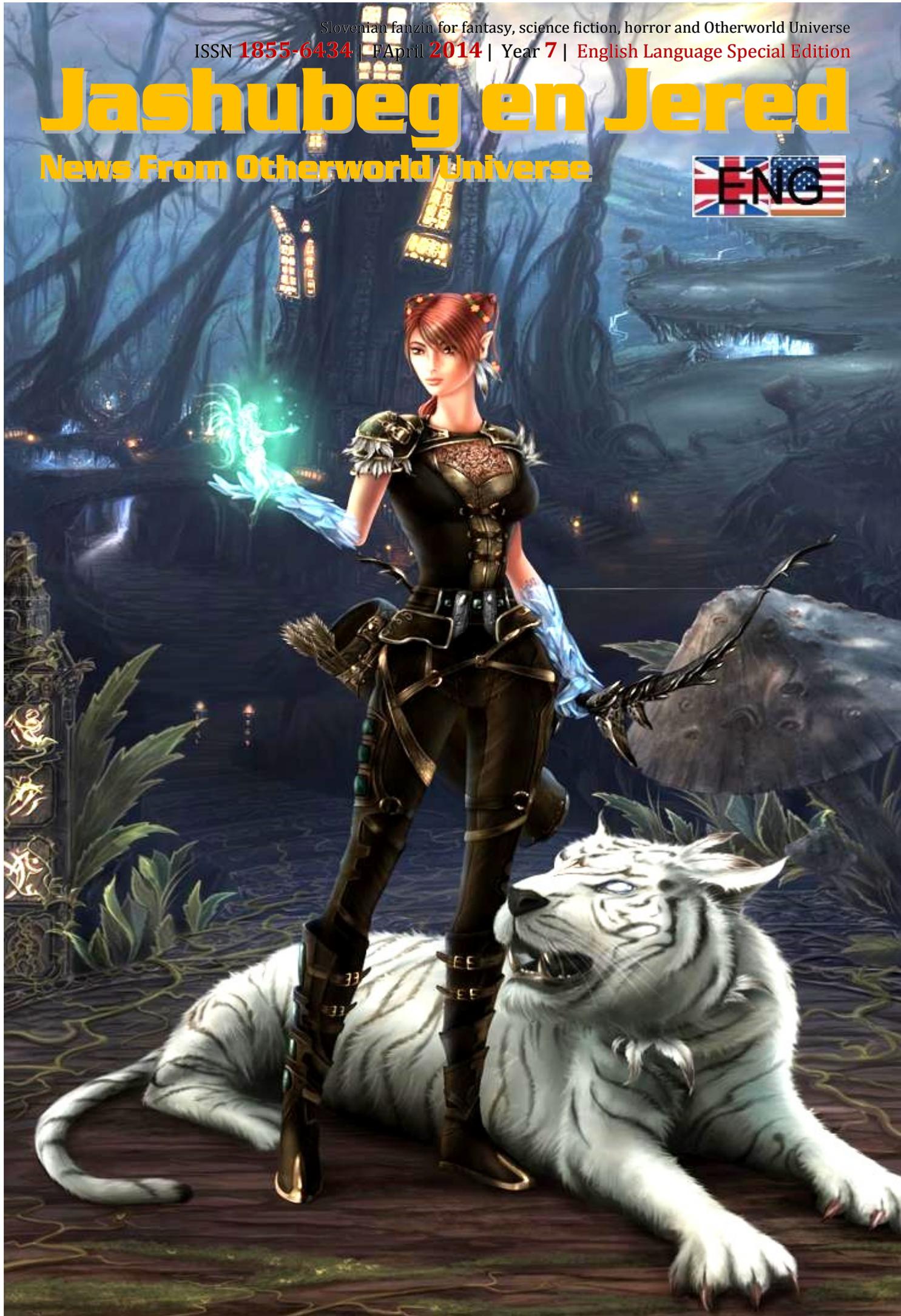


Slovenian fanzin for fantasy, science fiction, horror and Otherworld Universe
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Jashubeg en Jered

News From Otherworld Universe



Jashubeg en Jered

ISSN 1855 - 6434

Fanzin for fantasy, science fiction, horror and Otherworld Universe.

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Kara Shyre and PawPaw

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FIRST SIDE ILLUSTRATION

Mark Jordan: Kara Shyre and PawPaw from GuildWars

Who is Kara Shyre and her partner a white Siberian tiger named PawPaw?

Hmm, yes. Kara Shyre is a name of a character/avatar which I've created years ago for the computer game Guildwars. Eventually, I decided to draw her portrait, sort of a fan-art illustration. She was portrayed based on the world and images of the Guildwars game, along with a few parts of my own imagination.

Yes, let's not forget about the tiger. That was my digital companion in the game for some time. It basically got the name from the first thing that came to my mind - call it pure inspiration.



READ IN THIS ISSUE

Here is the annual review of development in the Slovenian SF&F scene. For start is the editorial by Andrej Ivanuša, co-editor where he talk about seven magical years ... and third issue od fanzine in English language.

→ **page 3**

Next comes brief news (about Life, the Universe and Everything) and some space humor.

→ **pages 4 and 5**

We report about EUROCON 2013 in Kiev, Ukraine and about Slovene SF&F convention in Ljubljana with title Na meji nevidnega (Upon the Edge of the Invisible) which was held September last year.

→ **pages from 6 to 11**

Bojan has contributed a brief evaluation of a book Varuhi: Viharna princesa (Guardians: Stormy Princess) by Tanja Mencin. Andrej write about Slovenian SCI-FI films. After his article Bojan write about The Coexistence of Paper and Electronic, a deep analyze of future of printed books.

→ **pages from 12 and 19**

We have two interviews in this issue. First is with Cheryl Morgan, an writer and editor of SF&F. Second is with our fantasy illustrator Mark Jordan. We talk with him about Kara Shyre and PawPaw.

→ **pages from 20 to 25**

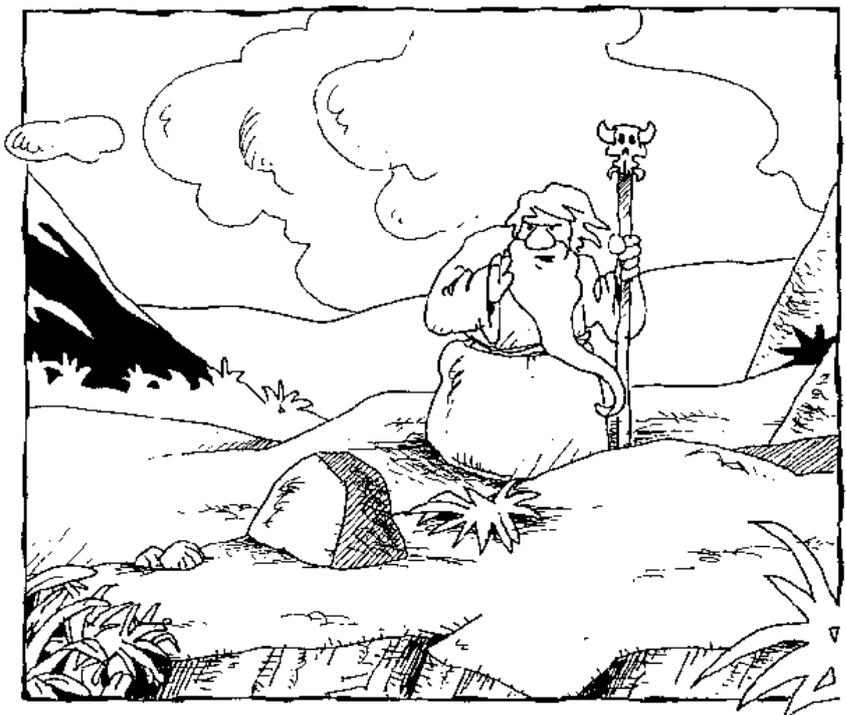
In this issue we bring stories: Where is lordkona? (From the book the blue drug and other stories) by Matjaž Štrancar; DVD of Life by Bojan Ekselenski; Today is not Tueasday by Andrej Ivanuša; and as special guest from America Vanna Smythe with her short story MEMORY BOOK.

→ **pages from 26 to 35**

On last page we introduce two of our writers which received EUROCON awards on two last conventions in Zagreb and Kiev.

→ **page 36**

SECOND PAGE ILLUSTRATION



The Whiteman wizard's beard was waving in the wind. //Illustration by Damijan Sovec from the book WONDERFUL JOURNEYS OF RONO RABBIT by Andrej Ivanuša./

SEVEN IS A MAGICAL NUMBER

by Andrej Ivanuša, co-editor

Fanzine Jashubeg en Jered is now seven years old. Members of editing staff are all very hardheaded and as far I know JeJ is fanzine with longest history of all times in Slovenia. All together we issued 30 numbers (regular and special editions). This is also third number in English language (Yes, yes, it is not our native language, so please excuse our mistakes). Only Gil-Galad, the Tolkien society of Slovenia edited for a longer period their society fanzine Sijoča zvezda (Shinny Star aka Gil-Galad). Older fanzines were Nova (7 numbers), Občasnik (6 numbers), Blodnjak (13 numbers), Neskončnost (12 numbers).

Seven is a magical fairytale number second most important after number three. Why seven? One of explanations says about pagan origin of seven. People help themselves with supernatural beings when they look after answers "about Life, the Universe and Everything". They recognize meaning of Sun, Moon and with naked eye seeing planets. Because there were seven heavenly bodies there was also seven gods. Also islam knows seven heavenly bodies. Astrologists also measured time and they divided time in seven days. Our brains with less effort member seven things. Seven is in fairytales and in superstition very important number

because represented relatively big number which is not yet unimaginable big. Seven years of accidents is hearing horrible but is still bearable. So seven years editing JeJ is very hard task but still bearable.

I don't know if you like concept of fanzine but we try to make it diversified. We try to bring as fresh as possible news but three month editing period make us many troubles. Another obstacle is also that we do everything voluntarily. I believe that a lot of you, people, want to read "real" SF magazine. But we have troubles to catch authors which will be willing to write down any kind of article. Authors for "real" SF magazine we also must pay. On other hand is critical mass of Slovene readers to small that we probably not go over profitability threshold. So we must ask for state support or find "crazy" donor.

Dear readers, if there anyone which has any idea on field of speculative arts, I gladly invited that "guy" to join us, creators of Jashubeg en Jered. Among stories we look also for theoretical articles about speculative arts. With bigger number of co-workers we also rise quality of fanzine and so will be easier too survive next seven magical fairytale years.

INTERESTING WEBSITES

the guide to **SLOVENIAN**
SCIENCE FICTION

<http://vodnik-zf.info/index-e.html>



ANDROS

<http://www.andros.si>

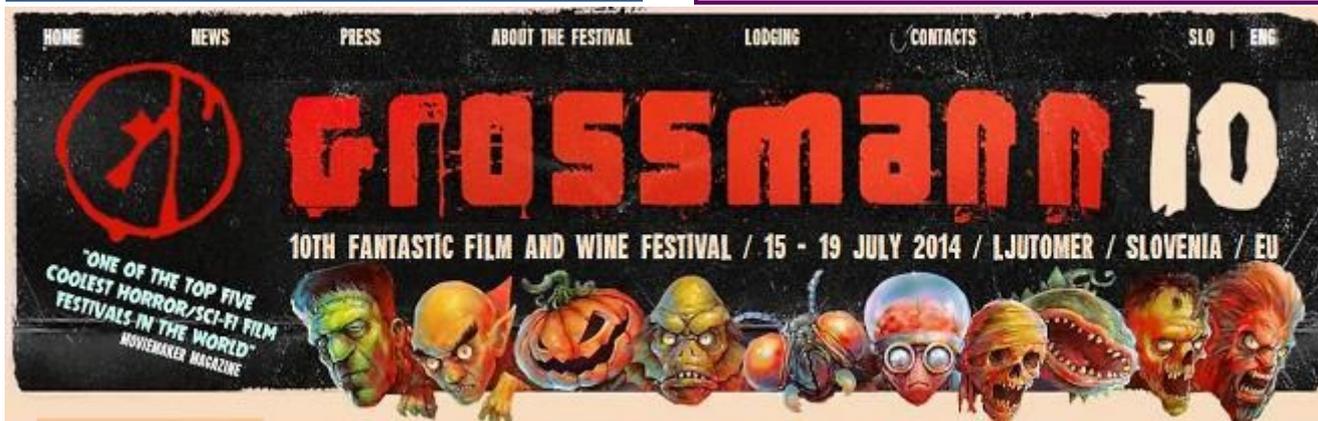
Jashubeg en Jered (PDF) and some stories by Andrej Ivanuša in English.



<http://www.drugotnost.si/index.php/en/>



<http://www.zvezdni-prah.si/>
(only in Slovenian language)



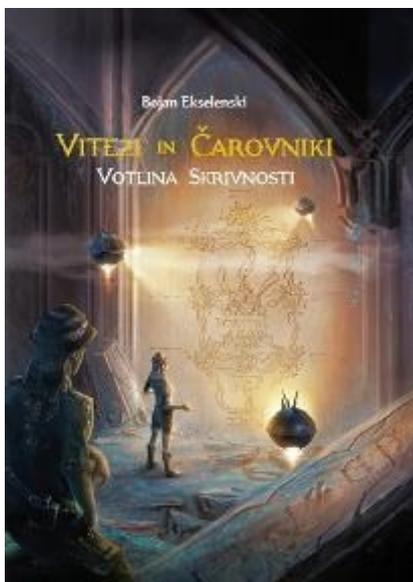
<http://www.grossmann.si/home/>



ABOUT LIFE, THE UNIVERSE AND EVERYTHING

Knights & Wizards: Cave of Secrets in Antika /march 2013/

The newest novel by Bojan Ekselenski from the Slovenian fantasy epic VITEZI IN ČAROVNIKI (Knights & Wizards) was first publicly presented on 5th February 2013 at the antique bookshop (Antikvariat), and the bookstore Antika in the author's home town of Celje, to about 15 guests.



After the presentation there was a lively debate on the state of science fiction and fantasy books in Slovenia. The author answered questions and explained how he got the idea for his fantasy epic, which will be released as four novels.

Fanzine Drugotnost (Otherworld) /march 2013/

Fantasy project Knights & Wizards is now accompanied by the Fanzine Drugotnost (Otherworld) which is reachable in PDF form on the website

www.vitezicarovniki.com.

That site is also official site of project. As you probably know fanzine Jashubeg en Jered was at first born as such accompanied fanzine but now he grows up in biggest (and for now sadly only) Slovenian

SF&F&H fanzine. Author of the project say that he cannot finished his work without own supporting fanzine. So he started with new edition. We wish him a lot of luck!

Alamut by Vladimir Bartol goes on film /march 2013/

The publishing house Sanje, after numerous not very "serious" bids finally found a common language with French screenwriter and director Guillaume Martinez, who will be adapting for the screen the world famous historical fantasy novel Alamut, written by Slovenian author Vladimir Bartol. That only they would film it as soon as possible! We expect result with great eager.

