



Issue Uno - January 2010

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Musings from Under the Mountain

Jacqui Smith

It is 2010—and I surely don't see any cool spaceships heading for Jupiter! Not even a moonbase—just a tiny space station, not at all like the one in the movie. A bit disappointing, really. I thought about watching "2010" around New Year's Day, but I'm not sure that would have been a good idea. Too depressing.

Of course, it's still possible. The greenies might finally realise that the way to solving the world's environmental problems is to quit looking inwards and trying to persuade human beings to be unselfish (futile exercise); and to look upwards where there is a immense trove of energy and resources. Oh, and a means of solving the problems of climate change by simply blocking incoming solar radiation. If they're really clever, they'll figure out a way to not simply block it, but utilise all that clean energy and get it safely down to Earth where it's needed. And it's always possible that even if the greenies don't convince the governments, then enterprising corporations might see their way to financing the exploitation of space. After all, where there's energy and resources, there's cash. It'll be a huge investment for the one that goes first, but it would pay off—for all of us. And maybe we will get to Jupiter one day... or at least to Mars.

I really am rambling. But isn't that what these editorial columns are supposed to do...? Anyhow, I hope you enjoy the magazine, and my thanks to everyone who wrote me an article, a story, or gave me some artwork. As for those of you who didn't—there's always next issue.

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From the Cramped Office

Steve Litten

It's the start of a new year and we all have resolutions to keep (or break). My main one, in regard the club, is to kick start it back into a semblance of life. Failing that, an undead state that vampires, zombies and other denizens of urban fantasy can be proud of. So I decided to re-launch the club's fanzine (it's called executive fiat, unlike the useless Fiat I owned in the '80s). Bit of a risk, as the "wiki" was supposed to take care of all the fun stuff that a fanzine usually does and more, but after the initial burst of enthusiasm, the wiki withered.

So here it is, the new 'zine, Filled with all sorts of lovely reviews, opinion pieces, and useful info. And to make sure it reflects what the club membership does, I've given the editor, Jacqui, full permission to "shoulder tap" members for contributions. Even that louche reprobate Broderick Wells has been ordered, on pain of a visit from the Sallies, to write a column. And if he can do it, so can you.

So, support the club – write an article. Promote the club – write an article. Help the club – write an article. Help yourself – write something for the 'zine. Caution, Jacqui has full authority to use any and all means to extort an article from you, and that includes descending with Paul in tow. So much for the threats. It's our club, let's get active and do stuff to make it appealing to non-members. That is a presidential decree.



Art by
Elizabeth Tan

Juno of Taris

Fleur Beale

Random House (ISBN 978-1-86941-988-2)

It is the future. Taris is a Pacific island that has been hermetically sealed. A group of 500 people were chosen to colonise it 200 years ago when the outside world was in chaos, and they've been self sufficient ever since.

Juno is a teen who questions everything, and gets people to take a look at established traditions, such as the shaving of every inhabitant's head every week.

This was an excellent read, not surprising as the author always has great stories to tell. This is a book aimed at teenagers but is a interesting read for anyone, having interesting points on how power can be misused and drawing parallels to the Nazi Youth Movement and how it became established in Germany.

This book was a finalist for the 2009 Sir Julius Vogel Awards in the Best Novel – Young Adult category.

Dead Until Dark

Charlaine Harris

Orion (ISBN 978-0-575-08936-5)

This is the first of the Sookie Stackhouse series that "True Blood" is based on. Sookie is a waitress in the Southern US who hears thoughts and is considered 'odd'. Vampires have recently come out of the closet and are part of society. Sookie meets one who becomes her boyfriend, just as the bodies start appearing.

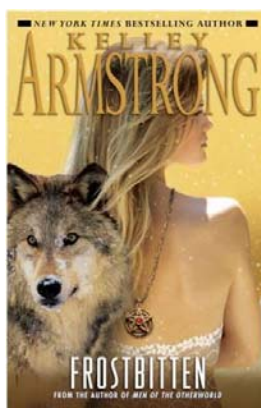
Sookie seemed a bit dim to me, and as the book seemed to be based on her inner thoughts, I'm not sure how that translates into TV. I have not watched True Blood, but I hope it's better than this book.

