The hoists at the edges of the facility sprung into action, and the four arms of the cannon barrel telescoped skyward. Other guiding cables made sure that the gun didn't tip over, and were designed to aim the cannon. There was a loud thud, and the arms were completely extended.

I climbed up a small platform that was in place so that I could get into my ship. First, I helped Koto into her seat, and then hopped in myself. The cockpit windshield slid into place, and sealed tightly for space flight.

Different operators who ran the gun came on to the intercom system, and started their final checklist.

"Arms extended – Check."

"Static charge – 100%."

"Capacitor linking cuff – Fully functional."

"Setting target 5 degrees south east – Target locked."

"Rear lock – Disengage."

"Rail gun assisted launch system is armed and ready to fire!" I braced myself for the launch. The gun barrel began to glow a bright yellow color on what must have been some sort of propulsion mechanism.

"Fire!"

Instantly, I was pushed back in my seat. My speedometer was already maxed out, but I could tell that I was still accelerating. Finally the capsule left the gun barrel, and I soared straight up.

It was only after a few seconds that we were nearly in orbit. Near the apex of the launch, the capsule's booster rockets fired, giving a little extra push into orbit. Then the capsule broke away, surprisingly all in one piece. Now I know what it feels like to get shot out of a cannon.

My ship spun a little bit, and I was able to see the capsule begin its reentry. It followed by deploying parachutes to help it float safely down.

I was able to take the control software off of autopilot finally as the engines began to warm up. In space the engines run a bit differently, as the intake props do not activate. There is no air in space, so there is no reason for them to spin. The rears

of the engines were glowing, and the plasma was building up. A control panel on my screen showed that they were nearly done charging up. Even though our momentum from the launch was still carrying us forward, I hit the throttle switch, and the engines kicked in.

I thought to myself, "Funny... according to the calculations Pops did earlier, we should be coming up on it, but I don't see anything. Pops was right when he said that they were cloaked well."

Pops called me from the com-link, "Did you make it up there okay?"

"Yeah we're fine, but I don't see anything. The sensors aren't picking anything up either."

"We're going to try to triangulate it more precisely based on where the last shot was fired."

I glanced at the seat behind me where Koto was sitting. I just realized that she had been very quiet this whole time. Koto was staring out the window, with that same look on her face that she had earlier. She was looking towards our left. I followed her line of sight, but I still didn't see anything.

"Pops, I think Koto sees something, so I'm going to head in that direction."

"Just be careful. Okay Rick? Remember, you only have a few minutes left."

As soon as I turned the ship in the direction Koto was looking in, I saw something. Seemingly out of nowhere, what appeared to be some sort of giant door had opened up. Inside, a gigantic cannon was drawing in energy, charging up. My cockpit's HUD display zoomed in to show the door. It appeared that they were experiencing some sort of internal trouble... Then a ship flew out very fast. The computer displayed a small amount of information on this ship. It was Joseph's.

Another smaller door opened up in what seemed to be complete nothingness. This one appeared to be a space dock. As soon as it opened, several squads of robotic guardian drones appeared, racing towards me. They were all armed and ready to fight. "They must have spotted us coming towards them," I said under my breath.

"These drones are the only things in the way, between us and the satellite. Let's go get them!" I flipped a switch on the side of my display panel, and my ship's heavy cannon opened up. I set the control of the cannon to the front seat, and the firing control program loaded onto my screens. The cannon was set to full automatic mode. On my cockpit's HUD, target locks began to show up around the enemy drones.

I pulled the trigger on my steering wheel, and the cannon opened up a steady

stream of rapid-fire energy bolts on them. One by one, the drone ships were destroyed. Most of them didn't even get to fire a shot, but I was still far away from the cannon.

One of the drones got close and fired a volley of missiles. I performed a barrel roll, and evaded the missiles. After that my cannon got locks on all of the missiles. It rotated around and shot each of them.

I was getting closer to the satellite, but my time was running out as well. I saw that the opening where the satellite's cannon was charging would probably be my best bet at disabling it, so that's where I aimed my ship.

I entered the area where the cannon was through the open sides that I saw from the outside. Internally, it seemed like it sustained a fair amount of damage, as the security turrets were disabled already. "It must have been Joseph's doing," I thought. I switched my gun from rapid-fire mode to the single-shot mode using the control on my display. The software showed that I only had three shots, in this mode, so I had to make sure that they all connected. I used my ship's infrared scanners to determine which points on the cannon would be the weakest, and targeted those. One point was on the cannon's barrel. The HUD read, "TARGET LOCKED."