The novel was not published in English until 2004. Earlier it was translated into about 18 other languages including Czech (1946), Serbian (1954), French (1988), Spanish (1989), Italian (1989), German (1992), Turkish, Persian (1995), Arabic, Greek, Korean and Slovak. More recently it has been translated into Hebrew (2003), Hungarian (2005) and Finnish (2008).

The novel and its plot were the inspiration for the popular Assassin's Creed series of video games. Many elements of the book's plot can be found in the first game, and the phrase from the novel under an alternative translation: "nothing is true; everything is permitted" is the guiding principle of the game's Order of Assassins – who are the fictionalized descendants of the Ismaili.

Iron Sky – The Coming Race /september 2013/

We are dealing with the continuation of the film Iron Sky by the Finnish director Timo Vuorensola. The producers of the film want to be even more independent of funders and have launched a successful pub-

lic funding campaign. In 57 days they raised more than \$182,000.

As with the first film, you can also join the filmmakers in creating this film if you wish. They estimate that they will need about two years to make the movie.

(Source: sciportal.eu)

Handicraft of Speculative Fiction /december 2013/

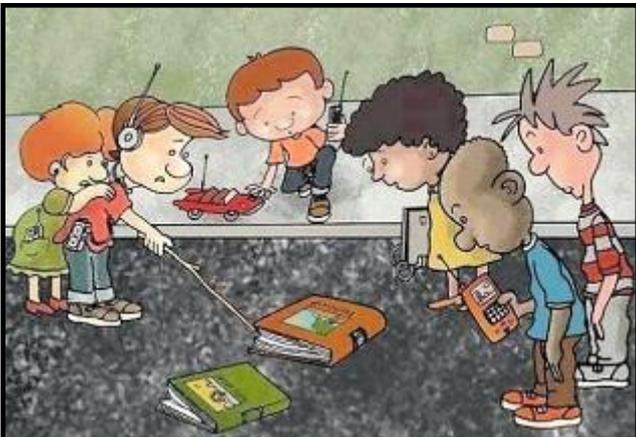
At the Trubar House of Literature, the Zvezdni Prah society held a creative writing workshop. During the three consecutive meetings (19.11., 26.11. and 3.12.) the eight attendees mainly learned of a sort of common framework, and the foundations of modern prose creation. The second workshop will be the real one, since we now all know the foundations of what we are talking about. Most of the attendees of the workshop were published authors, so we found a common language, which is comparable to the more developed book markets.

Electronic releases /december 2013/

Through Biblos, the ebook library and store, Bojan Ekselenski self-published four books. In the VITEZI IN ČAROVNIKI saga the novel VOTLINA SKRIVNOSTI (Cave of Secrets) and the novellas Zadnji boj Zeolije and Duhovi Aldeverga (Zeolia's Last Fight and The Ghosts of Aldeverga) have already been published. VOTLINA SKRIVNOSTI is also available in the Kobo online bookstore. At the end of 2013 he also released the guide Rokodelstvo spekulativne fikcije 1 (a handbook on writing fiction 1).

It is odd that in both online bookstores, only the two major Slovenian book publishers and a few lone self-publishers are offering books, while all others insist on ignoring digital production.

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What is that?

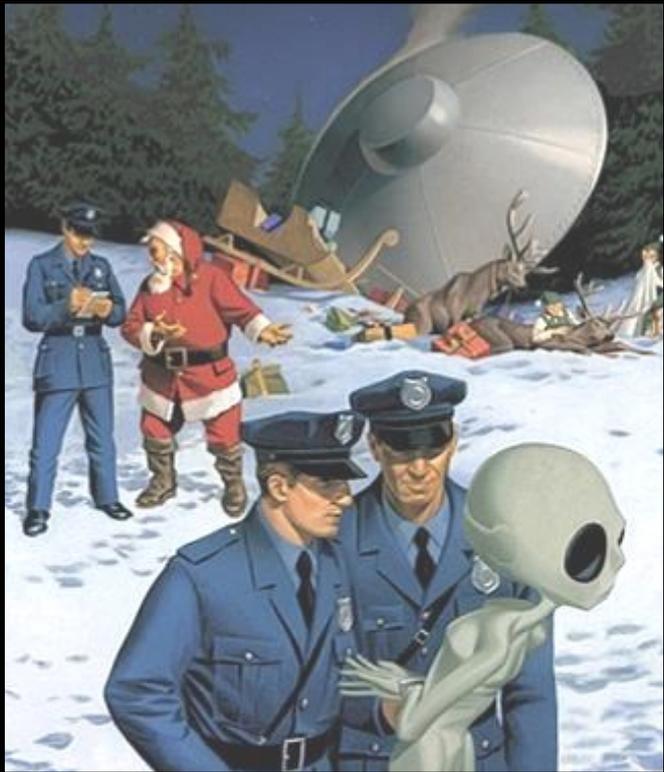


PLANET HUMOR



NEW PASSWORD
 Sorry, your password has been in use for 30 days and has expired - you must register a new one.
roses
 Sorry, too few characters.
pretty roses
 Sorry, you must use at least one numerical character.
1 pretty rose
 Sorry, you cannot use blank spaces.
1prettyrose
 Sorry, you must use at least 10 different characters.
1fuckingprettyrose
 Sorry, you must use at least one upper case character.
1FUCKINGprettyrose
 Sorry, you cannot use more than one upper case character consecutively.
1FuckingPrettyRose
 Sorry, you must use no fewer than 20 total characters.
1FuckingPrettyRoseShovedUpYourAssIfYouDon't GiveMeAccessNow!
 Sorry, you cannot use punctuation.
1FuckingPrettyRoseShovedUpYourAssIfYouDont GiveMeAccessRightFuckingNow
 Sorry, that password is already in use.

People say that they can not live without love! Hmm ...
 But I think that oxygen is far more important.





EUROCON 2013 KIEV, UKRAINE

11TH-14TH APRIL 2013

by Bojan Ekselenski, translated by Martin Vavpotič



This year's EUROCON, organized by the ESFS, was held from 11 - 14 April 2013 in Kiev, Ukraine. It took place in the showroom of the Expo Plaza in Kiev. Unfortunately, the Slovenian delegation didn't attend this year's convention, even though the Zvezdni Prah society did delegate an individual who was supposed to attend the convention. However, later a higher power intervened and prevented their attendance. It will certainly be better next year in Dublin, Ireland.

SLOVENIAN NOMINATIONS

The Zvezdni Prah society, which was the only organization to send a list of candidates from Slovenia, made the following nominations for EUROCON 2013 in Kiev:

- In the category of BEST AUTHOR: Miha Remec
- In the category of Best SF WEBSITE: Europa SF (scifiportal.eu)
- In the category FANZINE: Jašubeg en Jered,
- In the category ENCOURAGEMENT AWARDS: Martin Vavpotič (Clockworks Warrior).



A lot of visitors, big interest for all invents.

We were successful only in the last nomination, in which the encouragement award (to encourage a young author) went to Martin Vavpotič for his book *Clockworks Warrior*, which is presented elsewhere in this issue.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EVENT

At the exhibition site where the EUROCON was held, there was also a book fair. It was an excellent organizational move, since the visitors came to the convention and back to the bookstore. This resulted in more than 3,000 visitors per day. According to reporters from various websites, the organization was good, though not as good as at Eurocon 2006, which was also held in Kiev. It was organized by a different team this year and the economic crisis is also quite evident in the Ukraine. At the same time, all agreed that the organizers had not exceeded the brilliant organization in Stockholm in 2011 and Zagreb in 2012.

The main problem was certainly the fact that the exhibition places were in different locations, which made it difficult for people to find their way, or come to a particular event on time. At the same time, the exhibition spaces were also acoustically very poorly equipped, which resulted in many audio problems and noise during the events.

In any case, the contents did satisfy all tastes. In the crowd of visitors, there were very few Western Europeans, which gave the convention a more "Slavic" feel, which was also reflected in the award recipients. This was also the case with the guests (GOH), from the West only Christopher Priest (England) was present, while from the east there were Andriy Valentynov (Ukraine), Olga Gromyko (Belarus), Andriy Dmytruk (Ukraine), Maryna and Serhiy Dyachenko (Russia), Dmitriy Gromov and Oleg Ladyzhensky (who always act as a single person Henry Lion, from Oldie, Ukraine) and Vadim Panov (Ukraine). As far as I could determine, none of these authors' works have been translated into Slovene.

NEW LEADERSHIP OF ESFS

At the convention, a completely new leadership of the ESFS was selected. Only one member from the past remained on the Administrative Board, namely Bridget Wilkinson who could also be referred to as the "eternal secretary". She became the head of the Nominations Commission.

The new leadership consists of Carolina Gómez Lagerlöf (Sweden), President; Saija Kyllönen (Finland),



Vice-President; Vanja Kranjčević (Croatia), treasurer; Gareth Kavanaugh (Ireland), secretary; and Bridget Wilkinson (UK), Nominations Commission.

PROGRAMME OF THE CONVENTION

The organizers prepared more than 60 different events in four days in five different locations. Among the more interesting lectures were The Problems of Analysis and Systematization of Ukrainian SF and Fantasy As an Important Step In Developing speculative Fiction in the Ukraine (Yuriy Sheva, Vitaliy Karatsupa), Astronaut Pakal Is Looking for the Crystal Skull, or The Maya Are Not Only the End of the World (Tetiana Plykhnevych), Plot Writing Master Class (Stepan Vartanov), Alternative Ways of Printing Books (Oleksandr Diatlov), Is It Possible to Create an Intelligent Phantom and the World of the Modern Digital Technologies ? (Yuriy Ivanovich), Graphic Fiction As A Way of Making the Secondary Worlds (Maksym Prasolov) and the National Fantasy and Mythos: The Returning of the Old Gods (Ilona Volynskaya, Kirill Kashchieiev).

As for the workshops, the Workshop on Synopses (Nina Tsyurupa, Yuriy Ivanov) was the most interesting. It showed the attendees how to write the outline of a fantasy story. Individual countries also presented their SF&F&H scene: these were Ireland, Germany, Belgium, Hungary, Russia, France and Ukraine.

FUTURE CONVENTIONS

The 2014 ESFS Convention will be held in Dublin, Ireland. The Russians have entered their candidature for 2015, and propose a meeting in St. Petersburg. The Finns suggested Helsinki for 2015 or 2017, and the Belgians proposed Antwerp for 2016. Also, the Finns expressed their willingness to host the 2016 Worldcon. In 2017 the Germans would also like to host the Eurocon in Dortmund. The final decisions will be voted on in Dublin.

At the meeting of the delegates of the ESFS, the question of where the borders of Europe actually lie was also raised. Specifically: can Kazakhstan also become a member of ESFS? A final decision has not yet been made! The participants agreed that it was otherwise a good convention that focused on the production in

Eastern Europe, which was not a problem. Thus, the Western half learned something about people who once lived behind the iron curtain. As always, a good story is a good story, whether it is happening on Earth, on Mars or on the planet Kva-Zhu, today, tomorrow or yesterday.

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AWARDS EUROCON 2013 KIJEV

European Grandmaster

Terry Pratchett (UK)
Iain Banks (UK)

Hall of Fame

Pisatelj: Andrey Valentinov (Ukrajina)
Umetnik: Nikolai Redka (Ukrajina)
Naj-prevajalec: Patrice in Viktoriya Lajoie (Francija)
SF promotor: Istvan Burger (Madžarska)
Založnik: Shiko (Ukrajina)
SF magazin: SFX (UK)

Spirit of Dedication

Radio, TV, gledališče: »Vash Vihod« (Ваш выход – Ваш гіб), gledališče Raido (Ukrajina)
Web-stran: Europa SF – scifiportal.eu (Romunija)
Ilustrator: Katerina Bachilo (Rusija)
Fanzin: Fandango (Ukrajina)

Encouragement Awards

Stefan Cernohuby (Avstrija), Ioana Visan (Romunija), Aleksandra Davydova (Rusija), Leonid Kaganov (Rusija), Livia Hlavackova (Slovaška), Boris Georgiev (Gruzija), Julia Novakova (Češka), Oleg Silin (Ukrajina), **Martin Vavpotič (Slovenija)** in Anton Lik (Belorusija)

Honorary Awards

Harry Harrison (in memoriam, Irska)
Boris Strugatsky (in memoriam, Rusija)



New leadership of ESFS: Carolina Gómez Lagerlöf (Sweden), President; Saija Kyllönen (Finland), Vice-President; Vanja Kranjčević (Croatia), treasurer; Gareth Kavanaugh (Ireland), secretary; and Bridget Wilkinson (UK), Nominations Commission.



UPON THE EDGE OF THE INVISIBLE

28TH SEPTEMBER 2013, LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

by Bojan Ekselenski, translated by Martin Vavpotič



MOTHER AND FATHER OF THE INVISIBLE

September 28th was a day of convention, devoted to our favourite genres, named NA MEJI NEVIDNEGA (Upon the Edge of the Invisible). The organizer was the KUD Smaug society.

The convention was a one-day event, which proved to be a fairly smart decision. Location – the rooms of the dancing school Bolero at Dunajska 49 – again, a smart move since the configuration and size of the rooms was just right for an event of this magnitude.

The main brunt of the organizing effort was borne by Mitja and Rebeka, conceptual father and mother of KUD Smaug. They managed to gather all societies, involved with the speculative arts, in a single venue. It turned out that most of these societies are based in Ljubljana or its environs.

By 10 am, the following societies had gathered:

- **KUD Ampus** (fabrication of fantasy costumes and props)
- **Gil Galad**, the Slovenian Tolkien Society
- **LARP community** (live action role-playing)
- **Planeswalker** (Slovenian community of Magic: the Gathering players)
- **Virtualna Bradavičarka** (Virtual Hogwarts, not the show but a community of Harry Potter fans)
- **Slovenian Warhammer society** (community of Warhammer 40,000 players)
- **Zvezdni Prah**, (Stardust, the Author's Society of Speculative Arts)

The only ones missing were members of the society **Golden Goblin** from Maribor. At least, they attended as visitors.

BLACK HOLE STORE

Of course the convention would be rather poor if the only attendants were members of the societies. The true rhythm came from the significant number of visitors. The organizer counted 350 to 400 of them, with 100 at the peak of the event. Based on the crowd, I agree with the estimated numbers. Plenty of fan-made masks walked the venue. We've seen Gondorians, the Witch King of Angmar, Morgana from the League of Legends, Jedi knights and apprentices, etc. In short, a true sight for every true fan of the genres.

LECTURES

The lectures were all intriguing and what made me happy, the lecture room was almost always completely full. The introduction of our society also gathered a full crowd. A short and sweet introduction without unnecessary ceremony occurred around 10 am. Immediately after that, the programme began. Since I had a stall to look after, I couldn't take part in the lectures. Based on the responses, I can say they were executed with the proper quality. The organizer made a clever choice of putting them all in a single room. This way, no one was put in a dilemma which one to see. The lectures were oriented in the following categories:

- Introductions of societies
 - Lectures about various topics of the genres
- Also, the Geek quiz.

THE MASQUERADE

As it is customary in such events, the best costume was chosen. Deservingly, the winner was the Witch King, a truly magnificent piece of work with over 180 working hours invested in the final product. The best



three costumes were rewarded with practical prizes. Naturally, all costumes were beautifully crafted with effort and devotion put into them.