Kelley Armstrong

Frostbitten: Otherworld 10

Orbit

Clay and Elena are back! This story features the werewolf couple tracking a 'mutt' (non-pack werewolf) to Alaska. While searching for him they find other werewolves missing, human murders, shape shifters from Native Alaskan legends, and a rogue pack of Russian bad guy werewolves. They have to find everyone, hand out justice, and not be killed, while missing their twin children. Elena also has to deal with being the pack Alpha's successor, while Clay is thinking about dismembering a mutt with a chainsaw and posting the video on the internet. The best thing about this story is Elena has a strong character and doesn't sit around waiting to be rescued – when one of the bad guys tries to rape her she kicks some serious werewolf butt. This book can be read as a stand-alone, though I would recommend the earlier Otherworld stories be read to give some background (and because they are really good stories!)



Keri Arthur

Bound to Shadows: Riley Jenson Book 8

Piatkus

Riley returns in her role as a Guardian, policing the streets of Melbourne and focusing on non-humans. This time she has a killer beheading vampires and a killer

draining human victims and leaving them smiling. Is it the same killer? This is the question that confuses Riley. It doesn't make sense but the cases seem connected. She has her brother and his partner wanting to create a pack with her, her over-protective vampire lover, and her sociopathic soul mate showing up to claim her. The soul mate is not the vampire either, and Riley doesn't actually like him.

This is another fast-paced book about Riley, a werewolf/vampire hybrid. It's not as long as her previous Riley Jenson books, but has the action, bad guys, evil plots, and sexual tension of the others. Another good read from Keri Arthur.

JR Ward

Lover Avenged

Piatkus

The Black Dagger Brotherhood returns! Rehvenge has his story told and we learn more about his background and how a sympath half breed was born into an aristocratic vampire family. He meets a vampire nurse, Ehlena, and has to struggle to hide his drug dealing, dirty deeds, and sympath side from her, while submitting to the blackmail of the sympath Princess, his half sister. Xhex is given a bigger subplot, exploring her character and motivations more, and John Matthew appears often throughout the book. Tohrment snaps out of his grief daze while the Blind King learns to accept his kingship and physical limitations. The evil Lash continues to plot and make chilling alliances with other evildoers. The usual cast of suspects lurk in the background and pop up every so often.

JR Ward has a new viewpoint on the vampire rules and creates an exciting, new world. This book was a lot longer than previous ones in the series, probably because there were a lot more back stories in it. I would recommend reading the rest of the series before this one, to get background, and as I could see new readers becoming confused and giving up. This has the usual BDB action, rescues, evil plotting relationships, and the Brotherhood. Sigh. One thing I couldn't quite understand was the logistics of how Ehlena copes with Rhev's spine. I couldn't visualise it.

Keri Arthur

Penumbra: Spook Squad Book 3

Piatkus

Gabriel has finally gotten his way; he and Sam are no longer partners. He's set a tail to follow her though, as she's guarding a man who seems to be a product of the military experiments uncovered in Book 2. More is uncovered about the former military and people who are connected to it are dying horrible deaths. Sam is getting more memories of her past back, and learning more about her abilities. She's also learning more about Sethanon, the criminal mastermind who's killing Spook Squad agents, and his connection to her

This has more of the action, crime, conspiracies and sexual tension that Keri Arthur writes so well. I grew increasingly annoyed at the hero's 'traumatic past' and am thankful he's not described anywhere as 'dark and brooding'. The heroine has no time for his brooding though, and goes off to do her own thing. Yes!



by
Jan
Butterworth

UP

Directed by Peter Docter & Bob Peterson.
 Story by Pete Docter, Bob Peterson & Tom McCarthy
 Screenplay by Pete Docter & Bob Peterson.
 Executive producers: Andrew Stanton and John Lasseter
 Produced by Jonas River

Pixar are rapidly gaining an impressive reputation for making quality films and Up is the latest A-Grade product from their magical production line. It must be magic, because mere mortals surely are incapable of such a string of Excellence in Movies. In the past five years we have been privileged to see "Ratatouille", "The Incredibles", "Wall-E" and now "Up." (And, just around the corner in 2010 are "The Incredibles 2" and "John Carter of Mars" – which marks their first foray into adaptation as opposed to original stories).