I pulled the trigger, but I have to admit that was the first time I shot my gun in that mode, since the ammunition is rather expensive and I hadn't had much training with it. There was an enormous amount of kickback from it, and the ship nearly hit the side of the cannon's chamber, but that wasn't the end of it. The satellite cannon began to explode in that area, so I had to swing the ship around and make for a quick exit. My gun swung around in the opposite direction in order to keep the lock on the cannon's base. I fired another shot at the base, and then I raced up the cannon's barrel and finished by shooting my last shot down the cannon's barrel.

My timing was perfect. If I had waited any longer the satellite cannon would have fired and destroyed Neo-Tokyo. Behind me I could see the cannon exploding, as all of the energy that had built up on it escaped from the holes I had blasted in it.

Pops called again, "Rick you did it! You saved the city."

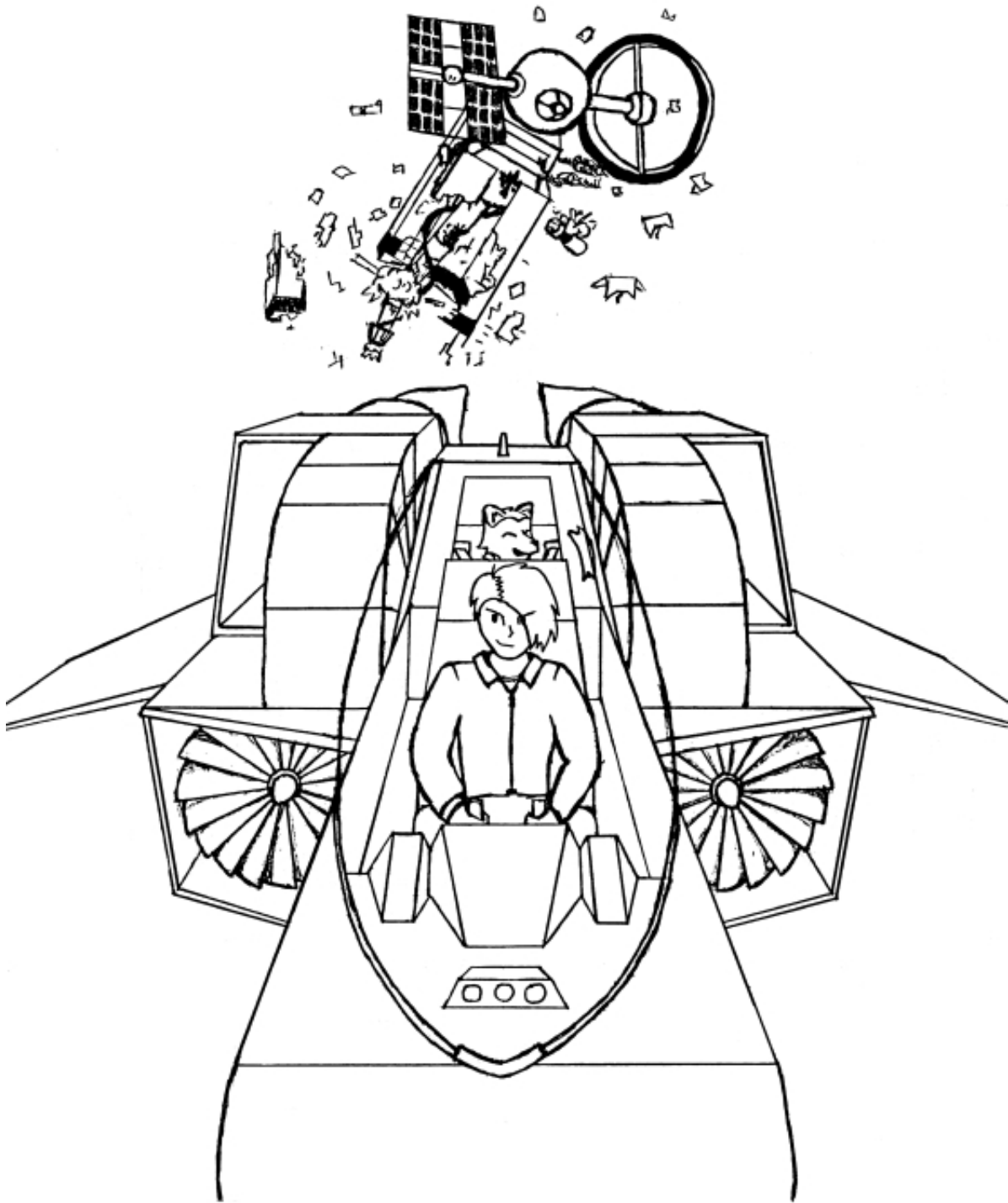
"It's no big deal really, is it?"