THE STALLS

Gil Galad – Slovenian Tolkien Society

I took a peek around the stalls. Besides its usual content, Gil Galad displayed the library, inherited from the sadly mothballed Prizma Society. We shouldn't neglect their props, based on the Lord of the Rings trilogy. We've seen some beautiful LotR costumes.

A handbook about calligraphy was most useful; to write the gorgeous LotR letters takes significant skill. I was fascinated by the Ent mask and a statue of a giant. Members of Gil Galad are very busy with various hand-crafting projects.

They also possess the oldest society fanzine *Sijoča zvezda* (Shining Star), continually published since 1998, which is practically stone age for Slovenian science fiction.

Virtualna Bradavičarka (Virtual Hogwarts)

The stall contained a few props, swiped directly from the mighty castle of Hogwarts. Clad in students of the Academy, graceful maidens wielded magical wands as they introduced their hobby. I took the magic wand in hand myself but couldn't even manage to conjure up a decent fire.

At first I thought the problem was because the wand wasn't based on a dragon's heart string but maybe I'm just more rusty than I dare to admit.

Slovenian Warhammer society

The stall of the Warhammer board game a sight to behold. The fans brought a myriad of game props. Salt and pepper of the game are the figurines which need to be hand-painted. The game includes plenty of hand-crafting and collecting, more important than the game itself for some.

The Black Hole store

The Black Hole store specializes in selling gaming and fan products. They exhibited and sold a variety of board games, Lego sets, books and whatnot. One could purchase the Warhammer box, a Warhammer cup and then be swept away dreaming about the next Warhammer battle by the paperback with a Warhammer-based story. A key condition for being a Warhammer player is decent knowledge of the English language. Playing board games means learning English as well as socializing, a positive outcome in both cases. What I found most intriguing were the LotR Legos, a Stormtrooper helmet and the LARP props.

KUD Ambus

My direct neighbours were the lovely ladies and amusing gentlemen of Ambus. Members are dedicated to the crafting of medieval and fantasy costumes, tools and weapons. They displayed a few of their products at the stall. They wore the clothes and shoes they had crafted themselves. No other word can be used except fabulous. The aforementioned Witch King was also their product. If you don't know, who that is, you're reading the wrong magazine.





Planeswalker

Society of fans of the card game Magic: The Gathering set up their gaming tables and initiated the beginners into the fantastical world of the strategic fantasy card game. The society maintains the Slovenian magical scene and nothing but good things can be heard about them. This game also requires quite a lot of skill with the English language, socializing and of course certain dedication.

LARP

LARP is a theatre of sorts – it's about live action role-playing of fantasy roles. People dress into costumes and act according to a predetermined script. Think of it as cops and robbers on steroids. Besides imagination, this includes a lot of hand-crafting and similar activity. I took a look at their costumes, weapons and other props. I'm always astounded by their ingenuity and imagination.

Zvezdni Prah (Stardust, the Author's Society of Speculative Arts)

Stardust was mainly about Knights and Wizards by Bojan Ekselenski. Hard not to be, since yours truly organized the stand, prepared the presentation while selling popcorn, biscuits and drinks. Just kidding. Besides Wizards and Warriors and fanzines Jashubeg en Jered (the only fanzine in Slovenia at the moment), the stand included a few business cards, a few dusty brochures and a batch of Clockworks Warrior novellas by Martin Vavpotič, the winner of last year's ESFS award. Products of the rest of the members were sadly missing due to the limited carrying capacity of yours truly.

IMPRESSION OF AN OLD FART OF MY CALIBRE

I consider myself as an old fart that has seen it all. After being spoiled by various foreign conventions such

as Eurocon and native ones such as Con-fusion, I can do a proper assessment of Upon the Edge of the Invisible. I honestly admit I expected less. I would consider fifty visitors as a success and a hundred as excellent. It's good to be wrong sometimes. I was astonished by the dedication of the local fan community. A limited mind would consider role-playing and handcrafting to be a waste of time. To that I reply: people without imagination and dedication lack creativity and do nothing but follow the trends, unable to add any value to their lives. In a fast-changing world, imagination and dedication are what brings success.

By the middle of the event, quite a crowd had gathered. Stardust stand saw a significant number of visitors and I enjoyed talking to the members of the fandom. I prattled on about my own books, lured some response, even signed a copy. At the end of the day, I donated a copy of *The Cave of Mysteries* to Prizma's library to assure future cooperation.

CONCLUSION

All in all, I had a great time. I found out that at least Ljubljana contains a living, breathing fandom scene. It can't be compared to the Croatian scene because we





don't have a fan society of classic sci-fi since Prizma was shut down but it is just as dedicated and lively. Membership is young by default as few are older than 30. For comparison, most of Eurocon's participants are over 40, even those over 60 are not a rarity.

My thoughts kept returning to the rest of our tiny country. Last year's SiCon saw a very poor audience. The list of participants and existing societies reveals a bitter truth. Slovenian scene is more or less contained in Ljubljana and its environs. Only a few local mavericks exist elsewhere. How to change this?

The Upon the Edge of the Invisible convention can become an excellent gluing agent, a light at the end of a dark tunnel of Slovenian sci-fi fandom. Slovenia needs

such an event and I hope it will become a yearly occasion. We need the fandom to get together as it's the only way to push the cart out of the proverbial mud. Since Slovenia became independent, this is barely the fourth general gathering of sci-fi fandom: Con-fusion in 2007 and 2008, SiCon in 2012 and Upon the Edge of the Invisible in 2013.

We can rouse the rest of the country with local afternoon events for starters. These events can show what is possible and maybe others will awaken as well. I find it hard to believe that Ljubljana is the only place with an active fandom and nothing but local mavericks in the rest of the country.

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GUARDIANS: STORMY PRINCES

ORIGINAL TITLE - VARUHI: VIHARNA PRINCESA BY TANJA MENCIN

by Bojan Ekselenski, translation by Martin Vavpotič

I browsed the shelves

The other day I browsed the shelves in our main library. I'm already familiar with much of what they have on the shelves under the heading of science fiction. Lately I have noticed that there are fewer new releases. But if anything new does come, it is mainly different versions of vampires, which according to the commandments of the legend they are not. During one of these patrols, I came across a book by the Slovenian author Tanja Mencin. According to the COBISS catalogue entry it is a part of a four book series. By genre, I immediately placed it in the popular genre of classical medieval fantasy. I also pulled a tentative link with Svetodrev by Ivanuša. Both of the stories take place in another world and in a kind of "primitive" era. But that's where the similarity ends.

For starters, I grabbed the first book in the series, entitled Varuhi: Viharna princesa. It's interesting, that in the timeframe of two years, we got two fantasy sagas, which have the word Guardians (Varuhi) in the title, and a female main character.

First, a description of the product.

The book Varuhi: Viharna princesa is of conventional thickness of approximately 250 pages, hardcover and costs € 28.90. Well, of course you can dream that this book can be purchased somewhere. Unfortunately, the situation in the book market is very unfriendly towards books by national authors published by small presses. The only place where you can purchase this book is the website of the publisher, Stella. Also, it is clear from the general design of the book that it was done by enthusiasts who lack design experience. The cover is a prime

example of what a cover must not be. Robert Pokorny was responsible for the cover design, but he is the owner of the publishing house, and not the artist of the same who lives in California. Even the interior layout of the book is a clumsy effort without any real sense of design. The appendices are written in a rather confusing fashion and, being without any online support, offer very little to the interest in the, without a doubt, very picturesque world described in the books.

Varuhi are a pretty ambitious project, since we are dealing with 1000 + pages. The Butcher's cut of this is probably the result of editorial policy, because it is easier to sell 4 books at € 28.90, rather than one for 100 € (this is unfortunately a reality in our bizarre literary cauldron, which they call a market). There is enough content for one G.R.R. Martin, but his books cost 35-40 €. Why do I think so? The story is one quarter of a longer tale, and not one of the four parts of a saga. This is not the first such publishing butcher's job in Slovenia (and certainly not the last). In reviewing such a cut we fall into a trap, because at the end of the book, we do not even reach an episodic end. On the plus side, this sort of a cut has its benefits - at least we're not lugging a 1000 page brick to the beach.

Well, we do not pick up books just because of the cover design, or editorial decisions. Tanja Mencin is responsible for the content. And many might like it.

Spoiler (don't read further)

The story is set on the planet Šarhah, which is more or less a copy of our Earth. In this world lives a diverse set of creatures, such as humans, dwarves, elves and giants, and half-deities. Their civilization is more or less medieval, dressed up with a bit of magic and some ele-





ments of contemporary spirituality. The names of the protagonists are Nordic sounding, or are at least similar to the names of characters from popular RPG games. You won't remember the majority of the names, because some are tongue-breakers indeed.

Everything revolves around the half-deity warrior priestess Norhaiah and her quest into the elven land of Valonia and the land of giants Tera. On this quest she is accompanied by a number of male and female companions. It all revolves around the impending war against the Mores, who are the resident villains of Šarhaha. First, she unearths the conspiracy in the elven land of Valonia, where Norhaiah and her companions eliminate the local More bandit. After that, she travels to Tera, where she performs a similar task. In the meantime, there is a dramatic call for the withdrawal of half-deities from Šarhaha, and Norhaiah become a priestess EXP +100 and her gang become ultra-destroyers of evil beings. I must not forget to mention the political intrigue going on throughout the story, though it is not best utilized.

That is mainly that.

Now, the details.

The story is decent, it does not get tangled up with too many parallel threads and never gets lost in unnecessary banality. Unfortunately, it fails to reach excellence. Where?

First of all, I was too distracted by the tendency to over describe. The author simply spent too much text telling instead of showing. Had the book been edited professionally, the editor would most likely help her to get rid of the unnecessary descriptions, or, rather, to turn the descriptions into storytelling. The second offense is the use of our local names. In an alien world, they certainly don't have oaks nor do pigeons fly there. Alien worlds need alien names, if they must be used at all (trust me, in 90 % of the time, it is just unnecessary word clutter). So I will not comment on the names of the protagonists. Unfortunately, the characters are rather static. No one's personality progresses. Abner started out as a calf and finished as a calf. Towards the end, the author merely indicates that he possibly might not be such a helpless dolt after all. Akron, who turns out to be a killer, is not used effectively. When you close the book, you do not have clear feelings for any of the characters, because none of them progress and their personalities are very simple. This feeling comes mainly from the aforementioned long descriptions of each pillar that the gang passes. And the last offense. Since this is the first part of a series, the author should conclude the story started in it. She should have at least made the effort to try and reduce the damage that was done by cutting the overall story into four parts. Instead of a distinct end we just have a kind of an episodic conclusion. Interestingly, another series with the word "guardian" in the title has a similar ailment.

Rating

And now let's say a few words about the target audience. Who will read this? This book will be picked up by lovers of medieval stories, RPG players and fantasy fans who have read all of Martin's books and are waiting for the new portion from the West. Young people up to 15 years old will not find much here, because they will be too distracted by the over describing. Fans of stories with not too many threads and characters will like it. The reading is not strenuous, and you will want more if you like this type of stories. I did.

The total rating is a fair 2.9/5. The pro is the good pace of the story, the con the over describing.

The book is good and worth a read, but it does not bring anything new to the genre. If the author found a way to describe less, and to breathe more life into the characters the rating would be much higher. I will recommend you buy the book once the price drops to under € 20. Also, I would argue that Tanja shows promise and has narrative potential. She has already demonstrated this with her poem experiments.

Basic information about the book:

- *Tanja Mencin: Varuhi – Viharna princesa*
- *Publisher: Self-published (or so it says)*
- *Printing and distribution: Stella, Robert Prokorny s.p. (Stella - sp.si)*
- *ISBN: 978-961-276-163-9*
- *254 pages, A5 format, hardcover*
- *Price: € 28.90*





SLOVENIAN SCI-FI FILMS

by **Andrej Ivanuša**

Surprised? Yes, they do exist! Not a large batch and I will not introduce every single one. Let's review just a few. The information comes from the webpage of Slovenian film centre. It's hard to acquire any pictures. Even worse, there're no film posters, which is standard for any foreign film.

Maja and the Alien (1988)

Feature film for children

Actors: Ana Papež, Dario Ajdovec, Maša Bole, Marko Derganc, Milena Zupančič, Gojmir Lešnjak, Vesna Jevnikar

Director: Jane Kavčič

Screenplay: Emil Filipič, Jane Kavčič

The film is about a class of alien children that arrive in a spaceship on a field trip about life on Earth. They wear shining badges that turn them invisible. But a desire to meet a creature from Earth is so strong with the alien boy Gubango that he's unable to resist. He befriends a girl named Maja and gives her a badge so that she's able to see him. This causes a whole list of complications, on Earth as on the space ship. Naturally everything ends well (heh, typically Slovenian film end)!



Jail keepers (1990)

Sci-fi feature film

Actors: Maks Furijan, Gojmir Lešnjak, Tanja Ribič, Judita Zidar, Ivan Godnič, Vesna Lubej

Director: Marjan Ciglič

Screenplay: Željko Kozinc

In an unknown town in the future, young men disappear in unexplained ways. A mysterious lodge of old men regenerates in a vampire-like fashion. When they run out of strength, they take it from young men, which are being held in special laboratories for converting life energy. The police is in pursuit of the kidnappers but these manage to capture the investigator named Pavel. The jail keeper Kristina falls in love with him and finally brings down the horrific system of life-force vampires.

Morana (1993)

Horror film

Actors: Branko Završan, Tanja Dimitrijevska, Vojko Zidar, Damjana Grašič, Urška Hlebec, Iztok Jereb, Zoran More, Nataša Tič Ralijan, Pavle Ravnohrib, Borut Veselko

Director: Aleš Verbič

Screenplay: Samo Kuščer

A group of nine people, three couples and three individuals, decides to take on the mountains in a unusual way: two off-road cars, a cross-country motorcycle and all the modern technology that they trust. But soon their technology begins to malfunction, things go bad and accidents begin to occur. Those that survive realize they can't rely on technology anymore. In the end, their survival depends on their own abilities and nature's mercy.

Tea (2006)

Fantasy film

Actors: Nikolaj Burger, Pina Bitenc, Marko Mandič, Sandi Krošl, Manca Dorrer, Tanja Šojić, Senad Bašić, Žan Marolt, Špela Petkovšek, Gruša Kočica, Maj Klemenc, Jan Bučar, Meta Vranič, Lidija Saje

Directed and screenplay: Hanna A. W. Slak

On Martin's tenth birthday, strange events begin to happen in the ancient forest. Two strangers from the city move into the woods, a girl named Tea and her mother. Their ominous presence announces a much greater threat: there is tension in the forest, trees are restless, even the ancient chestnut, Martin's friend, seems worried. Markings begin to appear on trees. Is it possible that they intend to cut down the ancient trees, home to the forest dwarfs, to build a new road? Martin desperately needs a flesh-and-blood friend that would help him save the forest. In the forest, the magical and the real world are inseparably connected. To defend the ancient magic, Martin must face the real world. On his way, he will learn something unusual: magic does not reside in the forest but in human hearts.