"Up" marks a big departure from previous Pixar films in several ways. First, it's not about some plucky character, Carl Frederickson is a Grumpy Old Man and he's hardly plucky, just stubborn and bitter. Cue loud cries of "No-Rewrite it!" from the Marketing Bozos, afraid that kids won't want to see a movie about a grumpy grandpa. Strike Two – there are no real Gadgets*, in it – No toy tie-ins there! (*the gadgets are small and subtle, and the tech is mostly from the 1930s!) Strike Three – No marketing Product placement either- unless you count walking sticks and Geritol! OMG Corporate America is DDOOOOMMED!!!!!!

Even Disney got a little nervous about "UP" and in an unprecedented move, asked Pixar to screen an unfinished cut for their corporate board.

And the result? That same board not only parted with the funds to complete the film, but also stumped up with 80% of a HUGE Marketing campaign. And almost the entire world-wide Disney Corp was brought in to promote "Up" in any way they could manage. Before the film opened there was an "UP" ride in Florida and Paris! That is corporate faith, and I'm glad to say "Up" is certainly one of

the top three Pixar movies.

The story itself is fairly straight forwards – (the following is plagiarised shamelessly from the IMDB summary). Carl Fredrickson (Jeremy Leary), is a little boy and a dreamer who idolizes an explorer named Charles Muntz (Christopher Plummer). When he meets Ellie (Elie Docter), who also worships Muntz, they become close friends. However Muntz is disgraced, being accused of forging the skeleton of the monster of Paradise Falls. He travels in his blimp to South America to bring the monster back alive but is never seen again. Carl grows up and marries Ellie. They promise each other that they would travel together to Paradise Falls and build a house there. Many years later, Ellie dies and Carl (Ed Asner) refuses to move from their house despite the offers of the owner of a construction company. When Carl accidentally hits a worker who damaged his mailbox, he is ordered by the court to move to a retirement home. However, he uses many balloons to float his house in order to travel to Paradise Falls. However he has a stowaway aboard. A rather overweight 10 year old "Wilderness Explorer" (Read: Boy Scout) named Russell (Jordan Nagai), whose trying to get his "Assisting the Elderly" badge. Adventure follows them from there on in. Be aware this is only the first 20 minutes or so and much of it is told largely without any real dialogue. (Strike 4!! Called out the Marketing Bozos – what do they actually know?)

Carl is voiced (as an adult) by Ed Asner (of TVs "Lou Grant" fame), and Christopher Plummer (General Kang in Star Trek VI & the Baron Von Trapp in The Sound of Music among far too many others to count easily) is the "Intrepid explorer, Charles Muntz". Other voices include some of Pixar's stock Company (e.g. John Ratzenberger, Peter Docter). One nice surprise was the voice of Delroy Lindo as "Beta" & with a Joisy accent yet!

Let me make this clear, I am NOT a fan of films featuring both talking animals with humans. Films like "A Bug's Life" and "Antz" where there are no humans (that talk), that I can accept, but not Dr Doolittle (Bad original or crap remakes!) It's one of the things that rather lessened my appreciation of "Monsters Inc.". But the talking dogs in "UP" are... well, quite simply... Da Bomb! It works for a simple reason: They aren't Dogs that talk like people. They're dogs that talk and think, and have the body language of DOGS. They just speak also. And they can speak for a reason - when it works as intended. (Which I won't spoil. It's one of the best gags SQUIRREL! in the whole movie).

Many critics placed "UP" not only as the best Animated movie of 2009, many put it as one of the 10 best MOVIES of the year, a sentiment that I whole-heartedly endorse. "UP" is fantastic, funny and moving. It's not perfect but it's closer than most will ever get to it. And if you ever get the chance—see it in Digital 3D. **** ½ stars out of 5.

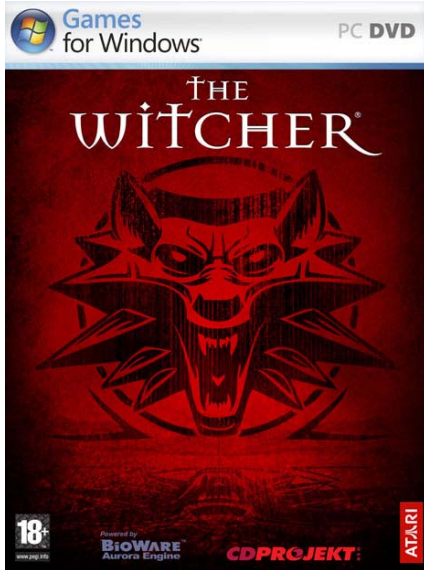
[Just one point on which I'd disagree with Brett... we saw "UP" in 2D deliberately—3D doesn't do a lot for us, due to our eyesight problems—and believe you me it was quite vertiginous enough! - Ed.]



by
Brett
Peacock

Uncorked Broderick Wells

Once again, I find myself adrift on the currents of life, bereft of preservatives. Actually, this is not quite the case: one bottle does not make a case (but I can make a case for a bottle). So why am I shy of sufficient sustenance? In a word, computer games. (Okay, you pedantic wowsers, that's two words, but running it together on the PC results in all sorts of ugly red lines and error messages.) I find I've been playing too many games to refill the cabinet.



