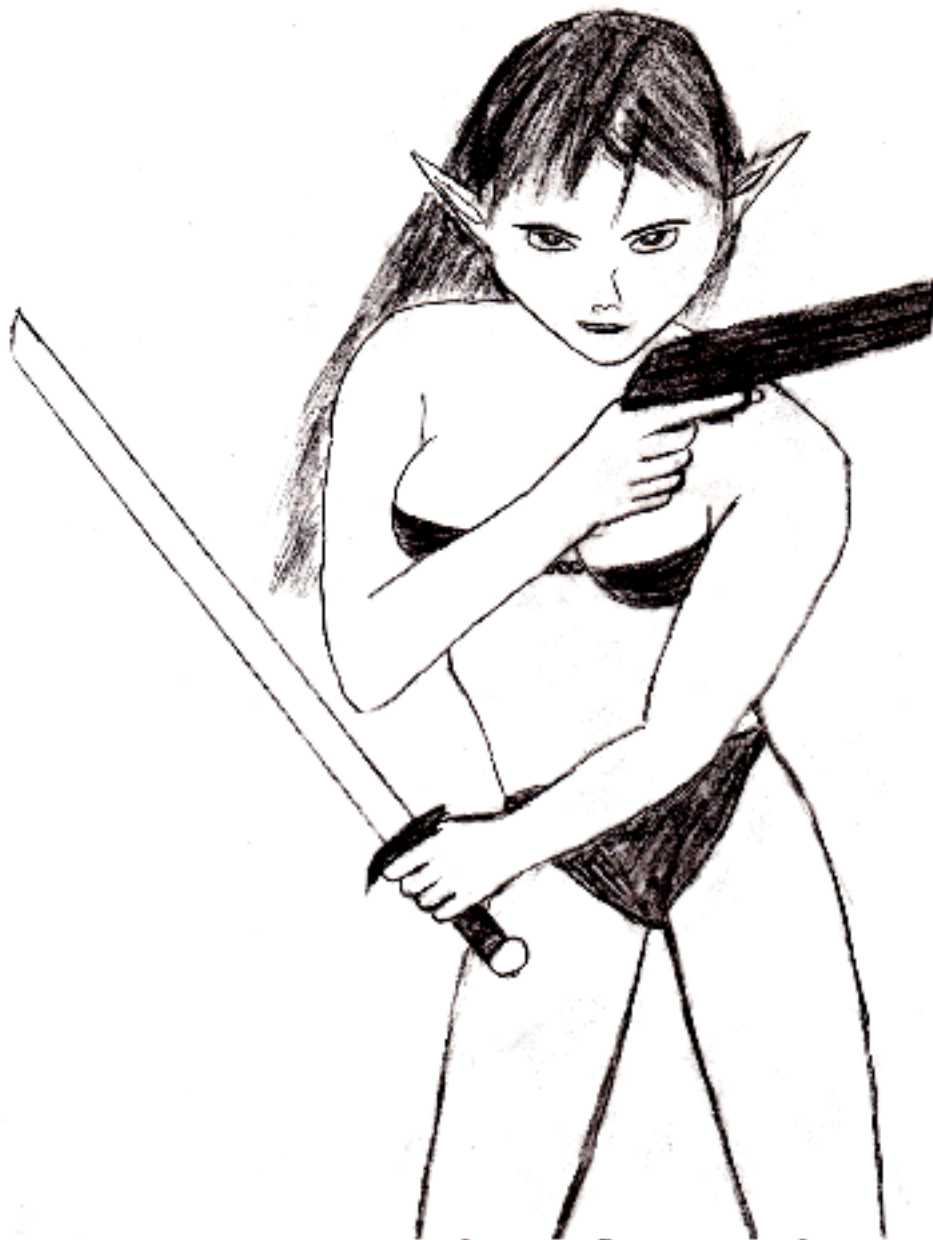


# Blazing Guns / Flashing Sword

The fanfiction magazine



Issue No 1, October 15, 2009  
Cover art by Jochannon Mahler

## *The Annals of Ramon*

*The land of Ramon had once been a bounteous place; fast flowing rivers had watered the rich soil; the weather was clement, the lords peaceful, and the people who tilled the land had grown fat and healthy: no where in the world, it was said, was there a people happier and more generous than those who dwelt here.*