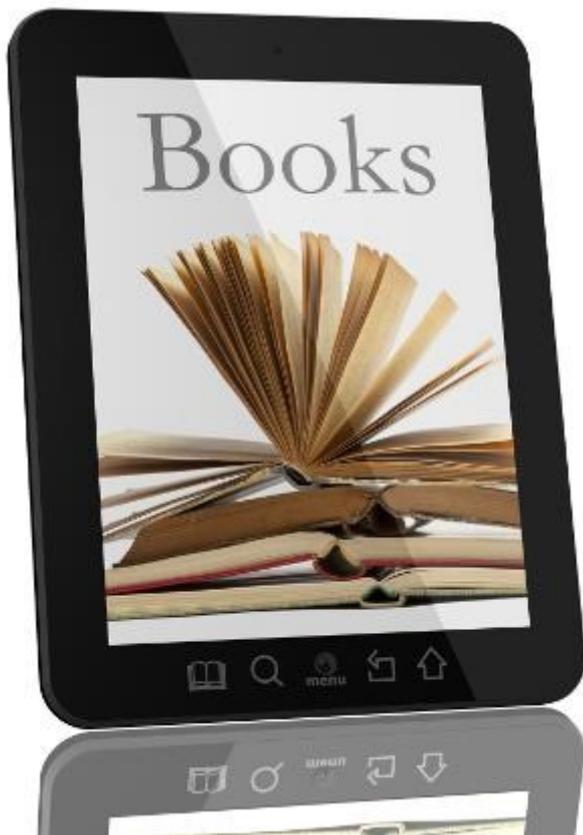
THE COEXISTENCE OF PAPER AND ELECTRONIC

By Bojan Ekselenski

In developed markets (read: Anglo-American) a certain relationship between the digital and electronic book production is being established. They were wrong, the technology gurus, who just a few years ago, condemned paper books to the garbage dumps of history. Aunt History likes to repeat herself, and so the story of radio, cinema and television has been repeated yet again. A new medium for delivering content does bite off a part of the market's attention, but it never replaces older technology, unless the old media doesn't have even a single advantage. One such victim is the VHS cassette. She died due to the ergonomically and qualitatively superior digital medial. Television is not a perfect substitute for radio, nor was it a "cinema - killer." The internet also did not destroy radio, television or the cinema, it just caused the cards to be reshuffled.

Hurry, the end is near

A few years ago, newspapers and other media, especially the computer related ones, were full of writings about the imminent extinction of the printed book. They had already written a funeral mass, to be offered by Amazon. Even Slovenian computer magazines tried to convince us that any time now it would happen. Start



collecting books, they will soon be a museum artifact. For some time, the exponential growth of the share of sales of digital media and the closing of bookstores in the Anglo-American world even gave the illusion of something like that really happening. They heavily emphasized the advantages of ebooks. But, as always this "but" is a grain of sand in the prophetic machine. Computer geeks simply forgot about user preferences and the simple ergonomic advantages of paper books. Because of this, bookshelves are still far from being terminated by the market. In fact, more people read now, either on paper or digitally. Did they close the last radio station? Did they close the last cinema? Did they close the last TV station?

For a time, the Kindle mountain really shook, and it smoked on Amazon's Olympus, lightning crashing and thunder roaring, but at the end of it, only a few digital mice came into the world. The paper book will survive this round. The physical book, therefore, will not survive, because Europe is throwing digital, fiscal and other obstacles its way. Even the screaming that the physical book is a cultural good will not help much. Once the consumers decide, the screams of someone lost in the desert are just screams.

Why would paper survive?

The reason is simple. The electronic book in its current form is merely a different, and not a replacement medium. Some content simply can not find its electronic versions. Ergonomics and the purpose of flipping the pages are still on the side of physical paper. If your child tears a picture book worth € 10, the cost is less than if they break an ereader worth 100 or 200 €. A physical book is on the shelf, accessible to the entire household, but the ebook resides inside an ereader, which may not always be at hand. When the wife is using the household ereader to read her favorite magazine, the dad cannot read his technothriller, and the kid can't get to his interactive story book. More ereaders, just like some homes have more TVs? Maybe. But this is not the only dilemma. The reading area of ebooks is limited by the size of the screen. Something bigger, say larger than A5 is not yet available for generally accessible human coin. Have you ever seen an ereader in A3 size? Are A4 ereaders popular? How about a picture book measuring 50x50 cm? I thought so. LCD screens are getting better, but they tire the eyes and devour electricity. E- paper of all electronic devices best mimics plain paper. But it has other drawbacks, such as the absence of color in an acceptable price range.

Our publishers are unnecessarily on the ramparts as they furiously insist, with stupid stubbornness, on not



issuing ebooks. Currently, only the publishing houses Študentska založba Slovenije and Mladinska knjiga issued a small part of their books in electronic form. The other general publishers are hardly worth mentioning. In Slovenia, we only just got our first serious ebookstore and the first widely accessible public library of ebooks. Ruslica, unfortunately, because of its ergonomics and offering, despite its good will, cannot be called a modern ebookselling platform. But I would like a different state, I hope it will come, because we need a third party who doesn't have their hands in the publishing coffers. Both of our new and ergonomically competent ebookstores are currently very modestly stocked. Despite the progress, their functionality is still at the beginning and what's worse, each of them is in their own trench. Maybe someone will say that Kobo and Amazon are each in their own trench too, both in terms of software and hardware, but they are global giants and not a tiny Slovenian stick.

Publishing new titles in both the E and paper format is not a common practice in Slovenia, but an exception. When in 2013, a publisher highlights the launch of a book in both E and paper format at the same time for only a single title, that's a sign of a serious market problem. At least for a normal market. But our market is far from normal. In fact, we do not have a real book market, just a place to hand out state subsidies. The only sign of a book market are the translations of bestselling (though not necessarily best) foreign blockbusters that attack you from every exposed bookshelf.

The main reason for the obscurity E offers lies in the program plans of Slovenian publishers. They are afraid of new media. Of course, this is not the fear of the unknown, this fear is purely economically based. The entry of digital media into the world of our strange literary monopoly brings in at least a trace of normal market rules.

Probably the notion of paper books as tangible cultural goods plays a part too. The book is a kind of cultural cream, and can therefore only be produced by artists in the employ of national culture. In this world the idea that anyone can publish a book, can cause a pre-infarction state. There is no worse horror than if books, the cornerstones of Slovenian culture and art, were written by Slovenian housemaids or locksmiths. The horror of all horror!

In the electronic bookstore all the books start from the same starting line. There, state-subsidized and all other authors are displayed in the same store window. Suddenly the officially respectable writer finds himself in the company of un-knowledgeable self-taught writers. The superior work (according to the critics and articles in literary magazines) of the Doctor of literature is placed next to the work of the housemaid, of whom nobody writes anything, nor is it ever mentioned that she exists at all. Yet, they are placed on the same shelf, think on that for a moment, perhaps even one next to the other. Then the public can choose, and the

future selling fate of the work is almost exclusively dependent on the people who vote with their purchases and borrowings. In such an environment, a housemaid can sell much more than the top literary writer. What does this mean in terms of culture?

Of course, such a scenario is not what the Slovenian literary and publishing representatives want. In fact, they fight it for their own benefit and their perspective on the book.

Digital hinders them

We have already mentioned that in Slovenian ebookstores you can only find books from the national book publisher and a few self-published works. Why don't other publishers sell their books in the ebookstore of Mladinska knjiga? Why does Biblos list, almost exclusively, books published by Študentska založba? Biblos is also connected to Slovenian public libraries and with a valid library card you can easily borrow books, which are therefore constantly visible to the eyes of the reading public.

Everyone complains all the time, how Mladinska knjiga pushes them into inferior positions.

Ebookstores abolish such doings. Why is no one outside of both the publishers and the rare self-publisher interested in the opportunity to access new potential customers? Why do they not want a permanent place in the shop window, on an equal footing with works published by the national publishers? Why do they not want their books "translated" into ePub and/or PDF? Yes. Why? Where is the logic?

Simple! Virtually all publishers are "cautious" when it comes to digital. This is only a different term for waiting for government support and a possible fiscal, technical, or some other protection from the flood of "bad books." Caution also means a desire to have the state pay for those few costs of digital production. They are well familiar with the trends abroad, where the creation of literary works has become quite a mass undertaking. People write, customers vote. Success does not depend on those setting the cultural policy, but people who with their ratings and money support that which attracts them to read. This is something that Slovenian publishers don't want. They want reliable protection against writing housewives. They will probably not





enter the E- market until the policy of the cultural ministry manages to create conditions similar to the market of paper books. They want to make sure that writing books remains in the secure domain of those “called to the vocation.”

Everything always starts and ends with money. In this case, the e-nail in the coffin of equal production of ebooks is the fact that the ebook represents a kind of negative number in the world of subsidies for the printed book.

In Slovenia, this is precisely why we will never see our own versions of Kobo, Amazon or Smashwords. There they sell ebooks from various publishers and the only motivations are the sales and the profit stemming from them. In Slovenia, everyone rolls their eyes when making a profit from books is mentioned.

You might say I’m wrong in the previous paragraphs. Market research reports tremendous growth in the penetration of ebooks, but it is nothing special. It is a growth of something from almost nothing. The growth from 1 to 3, is perceptually certainly more than the growth from 10,000 to 10,500. The Slovenian market is still far below the average in terms of its relative proportion of the global book market and it will remain such for some time yet. Until all published works are simultaneously available in paper and electronic form, the ebook will remain a marginal “no good bastard” in the world of “high art.” Ebooks are something that is modern, that the whole of Europe now has, if they want it or not, but everyone secretly hopes it won’t constitute a serious business in these circumstances. The ebook bastard was brought to us by the Anglo-American markets and so it has to exist, because it cannot be avoided. It will probably be so until the ministry of culture takes those waiting for government handouts by the hand and leads them the new digital subsidies when they become available.

The Coexistence of Diversity

Digital and paper are friends, colleagues and mutual supporters. They are not enemies or competitors. This is the first thing that needs to be understood.

In Slovenia, an enviable number of people have the technology suitable for comfortable reading of ebooks. The computer screen (on the desktop computer or laptop) does not count as serious equipment for reading. Maybe it’s worrying because Kobo readers[1], in addition to Amazon’s Kindle, which are the only ergonomic and competitive devices, cannot be bought in bookstores or in ebookstores. This is strange, because the format of the Slovenian ebooks is compatible with Kobo readers. This is one sign that digital is not considered a serious business for those in Slovenia who have the means to run out a serious book publishing business. A small self-publisher simply doesn’t have the means to offer ereaders or provide an infrastructure for a decent ebookstore.

Nevertheless, many people have Android and Apple tablets. They are sold in every supermarket. Each tablet has at least one ereader app for viewing ePubs, Kindle books or PDFs, which can transform the tablet into a sufficiently ergonomic ereader. If the reading app is not already loaded, it is available for free via a few taps from the digital marketplace (App Store, Google Play).



Also, both of our real ebookstores have their own reading apps. So the lack of availability of Kobo readers is not a critical flaw. Because of all this, the needed technology is present in almost every home.

The problem of the implementation of digital books lies in the misunderstanding of the possibilities offered by new media. Creating the ebook should not be just a simple formatting into the appropriate file format (ePub, PDF, mobi). As long as the participants in the creative and productive food chain do not understand the difference and, particularly, the advantages of digital, ebooks will remain only small niche products. Their market share will continue to be disproportionately low. Ebooks will come to life when those responsible for their distribution will learn to take advantage of their opportunities (interactivity, connectivity to the internet, the possibility of additional content, the democratization of literary publishing and the criticism of published works).

Ebooks can be quite cheap, in conditions where the price of the printing also represents 70% of the cost of a book, but they will never be (almost) free. You still need to pay at least the author (although you have a day job, you still want a piece of the cake) and the supporting infrastructure. Ebooks also bring a different attitude to the concept of the book. They add a social component. In the explosion of social networks, universal likes and voting on online goods, the voice of the people is stronger than ever. Everyone has access to publishing and they all have an equal opportunity. As we already mentioned, ordinary people decide what is rated higher, and not some authority that is far removed from real life.

What do you think of the cultural greats in their porcelain castles say to that? Surely, you do not think they agree with the full democratization of books, which they consider such a fundamental cultural good.



Perceptions of the book

This brings us to another minefield – the understanding of the literary work.

The basic postulate of the European book market is different from the Anglo-American. These markets are distinct, although they both offer the same products.

In the Anglo-American world there is almost no cultural policy in the European sense of the word. The book is not primarily a cultural asset, but a consumer good that may have a cultural or educational role. The purpose of the book is to penetrate through all levels of society, and pull a dollar or pound from them. In return for the “cha-ching” even the least educated person, namely someone with no literary or general education, gets a right to vote on the likeability of the read. His voice in the market place counts as much as the voice of a top literary expert or professional critic. The ebook in the Anglo-American market is an opportunity for new profits. Cultural policy has, in this consumer world, been reduced to the null tax rate. The book is not taxed, but it also does not receive any systematic state support. Obviously, this system is successful because all popularity trends start in these markets. Tolkien, Martin, Rowling, Asimov and many others came to Slovenia from these markets.

When it comes to books, Europe is a planet from another galaxy. The book in Europe is not a consumer good with possibly an added cultural value, rather it is one of the fundamental cultural goods with an especially elevated place in the life of nations. Because of this role of the book, its creation is considered the gift of an exalted divine muse to a select few especially inspired people. The development of book production is part of the fundamental national cultural policy, which is strongly intertwined with the division of financial assets. In this world, the author, who is also a cook or electrician, does not have their rightful place, because, in the opinion of the cultural elite residing near the

state money pot, they have no ability to understand the philosophical, existential or other high-sounding terms. This is particularly evident in Slovenia, where the book is the foundation of our cultural and national identity.

European publishers are against the zero-tax on books. In particular, the major Slovenian publishers are laughing because in our country the ebook is taxed at the highest rate, equated with pornography. No publisher has yet loudly drawn attention to this tax anomaly, because it is not in their interest to do so. Thus, the “annoying” ebook is by default, a tenth more expensive.

Continental Europe is linguistically diverse, and many of the book markets in it are small (especially our Slovenian market) so the Anglo-American democratic market machine is seen as a threat to their own identity. Despite all the symphonies in honor of the European common market no one has yet demonstrated “the balls” to create an appropriate pan-European multilingual platform, which would be equally accessible to all in the European Union. We are all still forced to purchase on the Anglo-American platforms. Europe is still the land of self-sustaining gardens, because many are making great profits in such conditions. The ebook abolishes the principle of language and soil, to paraphrase the saying “blood and soil.” In this gardening village, the book has the role of being the foundation of the national cultural existence. The mere thought of marketing turns everyone’s stomachs. As a result, the book market is not really a market in the true sense of the word. This of course only applies to paper books, because the paper is being controlled. The paper book is a cultural asset in the eyes of the classical book literary public, while the ebook is a consumer good. They behave according to this belief. The book tax and the skeptical attitude towards ebooks, which is evident in not publishing books in the eformat support this view. The VAT on books is collected from all, but only distributed among a few. Who gets it is decided by institutions, which are not guided by the welfare of the masses, but rather by not always traceable objectives. Once again I repeat the mantra of one of Slovenia’s renowned writers - we lack quality readers. I prefer not to think about what this means. In any case we once again return to the unusual monopoly. No one likes how it works, but everyone wants it to remain as it is. The ebook is not wanted here. No one thinks of coexistence, but only of scuffling.