First poison was *The Witcher*, a Polish game where you play Geralt of Rivia (that is who you are, no choices, nothing), an amnesiac monster hunter who must chase down some thieves who stole stuff from the stronghold you were recovering at. This is about the only linear piece of plot, and you can vary which bits of main and side quest you chase,

dependent on personal whim. There are three variations on the ending, dependant on which choices your Geralt has made; the Nazi Geralt, the Liberal Geralt, and the splinters up the fundament Geralt.

The game is based on a series of books by Andrzej Sapkowski featuring Geralt and other characters in the game. There was also a film, which apparently the critics panned (too short or some such), and a television series, which the critics and the fans thought was much better. The only problem is both film and series are in Polish (series apparently has English subtitles), so if you like gritty fantasy with some hack and slash, you'll need a LOT of patience.

The other great impediment to shopping is *ANNO 1404*, another in the series of ANNO games - 1602, 1503, 1701. It's all about exploration, colonisation, and satisfying your colonists' needs to get them to advance to new civilisation levels. My original machine could handle ANNO 1602, where one was in the West Indies, but the new version, set in the mythic Orient, requires a fairly large amount of RAM, a decent graphics card and moderate processing power (that heap of junk is how old?). The tutorial is an introductory campaign, whereby you complete minor quests for various people, thus satisfying their demands and you get rewarded with various useful items. The tutorial is divided into eight chapters, can be played at three levels of difficulty, and is a surprisingly coherent story. Fulfilling quests is a major

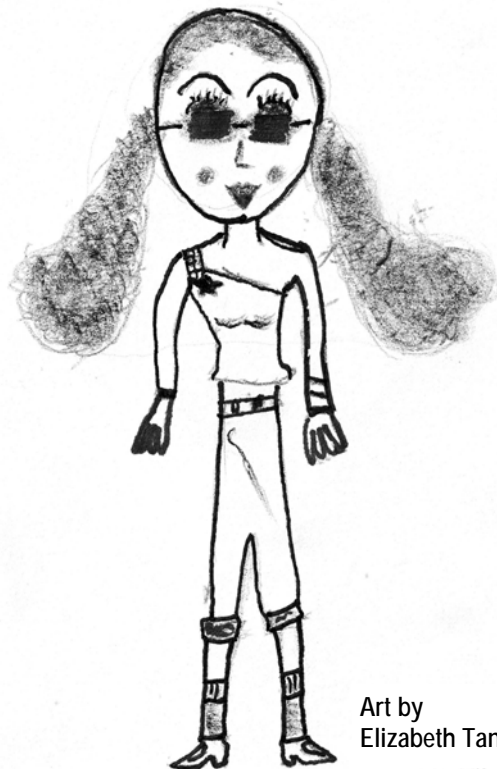
part of the main game, and is often the only way of receiving unusual items.

There are six standard scenarios varying from quite easy to something diabolical as well as the "continuous play" mode.

Continuous play victory conditions are endlessly mutable, so can satisfy everyone, from the most pacifist to total blood-and-guts merchants. The continuous play mode has various side quests

available in it, and some of the islands have useful buildings on them, such as *The Academy of Wisdom*, who generates items, such as construction plans or ships' crews, for dates and milk. Honour plays an important part in getting various items, such as oriental building plans, so how you expend it can be a tricky decision. The game's German designers are working on a new chapter (*ANNO 1404: Venice*) which is due in February this year. Naturally, it's all available in download.

My housekeeper has just informed me that the olives are getting warm, so it must be time for a martini. Catch you all next month.



Art by
Elizabeth Tan

The Sultan

by Carine Heidmann

‘Goodbye, my sweet,’ Hanlon Grey whispered. His words wobbled and his lower lip quivered. ‘I love you.’ Hating the way his body betrayed him in these tiny but telling ways, he bit down on the inside flesh of his cheek to stop the small spasms. He sucked in a hard breath. Voice deliberate and steadier, he said ‘Now you will be safe.’