*Leanna smiled grimly as she pulled the hood of her cloak tighter across her face; those days were long gone.*

*She rode now through a land of hard packed gravel, shifting dunes of sand, the ever blowing dust, and the hot, hot sun that beat down on them from dawn to dusk, burning all life from the land.*

*A cloud of dust blew into her face, and again she tightened her cowl, in an effort she knew was vain to keep it from her eyes.*

*So she had been riding for three days; but now, over a small rise, she could see her destination:*

*It was a cluster of weather beaten hovels of the style the people had painfully learned to build ever since the Demon Lord Kurst ascended to rule Ramon; low domes made of earth and stone, with few windows, and facing to the east: where the sun rose, and the light was soft.*

*The few men who were out for though it was not yet midday, the air was burning hot wore the briefest of garments: once a temperate place, the people of Ramon had been a modest people, now under the burning sun, they thought nothing of going about with a scrap of cloth about their hips and groin; women added a light halter, and over all was worn a large cloak of loose weave; this was the garb of the once proud yeomen farmers of Ramon, now scrabbling for life amidst the hardship and dust.*

*Leanna rode her horse to the largest building and dismounted there. The tavern, what some now called a cantina; a boy came out and took the reins for her, and led the stallion away to the dark and shaded stable.*

*Leanna threw her cloak back once white, now stained a dirty gray by the dust and sun, showing her garb like theirs; thin silk, for coolness, and dyed black, for she was a modest woman, despite her minimal garb.*

*The common room, when she strode in, was nearly empty, only a few determined drinkers pouring down ale at the ancient, drink stained and knife worn bar.*

*After looking about once, Leanna took a seat at an abandoned table, carefully setting her pack down beside her.*

*After a minute, the tavernkeeper wearily came over. "What can I get you, my lady?" He asked, eyeing her cloak, of obvious quality beneath the grime of travel.*

*"Ale." She replied simply.*

*He slouched back to get a tankard, leaving her alone for a while; she threw a cautious glance around the room again, and lingered on the door; the man she was to meet should have been waiting for her.*

*The tavern keeper came back with a tankard of ale, waited expectantly until she dropped a penny on the table, then scooped it up, and hurried back to some liquid comfort of his own.*

*Leanna sipped her ale, and grimaced; it was as bad as she expected.*

*She set it down, then heard footsteps in the open doorway.*

*She sat still, not looking, as they neared, then stopped at her shoulder.*

*There was movement, then something landed on the table before her, spilling her ale: it was a human head, blue eyes still wide and staring.*

*"Waiting for him?" The man behind her asked hoarsely.*

*Calmly, she turned and glanced up at him: hulking over six feet, he wore a leather harness festooned with weapons, whips, and chains; as she stared, four more followed their leader through the door; bounty hunters.*

*"Leanna the Red." He intoned triumphantly. "Arch conspirator against Lord Kurst; I'm taking you in for the reward."*

*As he spoke, two of his henchmen leveled guns on her, the third readied a net, while the fourth drew a wickedly spiked chain.*

*The other occupants of the tavern sensibly vacated the premises. A few paused, as if they might help her; the farmers of Ramon had been a proud folk, and brave. But too many years of*

*the sun had leached it from them as surely as it took the life from the soil they tilled: "Go!" The bounty hunter roared, and they took to their heels.*

*The bounty hunter grabbed her arm. "Time to go, my lady." He drawled.*

*Before he could pull her up, Leanna jumped to her feet; catching him by surprise, she grabbed a knife from his harness and slashed it across his throat.*