Meeting the Conclusion

At the end, aunt Conclusion always comes, accompanied by uncle Opinion. It is always necessary to spit out some kind of a conclusion.

Ebooks can not replace paper books. Ereaders present a book in one way, and physical paper presents it in another. Paper will certainly continue to reign until ebooks are able to fully take advantage of their medium. Then there is the awareness of the public that only a physical book represents a real cultural good. The



internet generation has simply ate too little of book porridge so far, to be considered a sufficiently large consumer base. The media and publishing houses should put some effort into educating and informing the public, that the ebook is also a cultural good and not something that is a necessary evil, because Americans have it. A significant portion of domestic publishing houses do not see the opportunity in ebooks because of the system of financing, but rather see uncomfortable risk and competition to their market position (in so far as the term market even applies). Technologically-imperfect ereaders and their birthing problems, along with their limited accessibility in places where they belong – such as bookstores and libraries – also add their share to the problem. But, hey, ebooks have only been alive for a few years. Compared with the tradition of physical books, they are not even able to walk yet, let alone speak their first words. Do you remember the opinion of top photographers at the beginning of the penetration of digital photography? Who still uses film today?

The physical and ebook will cohabit in the same cultural space once publishers learn how to take advantage of the new medium, and once both mediums will begin to support and complement each other.

For us, the creators of what the cultural policy considers inferior literature, the ebook represents a unique opportunity. For the production of ebooks you primarily need knowledge, and not a pile of cash for the printer. The tools are exceedingly cheap, the internet is rife with mountains of suitable artworks, which is available for multiples of 10 euros. The only necessary cost is a proofreader, in case you don't have someone with a linguistic education and experience in your household. Soon, perhaps even the proofreader won't be a necessary companion to literary creation, but that's another story.

I recommend that you grab hold on ebook production. But beware! A semi-finished product in electronic form is an equal gravedigger as a semi-finished product in the physical form. Take advantage of the new medium. That is the only path to success. <>





CHERYL MORGAN

Interview by Bojan Ekselenski

Translation from Slovenian to English and back again by Martin Vavpotič

A cliché question for the beginning: what lured you into the area of speculative fiction? When did you hear the call you've followed until today?

That's hard to say. It was a long time ago. It may have been comics. I remember reading Mike Butterworth & Don Lawrence's brilliant Trigan Empire series, and of course Dan Dare. And when Marvel UK arrived on the scene I became addicted to the X-Men. But it could have been TV. Doctor Who and the various Gerry Anderson series were major features of my childhood.

If you are asking about books, the Narnia novels were certainly important, though I was reading books about mythology and historical novels long before I got to fantasy fiction.

You work focuses on publishing, editorial, literary critique and bookselling. You are also active in the area of genre. A set of the most prestigious awards speaks of the success of your work. A cliché question once more: which of these awards are you most fond of?

I guess the 2009 Hugo for Best Fan Writer is my favorite. To start with I actually beat Dave Langford, which many people held to be impossible. In addition that's the one award that is purely for my own work, as opposed to editing other people.

You are also the owner of a publishing house and a bookstore. I peeked a bit; how many manuscripts do you receive daily?

Wizard's Tower isn't generally open to submissions. What we mainly do is help authors get their backlists available again as ebooks. That's not the sort of thing that would require submitting manuscripts. We do occasionally do original anthologies, and indeed have submissions open for one at the moment, but in those cases I hire editors to handle the submissions for me.

What is your screening process like? What do you look for in manuscripts that manage to find their way to your desk?

See the previous question.

You also own an e-bookstore which I've visited briefly. How do you assemble its marketing program?

Carefully and when I have the time. People tend to assume that because I have an ebook store I'm making a lot of money from it and can afford to buy advertising. Neither of these things are true. The bookstore doesn't (yet) break even, and any advertising I do needs to be very cheap, preferably free. Mostly I get that through writing guest articles for other websites that allow me to put links to the bookstore in them.

What about physical books? Or should I ask: what is the fate of physical books of fiction genres?

I love physical books. I probably own a few thousand of them. Certainly too many to count, especially as they are spread over many physical locations. As long as people love books, there will continue to be a market for them. After all, people are still buying vinyl records.

Having said that, ebooks are gradually eroding the market for physical books. They are very convenient (especially if you are traveling, or don't have a lot of room for shelves). I expect them to gradually replace mass market paperbacks.

As far as Wizard's Tower goes, I would love to do paper. However, I have nowhere to store stock, and can't afford to pay for big print runs in the hope I'll sell them all. Also fulfilling orders by mail is a real pain. So we are looking at print-on-demand, which is a lot better these days than it was when it first started. Hopefully that will allow us to do paper versions of our original material. With the reprint business it very much depends on what rights the author has.

A typical question for someone from Slovenia: what is the status of science fiction and fantasy, compared to other literary genres? Are they marginalized or treated as equals?

It varies. I have lived in Australia, California and the UK. There is literary snobbery in all three countries, but it is not a major problem in California, and still a huge one in the UK. Australia is somewhere in between.

As a comparison, my friend Kevin Standlee is proud to put the fact that he chaired Worldcon on his resume.



Charlie Stross and Cheryl Morgan on Eurocon 2012 Convention Zagreb, Croatia (photo by ANI)



In contrast I know of UK fans who are afraid to have their names listed on convention websites in case it damages their career prospects.

Let's talk about the area of fanzines. If I saw correctly, Futura is a purely online magazine, not an electronic publication as is our Jashubeg en Jered which is distributed in PDF form. How does it all work? How does it get published? How do you pick and gather the stories?

Well Salon Futura is currently on an extended hiatus because I can't afford to pay for articles. However, ebook versions of the nine issues we published are still available in the bookstore. It is a non-fiction magazine.

What is a semi-professional magazine? What separates Clarkesworld magazine from a so-called professional magazine? As far as I've seen, Clarkesworld is not a no-charge magazine.

All issues of Clarkesworld are available for free on the website. As far as I know, Neil Clarke intends to keep it that way. You can also buy ebook and paper versions of the magazine, and that helps pay for the stories, but it is not necessary to do so.

There is no ebook-only content, as is the case with some other magazines. As to semi-professional, the basic idea is that the magazine pays for content, but that none of the staff of the magazine make a living from it. In that way it differs from a fanzine, where no one gets paid, and from a professional magazine such as Asimov's which has full-time staff.

I believe that the English and American areas are much richer than continental Europe. Is there any specific reason besides the language?

I presume you are talking about SF&F rather than general wealth. I don't think there's anything special about English as a language, other than the number of people who read it. One issue that may have affected Europe is that SF&F started to be written in quantity at the end of the 19th Century.

Then we spent the first half of the 20th Century trying to kill each other. That doesn't help develop a thriving literary community.

What would you recommend to a market as small as ours (we could populate one quarter of London) , where native authors of speculative genres are being ignored by the larger publishers as well as the media? What fan activity we have is cloistered into tiny self-centered shells.

I think that if you live in a country where speculative fiction is disrespected then your best bet is to participate in the international community.

We are slowly winning the culture war, so with time your country will become friendlier to SF&F. In the meantime, if someone from Slovenia manages to become famous in the wider world that may help change things at home.



*Cheryl Morgan with her »squid«
Convention Eurocon 2012 Zagreb, Croatia
Photo by ANI*

Is a convention where no publisher is present, with no existing media coverage, where foreign guests outnumber native visitors a convention at all? Since you have experience with convention activity, do you have any inspiring advice?

Of course it is a convention. You certainly don't need publishers or media coverage. And I'd be delighted to be attracting more foreign guests than locals. It shows you are doing something that people are prepared to travel for. When we first started BristolCon we had just over 50 people attend. Now we get over 250, and we keep growing every year. If people like what you are doing, word will get around.

What are the international opportunities for a small country such as Slovenia? One path seem to lead to our neighbor Croatia. Could you think of another path?

Croatia is probably your best bet because it is so close, and because they have such an active fandom. There may also be conventions in other nearby countries whose languages are Slavic. I don't know how mutually understandable these languages are, but I know that fans from Denmark, Norway and Sweden are able to work closely together because they can understand each other fairly well. Beyond that there will be conventions that have English-language programming, but that requires additional language skills and money to travel.

Would you briefly describe the process of organizing conventions where you participate in that process?



INTERVIEW

Briefly? Well I'll try. There are three main things you need to get right. Firstly you need a venue that you can afford and that fits the event you are putting on. Second you need someone to organize an interesting program of activities, and make sure it runs smoothly on the day. Finally you need someone to handle the money and memberships. If you can do all of those things you should probably be OK. It also helps to have a leader who can inspire people, and no matter how careful you are there will probably be a period of mad panic in the weeks leading up to the event.

Big events like Worldcon are, of course, much more complicated.

In your opinion, what are the three most important world conventions and the three most important European conventions?

For world conventions there's really only one: Worldcon. No other convention has a serious commitment to being international. It is nowhere near as good as it could be, though that is in part because many countries don't have a sufficiently well-organized fandom to run one. However, it does regularly go to Australia, the UK and Canada. It has been to Germany, the Netherlands and Japan, and hopefully it will go to Finland soon.

Europe is more interesting. Eurocon is a bit of a hit and miss affair. Its commitment to travel, in particular visiting a wide range of countries, is impressive. However, the convention can sometimes be very flat, depending on how active the local fandom is. The recent Swedish and Croatian Eurocons were very good, and I'm hoping that the new ESFS Board will find ways to improve the convention.

From a Slovenian point of view, the great thing about Eurocon is that it is an English-language convention attended by lots of people for whom English is not their first language. So although there might not be many Slovenians there, there will be lots of people also trying to get by in a foreign language. That should be less scary than visiting an English-speaking country by yourselves.

There are big conventions in many European countries, but most of them are in the local language. I've been to Imaginales in France, and it was great, but you do need some command of French, or good French friends, to get by. I'm guessing that the same will be true of Germany, Spain and so on.

Finncon, however, is a tri-lingual convention. It has programming in Finnish, Swedish and English. It is also huge (though the 10,000+ crowds of past years won't happen again now the anime convention has been spun off as a separate event). The organization is excellent, and most of the Finns speak good English. I'm sure they'd be delighted to have some Slovenian visitors. There are generally many Finns at Eurocon, so you can make friends with them there before visiting their country.



The other option you have is Eastercon in the UK. It can be quite big, and there are always lots of top writers. However, the British don't really cater for foreign visitors, and it moves around the UK. Travel in the UK over Easter weekend is always a nightmare. My advice would be to look for a year when Eastercon is somewhere easily accessible to foreign visitors, such as the recent ones at Heathrow. Better still, go to the London Worldcon.

Lately, we're seeing a rise of fantasy compared to science fiction. The general public is more familiar with Rowling and Martin than Stross, for example. How would you comment this?

Reader tastes come and go. Right now no one is much interested in space flight, and we know all about the issues of faster than light travel. Once space tourism takes off, or someone invents a hyperspace drive, or SETI turns up evidence of extra-terrestrial life, SF will become popular again.

Of all things, zombies are the most popular at the moment. Why do you think that is?

Zombies are often a proxy for an economic threat from people other than ourselves. Right now the world is going through a major economic downturn, and anti-immigration sentiment is rising everywhere. There are also "austerity" measures designed to keep the working classes in their place and reserve wealth for the upper classes. It doesn't surprise me that zombies are popular right now.

We really can't avoid it, can we: what would you rather be – a vampire, a zombie or a werewolf?

I am a were-leopard.

Slovenian market analysis and online forum development show that young women read more than young men. Did you notice this trend in more developed markets as well (England, USA, etc.)?

Yes, it is a very common trend. I don't know of any country where it isn't true.



Do you have any insight into literary theory that involves science fiction and fantasy? What is your experience with that?

You should ask people like John Clute, Farah Mendlesohn or Gary K. Wolfe. They are much better at such things than I am. I love literary theory, but I'm by no means an expert.

Could the fact that native authors are being purposefully ignored by the literary market be the cause for marginalization of science fiction and fantasy?

That's hard to say as I don't know your local conditions. It is possible to have a thriving market based on imports and translations, but equally having original work published in your native language helps a lot.

What sci-fi novel, published in the last two years, is worth transforming into a film version? If you could decide, who would you hire as director, screenplay writer and main roles?

Novels don't make good movies. The reason that Philip K. Dick has so many movies made of his work is that he wrote really good shorter work. Also movies are

such big business that they won't normally take a risk on anything published recently. Having said that, I understand that Leonard di Caprio has bought the rights to Lauren Beukes' *The Shining Girls*. I'm very pleased for Lauren and I hope that goes well. Also Neil Gaiman says that a movie is being made from his short story, "How To Talk To Girls At Parties". That could be very good. I know nothing about movies, so I can't really comment on who should be involved, except to note that if Robert Downey Jr. is involved I'm much more likely to go to see it.

A funny one for the end: if you could be part of a motion picture, would you rather take the role of a vampire queen or a werewolf queen?

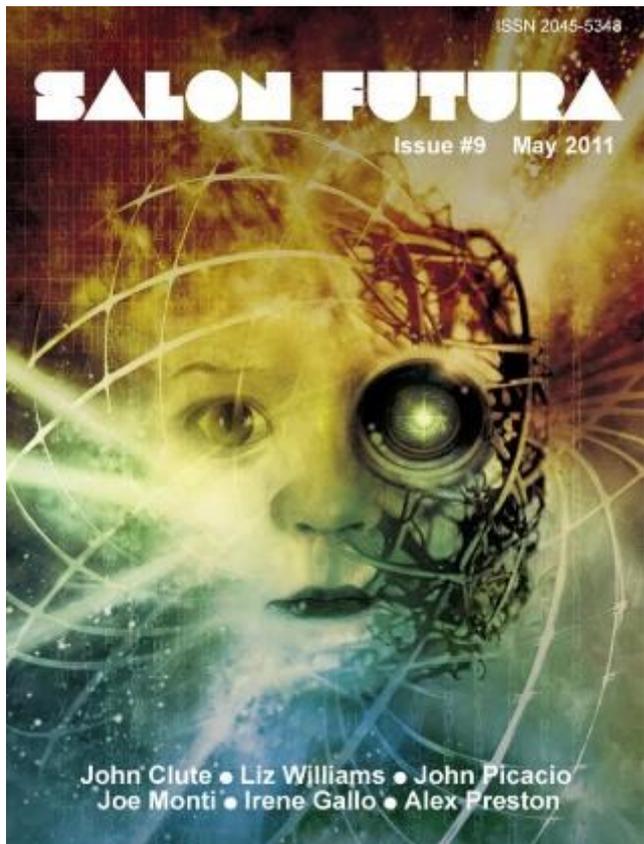
Were-leopard queen, please. But if I must choose then the vampire, as I wouldn't be seen dead playing a dog.

I wish many successes to you and I hope we meet in one of the upcoming events.

Thank you. I may well turn up at another Croatian convention sometime soon. They are very good.



<http://clarkesworldmagazine.com/>
Cheryl Morgan was editor of this magazine.