As the translucent green lustre of her eyes faded, Hanlon reached to close Leah’s luxurious lashes. He wanted to stroke down gently, reverently. His fingers trembled. Purposely he paused and stilled his hand, then proceeded to smooth strands of spun-gold hair from her flawless forehead. Cocooned together inside the weightless warmth of the sleeper bubble; its cloud-like interior held Leah motionless beside him. *A sleeping angel*, his mind murmured as he traced a line along her delicate jaw, past her petite ear, over marble skin, *so perfect, so lovely*. Her physical attributes; exquisite features and a figure to rival a goddess, amplified by a sharp intellect and a sweet nature to match, the sight of her mesmerized him. She was one of the better ones; the culmination of years of work. His eyebrows arched. *Had been...* a treacherous thought insisted.

A single tear distorted the vision in his right eye, spoiling his appraisal of her beauty. Irritated, he brushed at it, smearing it across his cheek before it could detach itself from his eyelid to drift away and be absorbed by the gas-foam of the sleeper bubble. He hitched in breath. *Why am I crying? I saved her, damn it; saved her from a fate worse than death*, he chastised himself. Intra-Solar Authority would never let her be—never allow her more than the life of a lab-animal—kept in a cage, poked, prodded, tested, analysed and experimented upon. Their scrutiny would not be satisfied until they wrung the secret of how she was made from her dissected flesh. *No, death is a far more merciful fate for my beautiful Leah*.

As he continued to watch the girl die, froth bubbled and flumed from her slightly parted lips, the only thing to mar her unblemished beauty, a sickly green indictment of what he’d done. *Had to do*, he self-corrected. *Not an indictment. A confirmation*.

He lifted his chin; the sight of her frothing mouth igniting an acid counterpart deep in the pit of his stomach. Swallowing away a rising burn at the back of his throat, he grabbed her still-warm hands before they free-floated away from her body to rob her of her dignity, making her a discarded puppet on a string. He folded and clasped them over her breast, adjusting her bodice where two creamy skinned mounds peaked out. An unexpected chill stole over him despite the tangerine warmth of the sleeper bubble. Automatically his IAI (Intelligence Augmentation Implant) checked the temperature, reported: *Within normal range and constant*.

The cold that prickled the skin along his spine underneath his pyjamas didn’t have its origin in the bubble’s gravity-less sleeping environment. It came from the roots of his soul. Hanlon knew he had to leave her side, let the specially engineered virus he’d unleashed in her system do its work. The information from his IAI said the nano-organisms had reached the cellular level and were beginning to devour her from the inside out. A necessity. His enemies would defile even her corpse if they found it.

However, Hanlon had made sure they could never lay their hands on Leah. Once the disintegration process had run its course, there wouldn’t be anything left of her. Not a speck, no cellular matter, nothing biological and not a smidgen of DNA. *Especially not anything that might be cloned*. That thought

brought no comfort. Instead, a new and unpleasant warmth rose to his face and the corners of his eyes stung. Knew he’d done the right thing, *believed* it. Yet... *Leah, his Leah, was no longer alive*. Unwilling to face anything beyond this moment, lost in a whorl of aimlessness, his existence a parallel with hers, no impetus to move, no desire to rouse he waited placidly beside her. Only when greenish blotches broke out on her skin and quickly spread, caving into great swathes of puckering scales, did he utter a cry and leap out of the sleeper bubble.

The switch from eight hours of weightlessness back to gravity too sudden, Hanlon lurched as his feet hit the floor. A shudder gripped his loins, rippled up his torso and clenched his throat; his innards spasmed. He ran. Thankful he’d reached the waterless chemical toilet in time he shut his eyes. Revulsion wracked him. He draped over the bowl, yielded to the overpowering impulse and spewed the contents of his stomach, heaved long after he thought his stomach was empty. In the hygiene booth, exhausted and shaking, he popped the tooth-gel tablet and waited for it to expunge the repulsive taste that lingered on his tongue. The tingling spread as it dissolved and released its particular brand of nano-organelles throughout his mouth. He concentrated hard. *Don’t swallow*. The nano-particles would pass harmlessly through his digestive tract if he did, but would increase his heartburn ten-fold while they were in his system. In the full and glaring obviousness that she was not there alongside him, fussing as she would with the minutiae of her own ritual of preparing for the day, he proceeded with his morning ablutions in a kind of daze. Reason for doing all the usual things suddenly eluded him. Everything took on an air of futility. Every now and again he would catch himself completely stopped; like an automaton run down — fuel cell depleted. He had to force himself to continue. He scanned the array of bio-engineered medications on the shelf of his bathroom cabinet, fingered the appropriate vials, but doubted they could combat his present ailments. What ailed him was far more than physical. Inexplicable.