"Of course it's a big deal! Oh and by the way, the race here was rescheduled for later on in the week due to that EMP earlier. Are you up for the challenge?"

"Count me in! I'm entering the atmosphere for my reentry now."

"I'll see you when you get on the ground. We have a party to go to and an award for you to receive for your heroism."

"I hope there'll be cake!"



The Grand Prix Part 3 - Art By Kenny Coane

## A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Editing for *Warped*, eh? I don't have much of a story to tell, or at least I don't think I do. I applied (begged Marusevich) for the position late last year, after *Warped 6* was released. Well, the prospect of even having a writing editor at that point was slim, so I hoped for the best and continued on. This year rolled by, and it was announced, much to my chagrin, that there indeed would not be a writing editor. Moving on, I handed in my submissions and carried on with my duties as a member. Unexpectedly our local Che(i)f Editor asked me to be the new Writing Editor. If you're wondering whether or not I accepted well, you probably haven't been paying much attention to what you're reading have you? My first job as editor... ATTENDANCE!!

Wait, what?

Yeah, my prestigious career consisted largely of taking a tally of submissions thus far and who was at each meeting. I did get editor perks, such as taking part in the weekly chalk-board drawings, of which you'll see in the back, and helping compile the Top 10 Best/Worst Movies list. Later on, in the actual editing part of the magazine I got to do at least some of my job. I'm not above admitting that as an editor who wasn't necessary at first, I didn't get to do as much as I expected. Nonetheless, I took my assignments and a number more of them, mainly in the art department. It's been a lot (yes, if you don't know, the proper spelling is A LOT) of fun working for *Warped*. Thanks for a great magazine guys, I'll probably send a submission or two your way next year after I graduate.

All in all, HUZDAH!



Sean Fearon, Writing Editor



Art By Sean Fearon

## ANOTHER LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

To the readers of *Warped*:

As the layout editor, it is my job to create and put together a magazine that is both visually appealing and fun to read. You would think that this job would entail just creating the layout for this magazine. Of course that is part of the process, but this year, as with many others, there was much more work to be done.

First, the cover had to be created. So I came up with a concept that would reproduce well as a photo copy. Since this is our seventh issue, I figured that I should make it 7-themed. This was to follow last year's example of the 6-theme with the hexagon motif that I also worked on extensively. On the cover there are seven arms radiating in a warping pattern, with sevens gradually becoming more "warped" as they get farther from the center.

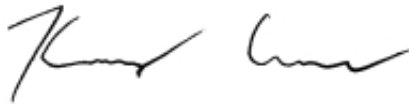
Next, the page layout background had to be created. To tell you the truth, I just did whatever I thought looked good, while keeping it less intrusive. This year I kept in mind the page margins, which was a problem in last year's design. One of my favorite parts of this particular design was the warping circles in the center between the pages.

Then of course the pages, stories, and art had to be laid out. All this and the fact that I was writing a story and creating my own art for this magazine, and scanning and digitally editing art that was submitted, added up to a great deal of work.

This has definitely been one of the smoothest productions, as well as one of the most memorable. This magazine would have been impossible without the participation of all of our members. Good luck to next year's editorial board!

I hope you enjoy this magazine, it was fun to create for you.

Slightly overworked editor,



Kenny Coane, Layout Editor



Art By Kenny Coane

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# WARPED!

The VII<sup>th</sup>



LOVE Peace + DONUTS ♡



HUZZAH!

Soul Collection

It's Just Business  
now give me my \$6,000.



Day ☺



Buh?! - When did Kenny get Glasses? + Became a Super Sajan!?



Bow to my Fatness!

NO HIATUS!



Angry Duck/Monkey

Sean is Sick Today



Running off of Dayquil + Cough drops

More submissions is the only cute

That sux lol!