<http://www.salonfutura.net/>
Cheryl Morgan is editor of Salon Futura.



WHO IS KARA SHYRE? THE ILLUSTRATOR MARK JORDAN

Interview by Andrej Ivanuša, translated by Martin Vavpotič

Lots of people ask just who is Mark Jordan? The answer: one of our own, a Slovene illustrator. We arranged an interview at the last 29th book festival in Cankarjev dom, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

It must be difficult to be an illustrator of fantasy works in Slovenia.

Extremely difficult! Because we are small, there is no demand. If there is one, the budget tends to be very small for an illustrator. Usually we tend to do it not because it would make a living but because we enjoy doing it. This situation is enhanced by the recession or however we choose to call it.

That's why most of the illustrators in Slovenia I know tend to work in other fields. Myself, I retouch photos for a living, various montages and outstanding designer solutions for advertising agencies and such.

Could you please make a more thorough introduction of yourself? I'm mostly interested in where your illustrations and paintings are published.

My name is Mark Jordan. I was born and grew up in Trbovlje, Slovenia. I emphasize this due to my name which tends to confuse those that hear of me for the first time. I am a freelance illustrator and graphic de-

signer for advertising agencies in Slovenia and Europe. Some of my works are published at various illustration sites such as CGSociety (www.cgsociety.org), Deviantart (www.deviantart.com) and such. A few of my works have been published in globally renown books about digital art: *Exotique issue 1*, *Expose issue 8* (publisher: Ballistic Publishing Australia), which also publishes work of the renowned artist H.R. Giger (Swiss creator for the artistic background of the Alien franchise).

What is your favourite theme?

He he, mostly what does not exist in this world – fantasy of any kind.

Here's an interesting question which I've put in the title: who is Kara Shyre (illustration on front page of this issue of fanzin)?

Hmm, yes. Kara Shyre is a name of a character/avatar which I've created years ago for the computer game *Guildwars*. Eventually, I decided to draw her portrait, sort of a fan-art illustration. She was portrayed based on the world and images of the Guildwars game, along with a few parts of my own imagination.

This ranger has had quite a few copycats online. Can you tell me more about the response from her and her partner – a white Siberian tiger named PawPaw?

To be honest, I never checked the actual response to the original illustration. It's interesting that I wasn't particularly satisfied with it once I finished it but it's still quite popular among the Guildwars fans and some forums of digital art.

Why? I don't know! Maybe because the theme of the illustration is very popular by itself. Guildwars is a very popular game.

Yes, let's not forget about the tiger. That was my digital companion in the game for some time. It basically got the name from the first thing that came to my mind – call it pure inspiration.

You've illustrated a few covers for books of Slovenian authors as well. What story did you like best and which was the one you created the best cover for?

Of course, I had illustrated quite a few covers for books of Slovenian authors. I must confess I have a flaw that I'm very lazy about reading anything. All right, except Miki Muster's comics, I know them by heart.

I don't know if I should call myself an 'anti-reader'. I don't remember when was the last time I read a fantasy novel or something like it. I'm simply an illustrator who doesn't read a lot of books. It's interesting that when I design a cover for a book, I manage to capture



Mark Jordan: Dominator

Mark Jordan: thumbnail from selfportret



INTERVIEW



the essence of the story just from the few words with the author or from the title itself. I love to draw the covers of books, because it's always interesting to enter the mind of someone else and try to put that on paper, no matter if it's digital paper, he he.

Which is my favourite cover illustration? Hmm, it's hard to say. I could say it's the cover of Indigo New World from the epic Wizards and Warriors by Bojan Ekselenski.

What are your plans for the future?

Hmm, that's a good question. When I was younger, I had dreamt of plenty of things. Not much of that came true. Then you grow up and other things become more important than youthful fantasies, things such as family. To tell the truth, I survive from one day to another. I enjoy life to the fullest and try to do what makes me happy. I would like to make a living from illustrations alone.

What is it that you would like to work on the most?

That's a difficult question! It's sort of dependent on inspiration. If I dare to hope, I would love to contribute to the art department for a fantasy film such as Avatar or the Hobbit, he he, like thousands of others no doubt! That's more of a wish about a career change, isn't it?

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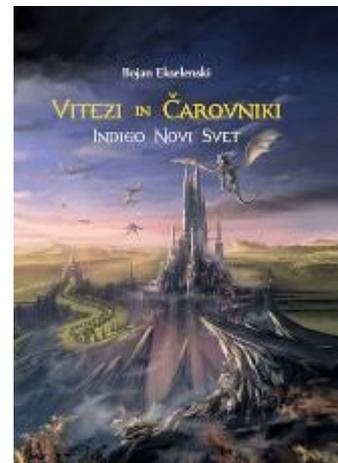
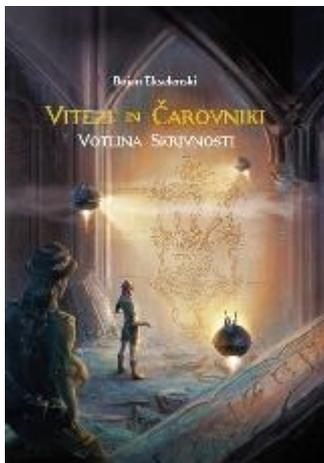
Illustrations on this page:

Top, right – Mark Jordan: Warrior

Middle, left – title illustration of the book *Vitezi in Čarovniki, Votlina skrivnosti* (Knights & Wizards - Cave of Secrets) by Bojan Ekselenski

Middle, right – title illustration of the book *Vitezi in Čarovniki, Indigo novi svet* (Knights & Wizards - Indigo New World) by Bojan Ekselenski

Bottom – Mark Jordan: Ice Moon





WHERE IS LORDKONA?

FROM THE BOOK *THE BLUE DRUG AND OTHER STORIES*

by Matjaž Štrancar, translation by Martin Vavpotič

<BobiBwanaXI – 21. 4. 2159, 12.20>

Based on numerous demands, a new thread's been opened in the Travels section where you can brag about your stories from travelling in the past and to pick the brain of experienced veterans. This is why we've assigned LordKona, the expert in historical portalling, to be the moderator. He also works in the Department for Consistency of Time of the Republic of Slovenia and is also a chairman of Slovenian society Wikihis. You know the general rules, in case of ambiguities talk to LordKona.

<Dolgacura25 – 21. 4. 2159, 12.25>

Great! We needed that.

<LordKona – 21. 4. 2159, 12.30>

I would ask you to refrain from one-line comments as they will be deleted in the future. I would also like to ask to keep the quality of this chat room to the highest level so that we don't get the same problem as the competition did where the moderator did nothing but repair history after assholes had screwed it up.

<Dolgacura25 – 21. 4. 2159, 17.56>

Fine, fine. One question. Why is it that you at the Department allow any asshole to travel back in time and do whatever comes to their mind?

<LordKona – 21. 4. 2159, 18.31>

We allow everyone to travel back in time because this is a democracy and we have no right to outlaw it. Of course we sanction everyone that changes history, and fine them with the cost that results from cleaning up their bullshit. Since there's too few of us, we count on the help of volunteers of Wikihis who are mainly used for cleaning up lesser infractions.

<Jan1888 – 23. 4. 2159, 12.30>

Yesterday, I went to the year 1944 to Eastern Prussia and helped von Staufenberg build a better bomb. Cool or what?

<Dolgacura25 – 23. 4. 2159, 12.40>

Wow. What date exactly is that? Hold on, I'll join you.

<LordKona – 24. 4. 2159, 7.30>

Just a reminder to everyone else. I dragged *Dolgacura25* back by his ears before he was able to do any damage and *Jan1888* paid for a tranquilizer administered to von Staufenberg and for a team of our finest pyrotechnicians. We also procured a trip to „Banovci“. Boys and girls, don't screw around with the past.

<Endivija – 25. 4. 2159, 18.59>

So, does anyone know how best to kill Hitler?

<Dolgacura25 – 25. 4. 2159, 22.25>

I think if you throw him off the Eagle's Nest just before the war. Maybe you can make it look like an accident.

<LordKona – 26. 4. 2159, 00.02>

Oh, come on. Once more a pair of jokers keep me busy. *Dolgacura25* – this is your second warning. *Endivija* was banned.

<Dolgacura25 – 26. 4. 2159, 11.24>

Fine. Don't be such a grouch. Of course every noob wants to whack Hitler. Some have done it several times, I've never done it.

<Antikona – 28.4.2159, 4.10>

You don't have to whack him at all. ☺ Send me a PM. ☺

<Endivija2 – 29. 4. 2159, 1.20>

What's the point of going back into the past if they don't let you whack Hitler?

<LordKona – 30. 4. 2159, 16.55>

What part of it don't you understand? By irresponsibly intervening in the past, you can alter it to the point where we would be able to communicate only through pheromones. You should feel fortunate that we have the knowledge and volunteers that agree to clean up after your mistakes and screw ups. Every day, less people want to work for free. Since last year when half of the Wikihis founders got vaporized, it's hard for us to get resources from sponsors. People laugh at us because we can't even take care of our own people. It's true, we got most of them back but we're still looking for whoever drugged and raped the grandmother of the programmer a day before her date with the grandfather. There's no time to chase after juvenile vandals, there's too much of serious crime. I also need an assistant for this topic as well. I really can't do it all by myself.

<Dolgacura25 – 8. 5. 2159, 9.59>

Hehe. There, my moment has finally arrived. I was there in 1905 when Hitler was passing his exams for getting in the Vienna Academy for beautiful arts. *Endivija* forged the results and so Dolfe graduated in painting. I bought two paintings from him. Does anyone know how much they would be worth now?

<EnForXXXer – 9. 5. 2159, 6.45>

Officially they're worthless because it's illegal to trade in art from alternative worlds. The black market won't get you anything either because it's flooded at the moment. Which is natural since it's cheaper for everyone to get their own copy of the Mona Lisa.

<Dolgacura25 – 9.5. 2159, 9.22>

Ah well. At least I can hang it in my bathroom. ☺

<LordKona – 10. 5. 2159, 12.33>

Not again! *Dolgacura25* – this is your final warning before you're banned and if I ever find you within 200 meters from Hitler, I will castrate your father while he was still pissing in his diapers. *Antikona*, consider yourself warned for giving inappropriate advice over PMs. *Endivija* – hide all you can, you can't outrun a pissed off LordKona...

<Dolgacura25 – 10. 5. 2159, 13.49>

Feeling a bit nervous lately? I didn't whack him. I just wanted to shake his hand. ☺



<LordTotalKoma – 16. 5. 2159, 10.00>
 Hitler's gone. Yesterday on a school field trip of World War 1, I saw him 'accidentally' meet a gas grenade.
 <Dolgacura25 – 16. 5. 2159, 12.25>
 Yesss!
 <nj00bilak – 23. 5. 2159, 12.30>
 Hey, does anyone know how best to kill Hitler's old man?
 <Eena Divja – 23.5. 2159, 12.38>
 Been there, done that. But it's not as fun as whacking Dolfe himself. ☺
 <Eena Divja – 23.5. 2159, 12.45>
 Guys, is anyone interested in how much booze Hitler can handle? I have a plan to get him to Oktoberfest in year 11. I need two more volunteers. Don't worry, that pussy Kona won't be bothering us for a while. ☺
 <LordTotalKoma – 1. 6. 2159, 12.30>
 How did it go? I kinda think you didn't do it. Eena divja, are you a man or a woman? Can't make it out from your writing.
 <Eena Divja – 1. 6. 2159, 13.48>
 No one wanted to come, will have to try next year. I'll go have a beer with Himmler for now. And it's none of your business what's between my legs.
 <Dolgacura25 – 8. 6. 2159, 8.25>
 Has anyone seen LordKona lately?
 <Eena Divja – 8. 6. 2159, 22.20>
 Lord who? ☺
 <nj00bilak – 9. 6. 2159, 17.37>
 You were right. It's not hard to whack Hitler's old man. His grandfather is really tough, though. It took six swings with the shovel to take him down.
 <LordKona – 12. 6. 2159, 18.00>
 I've had it with everything! It's one thing to go after Hitler, another to go after me. Not only that no one wants to help me because I can't clean up after you people by myself. Now you're messing with my ancestors. In the past two months, I've had to intervene a dozen times on their behalf only and a dozen times more on Hitler's behalf. I've filed and won a law suit against Eena Divja so she's banned from historical forums. From now on, she can watch history only on TV and on credit only. Dolgacura25 no longer has access until he formally apologizes. Let this be a warning to the rest of you.
 <nj00bilak – 12. 6. 2159, 22.31>
 Did you know that LordKona's granddad is also quite resilient to shovels. It's a good thing I had my phase remote defibrillator with me.
 <Antikona – 12. 6. 2159, 22.39>
 Right. Defibrillator rocks. ☺ Works good on Stalin too.
 <Pyrogasmus – 13. 6. 2159, 00.52>
 Guys, I need an advice. Does anyone know how smuggle a canister of Brenner through the portal? I want to give Hitler a taste of his Jewish medicine.
 <Antikona – 13. 6. 2159, 7.50>
 You can buy it there, asshole.
 <Strfotr TMI – 13. 6. 2159, 9.51>
 You should be ashamed. Today's youth lacks all re-

spect of history. Back in my day, no one would think of that.

<boohoo jonazy – 14. 6. 2159, 7.59>

Shut up, old timer. Hey, I want to put a führer in the ground myself. Who goes with me?

<Antikona – 14. 6. 2159, 8.50>

Get in line, moron.

<BobiBwanaXI – 14. 6. 2159, 16.21>

Since we can't find our moderator, and we have no one to replace him, I'm closing this thread before it's ripe for official lawsuits. I suggest you thank nj00bilak, endivija and similar idiots who stink of lack of bugging and are the reason why so many historical portals have such a bad reputation. I'm shutting this down.

<>



Title page of book MODRA DRUGA IN DRUGE ZGODBE
 (The Blue Drug and Other Stories) by Matjaž Štrancar



DVD OF LIFE

by Bojan Ekselenski, translation by Martin Vavpotič

I consider myself a lucky dog. It would be extremely rude to fate, if I were to claim otherwise. If God has all of life stacked according to genre in a DVD collection, I belong in the genre of fairy tales for alpha males.

The day started with good sex and a fine breakfast. Then I jump into the Beemer, hit the gas and the machine leaps onto the road. Did I have the right of way? Who cares? Everything lies in power and boldness! I race to the skyscraper of the Medicommerc firm.

The firm itself lays the golden eggs on its own. It sells medicines and medical stuff to public health institutions. The old man spent a few grand on buying favors from the right public officials. There is nothing more pleasant than milking the public sector with its greedy officials in decision making positions! The position of the owner of such a company as the one at the top of the skyscraper delivers plenty of bonuses. Do you itch with curiosity, to find out how I got hold of the highest office in the city? Here we go!

The story is a fairy tale for adults. Fate placed the position of alpha lion into my cradle. I successfully ditched, cheated or simply bought my way through elementary school and high school. Luckily the world is divided into predators and their prey.

The University of Economics is a tremendously entertaining institution. When they found a few politicians with pirated academic products they tightened up all the way. Of course, it's not true that memorizing will get you to pass the exams. At least it wasn't for me.