Although already sonic-showered, he glanced at the basin, at the spout. The supreme luxury of fresh, cool, clean water on tap installed in his quarters, something as Sultan, he claimed for himself, tempted him. Undecided whether he wanted to splash cold water on his face to alleviate the taught heaviness cloaking him, he stalled. *Sultan, they call me. Not because I am one, but because of my ‘harem’*. He shook his head and grunted. *What a title for a scientist*. Favouring old style shaving to modern depilation techniques, Hanlon reached for his razor. Not wanting to look, hyper aware of what he would see, he kept his eyes on the mirror, away from the sleeper bubble to his left.

His imagination provided horrid details of the continuing devastation of Leah’s body, and latched on to what was left of her. Behind his eyes he saw the crease in the sleeper bubble’s outer membrane marking his hasty exit and even heard the hissing and bubbling of her liquefaction. Dropping the razor, he scrunched up his eyes and knuckled his fists into his eyelids trying to grind out the images. They wouldn’t go away. He fled to his dressing room, plucked on trousers, a shirt, work boots and only when he yanked the lapels of his crispest lab-coat in place did he start to feel a little better.

Desperate to discard the sleeper bubble he and Leah shared, Hanlon was forced to wait for the virus to complete its work of utter destruction, before he could get rid of it. *Get rid of her*. Again, tears blinded him, streaming down his cheeks. A simple irritated brush with his fingers did not help this time. He swiped at his face, blindly grabbed for tissues from the vanity, stemmed the unwelcome flow and swallowed away his emotions. The effort tightened his jaw-muscles to the point of pain. If she had just died, arrived at her death in some other way than by his hand, he would have been able to grieve; would have allowed himself that luxury. Now it felt wrong to mourn. He’d made a

conscious decision. Convinced himself he was *right*. Then why did he feel if the tears flowed they would never stop? No. He could not allow the world to fall out from under him; had no justification to grieve like that. He killed her. Purposely. A discreet alert from his IAI demanded his attention. At first he didn't answer, suspecting who it was but not wanting to face anyone yet. The signal repeated, flared alarm in his brain, raised the hairs on the back of his head surrounding the interface nodule. Hanlon tabulated this as just another symptom of how he was proving too weak to carry the burden he demanded of himself. Finally, he acknowledged the call.

On impulse he activated the hatchway to his and Leah's private suite. It caught Tyler mid-sentence.

'Hanlon, may I come in? Are you ready? We have to go. There isn't much time —'

Hanlon watched his friend's face change when he caught sight of his.

'Where's Leah? She not ready yet?' Tyler demanded.

Hanlon sighed. *Of all things his closest friend could have said why did he have to ask that?*

Tyler's eyes narrowed on him. His voice quiet, guarded, careful, worried, he asked. 'What's wrong, Hanlon?'

All that from just watching me. It annoyed Hanlon that his face revealed so much. *He knows me too well.* He'd thought he kept his expression neutral; that no emotion and especially no pain showed on his visage. After all, he didn't need to feel any. 'Where's Leah?' Tyler repeated as he strode into the room. His eyes fastened onto the sleeper bubble and its grisly contents. A slow expression of horror morphed his face into a mask. Compelled, one cat-cautious step at a time Tyler stalked to the sleeper bubble and deactivated it. It vanished around what was left of Leah, betraying Hanlon's earlier actions. Her remains fell to the floor.

Tyler froze as his eyes slid to the partially decimated corpse. 'What the hell happened here? Who is that?' Face blanched, he bent to the corpse. 'Leah?' Tyler recoiled, straightened. Hanlon didn't answer.

Tyler's expression slid into accusation; ice toned his words. 'What have you done?'

Fascinated with his friend's reactions, Hanlon continued his silence, but Tyler's words insinuated the question into his mind. *What have I done?* Spidery fingers of doubt tiptoed up his spine.