I found a way to bypass the system completely and comfortably steered the wild years of student life. Again, thank God for the poor public sector. It gives you wings!

I gathered up my final thesis from all over. During the time of my pre-graduation partying, my old man decided to depart from this world. One afternoon his disk died and my stepmother formatted it to dust. But the old bastard fucked her over good. Despite his almost annual exchanges of official mistresses, she stayed with him for eighteen whole years. My real mother flew to the angels when I was four years old. Apparently she just collapsed and the doctors said, "Game Over."

Well, let's get back to the point! I, his angelic son, and not the stepmother, inherited the entire firm. She had to settle for crumbs. There is no better graduation gift.

I hung my university degree in the old man's office at the top of the skyscraper and hired a juicy fuckable secretary. I fired the old one. I like milfs, but not during business hours.

So today, I drove into the garage. I rode almost to the door of the office in my private elevator. My lovely secretary Helenca was waiting there for me. Oh, her intoxicating neck and the low neckline of her dress. Yummy, how delicious! Following the regulations, she smiled at me. I returned her smile and walked into my heavenly directorial sanctuary.

I admired the panoramic view of the city, through the big glass windows of my office. Below me crawled little people, cars and other traffic junk. They are all so small from this height, so tiny in their insignificance. I admired my view of the world. An endless river of racing people rushed past on their ways of survival. The invisible hand of the higher program of life broadcast the scenes of their unconscious life. Each of them hurried to get their meager pot of food, a pinch of pleasure and a fragment of games. The only real driving force of the world is greed. Infinite and absolute greed is the basic algorithm of the application of life. What is love? The wrong question. How much for a quicky? Honesty? Yes, but only with a good lawyer. Wow, that was some deep thinking. You can quote me for free.

At that moment, a bunch of business suits enters the office. My subordinates must be neat. Especially the women must never wear skirts that are too long. I like to rest my eyes on a pair of beautiful thighs. My company, my desires, my rules. My triple M.

They speak one over another and don't pay attention to my presence. I try to stop their bickering:

"Hey! I'm here! You're like a bunch of market sellers!"

It takes a while for them to settle down, then the Personnel Director speaks, looking a little embarrassed:

"I'm sorry, I did not see you."

The others begin scattering the ashes of poor sight on themselves too.

I waved my hand at them dismissively.

The meeting that followed was held in a strange sort of atmosphere. Every so often odd things happened. I also felt a bit empty. Something was missing. But what?

During the lunch hour I leave the office. In the hallway, I noticed that no one pays attention to their god, who cuts their precious bread. I address Helenca. But she does not respond. No smile, no showing her low neckline. You know, breasts are a gift from God to children, but its mostly adults that play with it.

I want to grab her bare shoulder. Fuck! My hand goes through thin air. What's going on? I loose it and scream: "Hey you!"

Nothing! Nyet! No response. Everyone is pretending not to hear me. I begin to sweat. Where am I? What is this madness? I stand still in the middle of the hustle



and bustle of people leaving their offices. Then I'm mowed down by the last shred of common sense. Filip walks right through me. By all the virgins of the worlds, it's a really scary scene. My head spins. Totally. I'm starting to lose the ground under my feet. Where am I? I want to get to my sanctuary. I insert the card into the slot. It falls to the ground. I bend down to pick it up. A soft hand beats me to it. Helenca. She peers at the card then sighs quietly:

"What is the boss's card doing here? I'll go look in his office."

The card is pushed into the slot and the door opens silently and Helenca looks around curiously. I walk into the office. I went right through Helenca. Really crazy. She becomes attentive:

"Hmm, a strange draft."

Shit, the director is a draft for her. She closes the door and I'm left alone. At least I thought so. I turn to my royal chair and see a tanned man in a fine suit sitting there. Between his heart-shaped mouth and crooked nose, he had a thin impeccably cut mustache. Together with his dark, teased and combed back hair he looked just like a gangster from the 1930s.

I managed to stammer:

"What are you doing in my chair?"

The man grins and stands up sovereignly. He pulls a cigar from his pocket, lights it and grins at me:

"Let me introduce myself. My name is Elči Svet, the librarian of the Library of Lives."

My blood pressure rises. What is he doing on my God's throne?

I furiously reply:

"Oh, so you can see and hear me. Fine. You know, this is a non-smoking office. Some ganja here and there, sure, but tobacco? That's for gypsies and the homeless."

The man casually inhales and blows the smoke out,

then lazily replies:

"Sir, smoking in this room is the least of your problems."

I step up to the table. I had a desire to punch someone in the face:

"I'm calling security! "

The man remains ice-cold:

"I'm here on business."

"You need something for your nerves?" the questions bursts from me. He just smiles:

"Funny question. You know, there has been an unpleasant mistake in our library. I would like to explain to you about this unwelcome matter politely."

I cross my arms and lift my chin:

"And how does your library concern me?"

The man nods:

"It might. I'll be brief. The DVD of your life unfortunately falls into the genre of fairy tales."

"And?"

Elchi casually blows out more smoke:

"There is no system support at the Library of Lives for the fairy tale genre, although this genre is clearly derived from the Slovenian political sewer. Your life will be deleted in 3, 2, 1. Now! Game over!"

The little boy looks at the plush panda bear. He wipes her mouth. She eat the boy's apple so messily.

Mommy caresses his hair:

"Janez, did she have enough to eat?"

"Yesss!" He exclaims.

"Excellent!" his mother says and stares out the window with a tense expression. Worries gnaw at her again. How will the new reduction of her already pitifully small teacher's salary allow her to buy the expensive medicines for her three-year-old son? And the arrogant politicians can eat pigeons!

<>





TODAY IS NOT TUESDAY

Original title: Danes ni torek by Andrej Ivanuša,
translated by author, proof reading V. K.

In the evening before going to bed, Erica asked herself when her George will stumble home at last. He wouldn't often get drunk on weekends. But still, now that he was in pension, she was slightly more worried about him.

"What if he tripped somewhere all drunk, hurt himself and now lies in a puddle of blood. She would nervously peep at the house telephone and constantly expect it to ring. Here and there she pulled the cellphone out of her tracksuit pocket and make sure it was turned on, had ringing volume set, and that the battery wasn't empty. She imagined getting a call from the police or the hospital, asking if George is her husband, because he is... She was tempted to call her son Tony and ask him to make sure that... She shook her head to dispel dark thoughts.

Of course she didn't like him roaming around with friends and ex-coworkers. But if she didn't let him, he'd be moody and grumpy the whole week. So she rather endured one day than having to go through a week of his crankiness. And he tried to make up for it every Saturday afternoon anyway.

In the bedroom, she set the alarm clock on the radio and listened to the music with half an ear. She changed to pajamas and still thought about it.

"But it was the same last week," she thought to herself. "He'll surely wobble back by midnight."

She consoled herself that so far nothing bad has happened. And neither will this time! At least he didn't get violent when he got drunk. He just quickly fell asleep and she would often find him snoring on the living room sofa, covered with his coat. Then she treated him all afternoon. Well, better yet, his hang-over.

As she got into bed, she started to think less and less about this whole situation. She was more worried about everything she had to do the next day. She listened to music that lulled her to sleep. Tired, she started drowsing and half-asleep, right before dozing off; she heard some words of a reporter, saying:

"... The sky over Chicago was lit up by an extraordinary object ... eye-witnesses say ... bright light ... high-pitched buzz, like the sound of a bee swarm ..."

The alarm clock automatically switched off after a while when Erica was already fast asleep.

Rumbling and smothered cursing woke her up. It was already bright in the room. She quickly rose from bed and checked the time.

"Seven!?" she looked in astonishment. She threw off the blanket, put on the slippers and grasped the dressing gown. She was putting it on while walking and opening doors, but suddenly stopped short. There, in the middle of the living room, stood her George. Somewhat different at a glance. Drunk? No! Then ... uneasy? Puzzled? Yes, that's it! He seemed absent. He looked towards her. Their eyes met. His look! He was scared to death!

"George! What happened to you?" she whispered. He stroked his bald skull and nape, covered with thin hair. He sighed. Then he got perplexed and looked down. He mumbled, more to himself:

"They kidnapped me!"

"What?!" She didn't believe her ears. He cleared his throat and repeated, this time louder:

"I was kidnapped!" He swiftly raised his head.

She opened her mouth in surprise, not knowing what to think of it. Surely ... he can't be drunk! Has he gone mad or what? She stared at him and observed his face. Then she realized that, surprisingly, his cheeks were covered with a few days old stubble.

"How ... is this possible?" she thought, "But he shaved yesterday morning!"

Before she could ponder over anything, though, he fell into her arms and burst into tears. He snuggled up to her, sobbing, like a spooked child.

"There, there! It's alright now, George!" she comforted him. "It's all fine now! You're home."

Abruptly, he moved away, wiped his tears and said:

"Nothing's fine! Don't you get it? The abducted me!"

"Who abducted you? When?"

George shriveled and made a gesture with his hand towards the ceiling:

"They! They abducted me!"

Erica shuddered as she realized what else has been disturbing her. His smell. He smelled ... stank ... She didn't know how to explain it. His odor was very peculiar, something she had never smelled before. "Who abducted you?" she absently repeated the question.

"A ... Aliens!" he stuttered. She gave him an astonished look.





"He must have lost his mind!" it struck her. Her thoughts were like a torrential current, she was thinking so fast.

"Come!" she said, put her arm around his shoulders and gently placed him on the sofa in the living room. She sat by him and held his hand. She saw his absent look and felt he's trembling. She caressed his arm.

"George ...," she began. He nervously moved away his arm and said:

"You don't believe me!"

"George ...," she repeated. He waved his arm in front of her face and then he let it out:

"Such, little men ... I can't describe them! You know! They took me four days ago and led me ..." She put her finger on his lips and stared in his eyes in surprise. Searching for madness inside him. But they were clear and pure and still terrified. She said slowly:

"I'd believe it if our Tony was saying such things. You know, all crazy about science fiction, reading those books and watching space movies. But ... you?" George shrugged his shoulders. He wanted to say something, but kept quiet.

"You're drunk," she exclaimed and nodded. She tried to convince herself that her George isn't mad, but only drunk, blind drunk!

"I'm not drunk!" he objected. "I was drunk on Friday night, I admit. Then ... when I went ... home. Then ... those little men with bulging black fishy eyes abducted me. They torturing me for four days. Four days! For what I know, they have dissected me like a frog and then rebuilt ... Yes, yes! They rebuilt me like a Lego brick robot!"

She was quietly listening and started to swing back and forth.

"He's gone mad!" she was thinking straight, as he was speaking. Only the end surprised her.

"They rebuilt you like a ... Lego brick robot?!" she asked.

"Yep!" he nodded. "They experimented on me, turned me inside out, took apart and rebuilt, like I'm a toy figurine." Now, as he talked, he was regaining his composure. But so did he regain the memories he tried to forget about.

Erica moved away from him. She was listening quietly.

"Friday night, they took me with a flying saucer. And pfft - some kind of a beam pulled me up, to them ..."

"Friday was yesterday," she said and again moved some inches away from him. This piece of information appeared to have confused him:

"Isn't today Tuesday?"

"No, today is Saturday!"

"Saturday?" he exclaimed. "Can't be!" He quickly grabbed his cellphone from a bag behind his belt. He took it out, turned it on and stared at the screen. Triumphant-ly, he looked up and showed it to her.

She was staring at it with eyes wide open. Without a doubt, the screen showed date and time: Tuesday, seven thirty. She turned and looked at his face. With a trembling hand, she caressed the four day stubble on his cheek.

"Maybe ...," she thought and moved away the hand as if she had burned her fingers. She remembered the words of the reporter she heard yesterday before falling asleep. This was all too much for her.

"Yesterday was Friday and today is Saturday," she repeated absently. "You went out yesterday ..." He watched her for some time and again checked his cell phone.

"I don't understand how's this possible!" he said quietly more to himself. "Damn it! I was there. I really was ... four days!"

"George, if you say so, it must be true!" she said calmly. She swiftly stood up to get herself together.

"I'll prepare us breakfast!"

He stared at her and kept looking at the screen of his cell phone. Vacantly, he said:

"Great, please do, I'm really hungry as a bear!"

Erica went to the kitchen and started rummaging.

But she kept shaking more and more and finally a coffee cup she was just putting on the table slipped through her hands. It fell on the floor and shattered.

"Erica? Is anything the matter?" George cried out.

He entered the kitchen a moment later, quickly reviewed the situation, nimbly pushed her away and bowed down as if he were young again. He picked up the shattered pieces in no time and tossed them in the trash. When he was done, he noticed that she was staring at him.

"What is it, Erica?"

"What about your back?"

"What about it?"

"Well ... doesn't hurt you anymore?"

Now George realized as well that he bowed down without any pain in his back or his knees. Something he has not done since the retirement. He felt rejuvenated. He didn't feel any pain anywhere. And his sight and hearing ... they were refined and keen. He was overwhelmed by a wave of inexpressible joy, when he realized what happened.

They were just eating breakfast. Erica was slowly gnawing buttered bread and sipped coffee. George was gorging on everything she had found in the fridge. He emptied it entirely and wasn't ready to stop. And he kept talking all the time. His memories started coming back. He told her every little detail.

At the end he had told so much that it was simply too much for her. She accepted everything, no matter what he said. And it didn't matter! The only thing that worried her was what's going to happen when George start sharing the story of his adventure with the others.

But in just a few days, she couldn't care less about what the others have to say. Her George! Every evening since, he'd take her to the bedroom with a naughty smile. Even the fact that she was younger didn't help her keeping up with him.

What she dearly wished for now was that she too was kidnapped by the extraterrestrials and turned inside out. She thought about how would be to be rebuilt like a Lego brick robot and ... reinvigorated. <>



MEMORY BOOK

by Vanna Smythe

Brynd squinted from the blinding light of the sun reflecting in the puddles left by last night's storm. The main thoroughfare of the town was packed with people; all and more seemed to have come to make their purchases on this first spring day.

It suited Brynd perfectly.

He'd already chosen his target. A rich-looking man--his heavy cloak adding at least 2 stone to his already formidable girth--haggling with the crone who sold the porcelain dolls. Brynd couldn't imagine what girl would want a doll that could break so easily. But girls were all dumb.

The man's velvet coin pouch hung off his wide belt, attached by a thin string. One slash would free it, and likely the man wouldn't even notice the lightening of his load.

Brynd tucked his curly brown hair under his hood, then tied his kerchief over his mouth and nose, so only his eyes showed. When Brynd looked back at his target, an old blind beggar seemed to stare directly at him. A thin cloth veiled the beggar's eyes, yet still Brynd felt the man's gaze pierce him.

No matter. The man can't see.

Brynd edged closer to the rich man, squeezing between two younger men who stood a step behind him. The man's face was crimson, and he was flapping his arms around wildly, explaining something to the crone.

Brynd took out his small knife and pretended to stumble beside the man. He fell to the ground under the man's thick cloak, slicing through the cord that fastened the coin pouch to his belt, as he did so.

He failed to catch the falling coin purse.

It clanked loudly as it hit the cobblestones.

Brynd scrambled to pick it up, but not before the old man turned. "A thief! Get him!"

Brynd found his feet as only a lithe boy of eight years old can, and ran. A glance back showed him the two young men give chase. Their long legs would make it a short one. He'd be lucky to keep all his fingers if they caught him.

"Stop, thief! You can't escape us!" One of them yelled, and Brynd imagined he felt the man's warm breath against his neck.

The blind beggar stood in his path. Brynd couldn't





avoid jostling him. The blind man stumbled and collided with the first of Brynd's pursuers. The other one couldn't stop in time, and tumbled to the ground too.

Saved!

Deep in the forest and certain no one pursued him, Brynd untied the pouch to check how well he did. More gold than silver coins spilled from the pouch.

This would have been ample to buy the biggest blown glass vase that Mam so liked. If only Brynd had not botched the stealing so, he could be carrying the gift home to his mother now.

At least he could pick some flowers for her on the way home. Mam'd like that. Maybe she'd even stay in this night.

The sun was well over the midpoint in the sky before he reached the small wooden hut that was his home.

"Where have you been?" His mother's sharp voice greeted him from the shadows that hid her bed.

She is cross.

Brynd untangled the pouch from his pocket and set it clanking on the simple wooden table where they shared their meals. "A small trouble getting this..."

His mother approached slowly, still wrapped in the blanket, her black hair greasy with sweat.

She hefted the pouch and whistled appreciatively when she opened it to see all the gold.

Brynd held out the flowers to her. "I had meant to buy you a vase for these, the violet one of blown glass you liked so much, when last we were in town."

She didn't reach for the flowers, just looked at him with her mouth open.

Then she snorted. "Good. Why would you spend coin on a thing like that?"

She spilled the coins on the table to count them, ignoring the flowers.

"You said you liked it..."

"No, son, you were gift enough for me." She didn't mean a true gift, Brynd was sure. She meant he was a gift she didn't want. Often she said so, but not always.

Sometimes she smiled, tussled his hair, and hugged him. She did on that day, when she admired the vase. But that was ages ago.

Today her hands shook and there was no kindness in her muddy green eyes.

She dumped her blanket across the table and put the coins back into the pouch. At the door she slung her violet cloak across her shoulders. "Don't wait up."

Brynd started after her. "You mustn't go out with all that money."

"You will not tell me what to do, boy. Never will you tell me what to do!"

She turned and slapped him, then left and slammed the door behind her.

Brynd's cheek burned. He clutched the flowers still.

She'd been worried about him, he was gone so long. That's what made her cross.

He filled a mug from the bucket of water by the

hearth, placed the flowers in and set them beside her bed. She liked the flowers, she was just too cross to tell him so right then.

The Disciple watched Brynd's mother sway along the thoroughfare. He approached her and grabbed her arm.

His particular talent as a Disciple lay in awakening compassion and love in the hearts of men and women, but the magic worked much better if the people he touched had an innate store of it. This woman did.

He pulled off the cloth covering his eyes and looked at her. She sighed and her eyes widened, as she met his turquoise-colored eyes and the full force of his magic hit her heart.

"Your son was born with the magic of the Disciples. Soon I will take him from you, make him forget all so that we may train him. Create for him a memory book. Do so with love, care, and warmth." The Disciple fortified his words with images set directly into her mind explaining the process.

"How?" She asked, tears welling in her eyes. "I have forgotten my love for him."

"Find a way, do not let drink steal it. Make the most of the time you have left with him. I will come for him at dawn tomorrow."

The Disciple released her, unwilling to overwhelm her with his magic.

A mean glint appeared in her eyes almost immediately. "Old man, get out of my way."

"After I take him, he will remember nothing. A memory book is all that will help him remember once his training is complete. If you do not make it for him, he will never again know you."

"As if I believe that you are a Disciple, or that Brynd is special enough to become one!"

Her laughed echoed shrilly across the street as she walked away.

Smelly old man, what was he even talking about?

Brianna entered the tavern where the ale was cheap and the company made up of folk she knew well. How they'd all laugh when she told them of a Disciple wanting to take Brynd away. Disciples could stop time, turn iron into gold, heal with the touch of their hands, and speak to wild beasts. They were always taken for training while still children. The smith's daughter was collected for training when she was only seven years old. Now a woman of twenty, she was a Disciple and sometimes visited her family.

Would Brynd visit me?

Nonsense. The man was likely just another lying old beggar.

Besides, Brianna didn't know how to make a memory book.

Yet there was knowledge in her mind of a leather-bound book filled with drawings, souvenirs and trinkets, scraps and locks of hair. In her mind, she and



Brynd were filling it.

The main room of the tavern smelled of spilled ale, vomit and unwashed men. Despite the early hour, more than half of the tables were occupied. The baker waved her over to join him, but Brianna didn't want company.

She sat down at an empty table, and the serving boy brought her a large mug of ale without being asked to.

The papery sold leather-bound books. Brianna had enough coin to get a good one, with brass buckles and paper stitched in well, so it wouldn't unravel. She still had a box of souvenirs of happier times at home. From before she began to drink daily, and coin always ran short.

She stood and ran from the tavern.

If I hurry I can still catch the paper maker before he closes his shop.

Rain began to fall as she walked to her shabby home, clearing her head. Brianna clutched the book to her chest, covered well by her cloak.

Brynd sat at the table, carving a spoon from a block of wood, working a bear into the handle.

"You are so good at that," Brianna said as she tussled his hair. The warmth and love in his bright brown eyes seared her chest. Will the Disciples make his eyes turn turquoise as they trained him? Surely it would be so, just as the old legends claimed. Where will his magical talent lie?

"Come, put the carving away now. We must do something." Brianna set the book on the table and went to collect the box of souvenirs she kept in a cupboard by the far wall.

Dust and dirt had formed a thick paste over the box.

She brought it to the table and wiped off the filth.

"What is this, Mam?"

"A box full of memories, enough to fill a book...I hope."

A lock of his hair, taken while Brynd was still in swaddling clothes, a locket he carved for her not so long ago, bearing a single flower. Pages filled with her own clumsy writing, detailing Brynd's first step, his first word. It was "Mam", she remembered now. Hot tears streamed down her face.

"Put it away, Mam, if it makes you cry," Brynd urged, an edge of fear in his voice.

She cupped his cheeks in her hands. "Fear not. I will never be cross with you again."

Sobs threaten to overcome her, but she stifled them.

Creating a memory book should have no sadness to it, only joy and love. How she knew this, Brianna couldn't say, but knew it she did.

"Bring water and flour. We must make glue." She rose to get the quill and ink. Some water would reawaken the dried powder and make enough ink to write with.

On the first page she wrote, "Brynd's Memory Book" in bold and shaky letters, hoping she got them all right. She hadn't set anything down in writing for a long time.

She stroked the lock of Brynd's baby hair then told him to put a blob of glue down so she could set it into the book. He looked at her questioningly, but obeyed.

His tiny head cover went below it. Under it, she wrote of the day of his birth. It was late spring, the flowers all in bloom. She had picked one, and dried it to remind her. Tears choked her as she set it into the book now.

"What did you write, Mam?"

"Of your birth and all the happiness I felt when first I held you."

She wrote of his first steps then, his first words.

"Do you remember how I would call 'bread' 'dough' for so long?" Brynd asked, smiling.

"I do."

Brynd took one of his drawings from the box. It was of their old cat.

"I wonder what became of him," Brynd said.

"He left as is the way with cats," Brianna assured him.

She glued in the drawing. "Here, you will remember him always now."

One of his carvings went in next.

"I cut my finger when I was making this," Brynd said, memory of pain marring his eyes. "You cleaned the blood and wrapped it up in a flowery paste, and it didn't hurt so bad afterwards."

"You remember that, do you?"

The first letters he set down went into the book next. She had never thought him all of them. The Disciples would, she was sure.

Coins were hard to get. Brianna had no man, no trade. She was just a girl when she got pregnant, shunned by her family for the shame. Left alone. Brynd was a ray of sunshine, but soon the thunderclouds set in.

Brianna had been forced to steal, and she made Brynd steal for her now.

She had done so much wrong. How could this little book of what she did right outweigh that? How could she have forgotten her love for him when it threatened to take away her air now?

Soon, too soon, all the souvenirs of good times were fastened into the book.

She dipped the quill into the ink and wrote of her love for him. Brynd would remember all again, once. The man he would become might not look so forgivingly on her transgressions against him, his unconditional love and trust.

She sought his forgiveness with those words, tears marring them in places.

Grey light began appearing on the horizon as she made the final token for him--a collage made of the flowers he had picked for her.

"Don't destroy them!" Brynd cried.

"I'm not destroying, I am creating that which will last," Brianna assured him with a smile. Then she wrote how she would always cherish the last flowers he



picked for her. She kept one whole, to dry and keep.

The Disciple stood in the doorway, the sun rising behind him. "It is time."

Brianna clutched Brynd to her chest. "No, not yet!"

The man shook his head. "You know it must be so. Your son must be trained as a Disciple."

She hugged Brynd tighter, and then covered his face and head with a thousand kisses. "I love you, my sunshine boy. I have forgotten, but will never forget again. Go now with this man. When you return, I hope you love me still."

She led him to the man.

Brynd squeezed her hand. "I don't want to go!"

She pried his hand open gently and set it into the old man's.

All recognition was gone from her son's eyes when he looked back at her.

"Did you make the memory book?" the Disciple asked. She ran to the table to fetch it.

"Do not expect him back soon," the old man said, then turned to the boy. "Are you ready to leave?"

"Yes, I wish to go home to the mountains," Brynd responded.

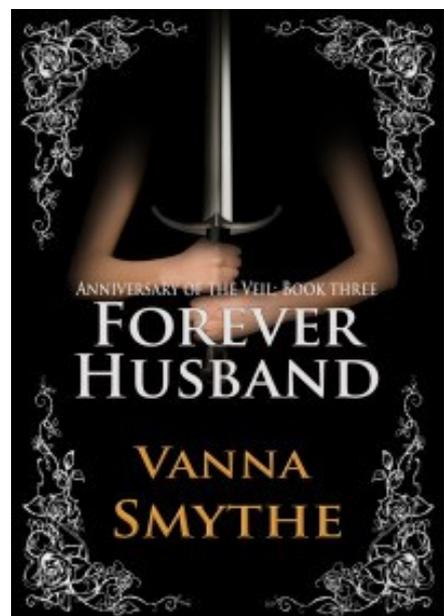
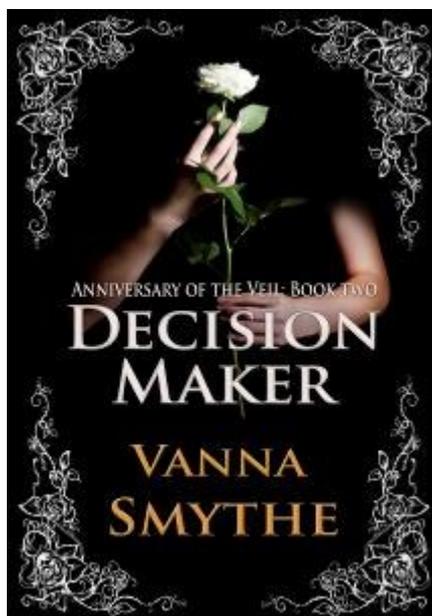
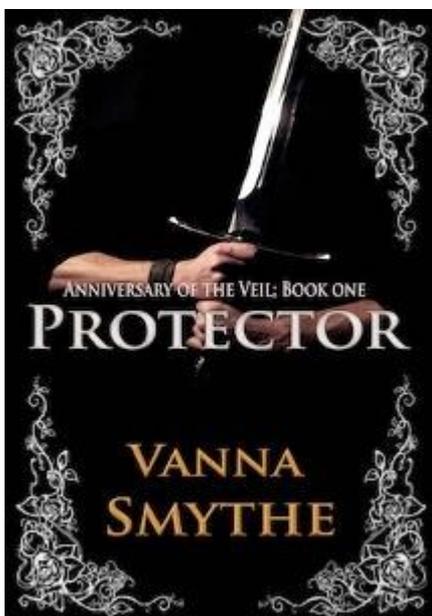
So quickly he forgets.

Tears ran unchecked down Brianna's cheeks as she watched them walk across the meadow and disappear in the trees. <>

Vanna Smythe (U.S.A) is the author of the **Anniversary of the Veil** fantasy trilogy. She has been writing creatively since her early teens, though one could say her creative writing efforts started long before that. While still in kindergarten, she once tore up a library book to make alphabet soup, and has been fascinated with what words can do, the pictures and worlds they can create, ever since.

Vanna is currently working on a new YA dystopian series, which was inspired by the bleak future presented in *The Hunger Games*, the fight between good and evil played out in *Harry Potter*, and the TV show *Heroes*, but with a totally unique story and twist. And don't worry, the story will be equally fun for teens as well as adults. The first book in the series will be released in Spring 2014.

Website: www.vannasmythe.com



Jashubeg en Jered

News From Otherworld Universe

LAST PAGE



ZVEZDNI PRAH (STARDUST), the Author's Society of Speculative Arts

We are a Slovene author's society of speculative arts. We are writers, painters, photographers, etc. of fantasy, science fiction and horror (F&SF&H). Membership conditions: membership is voluntary, author on speculative arts field and must provide one piece of his work for clubs archive. More information about the club and its operations can be found at www.zvezdni-prah.si.



Aleš Oblak

HIŠA DOBRIH GOSPODOV

HOUSE OF THE GOOD GENTLEMEN

Seven fantastic story heard Shepherd Hector, who under the roof take the seven travelers, because his Sheperdism laws require, that he can not deny shelter to anyone. Two soldier, smuggler, a witch, a man who talks to his cat, and Shepard woman with apprentice - they are all there for a reason and with their own dark secret.



ESFS ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD
EUROCON 2012 ZAGREB, CROATIA

Martin Vavpotič

ČEZ VELIKO ZAHODNO MORJE OVER GREAT WEST SEA

Middle East, 1190 BC., Bronze Age, the time of Ramses III, the last of the mighty Pharaohs. - The old world is changing. Hungry tribes are on the move, powerful kingdom collapsing like houses of cards. In order to save Egypt from the fate of other kingdoms, the Ramses III sent Manaptis, his bread brother, with three ships across the sea in Antica to loaded copper there, with which he had to arm his people. In fact, Manaptis rather followed the story, which he found written in the ancient papyrus roll. He went west sailed through Gibraltar ... and beyond. Here is his story described.

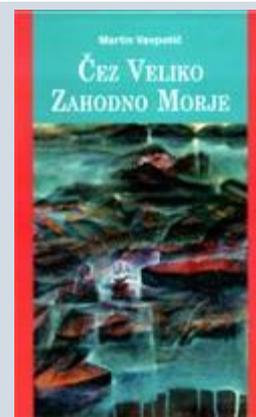
CLOCKWORKS WARRIOR

CLOCKWORKS WARRIOR

Steampunk novella was originally wrote in English language. A young aristocrat joins the Clockworks department where tiny flying machines are built to act as scouts for Hegemony's legions. The Hegemony is under attack by a mysterious new enemy who soon learns the purpose of Clockworks creations. A furious cat and mouse competition ensues as Clockworks employees struggle to keep up with the enemy's ways to incapacitate the flying machines and their pilots.



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