The intent in his face clear, Tyler honed in on him, but Hanlon anticipated his move and crossed the floor, arms stretched in front of him in an open-palmed placatory gesture. 'Wait, Tyler. I know what this looks like.'

Tyler's eyes moved back and forth, between Leah's corpse and Hanlon's face. *Like a tennis match* Hanlon almost chuckled. The look in Tyler's eyes forbade that. 'There was no other way.' He pleaded. Tyler's mouth moved, jaw opening and closing. He didn't say anything.

'I couldn't let her fall into their hands.' Afraid of the retribution, of the plans formulating behind his friends' eyes; plans he couldn't allow him to execute, Hanlon shook his head. 'I couldn't.' He'd been ready with a torrent of words; about how he'd done all he could, how he failed to protect her, how he couldn't prevent her from falling into their enemies' hands. Now the words died on his lips. Tyler's silence unnerved him more than all the things he expected him to say. His friend's reserve made him waver. Did he agree with him or was his uncommunicativeness an indication of condemnation?

He took a step towards the door. This time *he* urged 'Come, you said we have to go.'

'They call you the Sultan.' Tyler began. 'They look up to you.'

'I saved her, Tyler. Don't you see?' Hanlon said, his voice

remarkably stable as he faced his friend. 'I set her free. No one would ever be able to use her DNA again. They cannot re-create her. I'm the only one who knows how. I gave her the ultimate freedom. And in so doing *I* made the ultimate sacrifice, knowing *I* would have to face the rest of my life with the knowledge that *I killed her*.'

Emergency alerts flashed brightly from Hanlon's IAI. All ominous. The outer perimeter of 337 Devosa, their asteroid had been breached. Intra-Solar patrols had progressed to the surface. Time was up.

Something in Tyler's expression changed. 'Then you're going to have to do it for all of them.'

In a bare whisper Hanlon echoed Tyler's words. 'All of them?' Desperate only to save Leah, to keep her from those who would take her from him, he hadn't thought of the others.

Tyler leaned towards him. 'Cloning is illegal. Genetic tampering to the degree that you've done is unheard of, let alone illegal.' Expansive gestures punctuated Tyler's words. His voice rose as he spoke and pointed his forefinger at Hanlon's chest. 'If you leave even only one of them alive...' He turned on his heel and left.

Scant minutes later, before Hanlon had had time to come to his senses, four women, followed by Tyler, burst into the room — Leah's sisters, all exactly identical to her, members of his so-called harem. The looks on their faces as they glanced to Leah's all-but-gone form showed how fast they summarized what had occurred. *Or*, his eyes narrowed as a thought occurred to him, *had Tyler primed them?* Their eyes fixed on their Sultan. 'You have to do me too.' The first one said. Some of the others nodded their heads. 'Yes me too,' they all concurred. Confronted with the bluntness of their death-wish, Hanlon only looked at them. But Tyler was right. As her prototypes, they were just as valuable as Leah had been. If the authorities ever found them, their biology could expose all his secrets. 'I'll round up the others,' Tyler said and left again.

The stalemate moment between him and the girls broke as explosions shook the floor beneath them. The walls swayed and Hanlon watched everyone in the room reach for handholds before the shaking stopped and the noise died down. They would be literally afloat if the gravity failed. Immediately he demanded answers from his IAI. *Apparent military attack. Insurgents detected on internal security. Habitat sectors sealed off and holding. Debris from attacks blocking shafts to habitat levels. Insurgents attempting excavations.* Hanlon swallowed as he listened to the silent inner report. Their enemies were here. Her eyes terrified, the girl who had spoken first, swivelled back to Hanlon. 'You can't let them take us. Please. You know what they'll do to us. Please, Sultan.' *How long do we have?* Hanlon asked his IAI. *Estimation variable: 6 to 14 hours*, the answer came.

Long enough. His mind centred in fascinated certainty. He knew he would set them all free the same way he had freed Leah. Again and again he would have the chance to study his feelings while the life-light left their eyes; secure in the knowledge he was saving them. He would kill. Kill them all. Kill; until he felt the emotion he was supposed to feel — not the guilt; the grief afflicting him now. As the souls of the last of them slipped into oblivion he would not mourn their passing or regret their loss. He would be proud, relieved, vindicated; their Sultan. After all, given freedom, secrecy, time and resources he could again create the perfect woman.

The End.

There are two Auckland-based members on the SFFANZ board, Jan Butterworth and Barbara Clendon. We take part in the running of the board, which is based in Wellington, and make sure Auckland fans aren't overlooked! SFFANZ is a national body that was created to promote Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror in New Zealand, organises and conducts the national science fiction and fantasy awards, The Sir Julius Vogel awards, and is responsible for the voting between bids to host future national conventions. SFFANZ also has a national fan database, to provide fans with information of interest to the New Zealand fan community.

We have created a design for finalist certificates for the SJV awards, and sent certificates to those finalists for the 2009 awards. One of the matters that will be raised at the AGM whether these are necessary, as we conducted a survey of finalists who said no. We also had the resignation of two board members which leaves us with seven people on the board, the minimum required number.

The Sir Julius Vogel awards are fan voted awards for endeavours in the fields of science fiction, fantasy or horror. The award is held in the current year for works that were first released in the previous calendar year. The Creator of the Work must be either a NZ Citizen or have residency in NZ. Professional nominations can be for novels, short stories, art and others. Fan nominations can be for fanzine, writing, art, Services to Fandom, Services to Science Fiction and more. Voting on the Sir Julius Vogel Awards takes place before and at the National Science Fiction convention each year. You are eligible to vote if you are a member of SFFANZ, OR a member of the National Science Fiction convention that year. You are only entitled to one vote, even if you belong to both.

Making a nomination is free of charge!

Nominations for the 2010 SJV awards are now open, so please send an email to the SJV committee at sjv_awards@sffanz.sf.org.nz with the following information:

1. Name / Title of work
 2. Name of Producer / Author / Creator
 3. What the work is i.e. Novel, TV, Movie, Short Story, Web, Collection, Comic, Art
 4. Year of First Release
 5. Publisher / Production company name
 6. How to contact the producer / author
E.g. personal email / publisher email / publisher address / publisher phone number / work email / work phone number.
 7. What category you think the nomination belongs to i.e. Fan awards, Professional awards
 8. GENRE - science fiction, fantasy or horror
 9. Contact details of the person making the nomination e.g. email or/and phone number
- Any questions, see the FAQ page
<http://sffanz.sf.org.nz/sjv/sjvAwardsNominationGuidelines.shtml>.

by
Kevin
MacLean**Oral Roberts**

The original televangelist, and the man who blackmailed his congregation by claiming that God had told him He was going to take him up to Heaven if OR didn't get eight million dollars for his latest self-glorifying project. Sadly, he got the money, so we'll never have proof that he wasn't lying.

Roy Disney, Junior

Walt's nephew, and the CEO who tried to take the Empire of the Mouse back to its original mission, with some minor success.

Dan O'Bannon

One of the giants of SF film. From "Dark Star" to the as-yet-untitled Alien prequel, via the original "Star Wars", the entire "Alien" saga, "Return of the Living Dead", and "Total Recall". Co-creator of "Ellen Ripley" (and most of the other characters in the Alien saga). The man responsible for the tradition that zombies moan "Brains..." A true fan, and someone who had a large hand in shaping today's SF film.

Grand Ayatollah Hoseyn Ali Montazeri

Khomeini's deputy around the time of the Iranian Revolution. Later, one of the Regime's greatest and most respected critics. Died at an extremely convenient time for the Regime, at age 87, of "Natural Causes". I refrain from further comment.

Tsutomu Yamaguchi

The only officially recognised survivor of the A-bombings of both Hiroshima and Nagasaki. At age 93, of stomach cancer.

Dame Victoire Evelyn Patricia "Paddy" Ridsdale

Worked in Room 39 with Ian Fleming. Partial model for Miss Moneypenny. Regularly reported (falsely) to have written the love-letters carried by "The Man Who Never Was".

Eric Rohmer

Important French "New Wave" film maker.

**January 23-24 Taupo Joust 2010**<http://www.taupojoust.com/>**February 20-21 Battlecry 2010**<http://www.theamericacub.net.nz/battlecry2010>**August 27-29 Au Contraire**

2010 New Zealand NatCon Wellington

<http://www.aucontraire.org.nz/>**September 2-6 AussieCon IV**

2010 WorldCon in Melbourne

<http://www.aussiecon4.org.au/>**September 23-26 GenCon Australia Brisbane**<http://www.genconoz.com/>