*Her move was hidden from his henchman by his dying bulk; before he could do more than gasp, a bloody gurgle in his throat, she grabbed him by the shoulders, then picked him up bodily and threw him across the room, bowling over his henchmen and knocking them sprawling in the dust.*

*Before they could rise, she drew her sword and pistol; drawing a bead, she shot down first one, then the other with guns.*

*The third man scrambled to his feet, then let fly with his net.*

*In the blink of an eye, Leanna made three cuts with her sword: bits of the net fell around her, no danger to anyone.*

*The man with the spiked chain took the opportunity to get close: his first swing knocked the pistol from her hand.*

*Recovering quickly, she slashed at his wrist, cutting him to the bone; he dropped his chain, and she slashed again, separating his head from his shoulders, then turned to the last.*

*And stopped: he was bringing a gun to bear, and his face said he'd fire it: without thinking, she drew her sword back and flung it overhand: it flashed across the few feet separating them and plunged into his chest.*

*He cried out and fell back against the wall. Glaring hatred at her, he tried again to bring his gun to bear, but his quivering hands failed him; the gun clattered as it dropped to the stone floor, and its owner soon followed it.*

*A few men hesitantly returned to the tavern; remaining cautiously by the door, they watched while Leanna gathered her possessions. Before leaving, she hesitated, then grabbed the severed head from the table by the hair and strode to the door.*

*They got out of her way, but before leaving, she approached a man, one of those who had made to help her. "See he has a proper burial." She said, holding the grisly object out.*

*He hesitantly took the remains, and less hesitantly the silver penny that followed it.*

*That business done, she strode out into the sunlight, and continued on her way, her never ending way to free her land from the burning son, and the demon who ruled it.*

If you're gonna make a heroine, don't make her a damsel in distress; let her kick the shit out of any schmuck who gets in her way.

-Jochannon Mahler.

And now, a word from our editor:

Hi folks. Wow! an actual, bona fide magazine that I am publishing; never thought I'd see the day.

First, I'd like to extend a blanket thanks to all the fine, wonderful people who gave me encouragement and advice, and especially to the people who contributed their stories and art: thanks folks, you exceeded all my expectations.

The Whyfores:

It seems to me that there are a lot of really good writers out there who write very good stories that are really worth reading, but will never get the audience they deserve, simply because they write fan fiction.

So, I figured; why not start a magazine?

I've got plenty of time on my hands, I've got nothing else to do, so why the hell not?

The Whens:

God willing, I hope to put out an issue on the 1st and 15th of every month

Questions? Comments? I'd love to hear them: please send an email to:  
[fanficmag@gmail.com](mailto:fanficmag@gmail.com)

Or, if you want to reach me personally, you can reach me at [hans.mahler@gmail.com](mailto:hans.mahler@gmail.com), or check out my user page at either <http://jochannon.deviantart.com> or at <http://warhammer40kfanon.wikia.com/wiki/User:Jochannon>

Jochannon Mahler

We have a wonderful selection of stories from a bunch of great writers here, so without further ado let's get to them.

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# WELCOME TO THE REQUIEM

by Christian Vedsø,  
Subject: World of Darkness

"Who are you?" she asked with a slightly trembling voice. Even though she had prepared herself for this moment, this single question, she could not deny the fear she felt.

The room itself, sparsely decorated with old, crumpled newspapers on the floor and walls covered with grayish, flaking wallpaper, seemed to fear the man in front of her; even the air in there stung like tiny needles in her throat as she breathed.

He didn't answer. He kept looking at the floor, the exact same position he had been in when she entered. The hood of his black hoodie hid his hair and cast a shadow over his face, which she had no chance to see. Since his hands wore similarly black gloves, she could see nothing of the man; not a single bit of skin.

She cleared her throat, then asked again "Who are you?"

She sighed. It really seemed like he was going to keep ignoring her. After all this work, all this time, would she still be left with no answers? Would she have to walk back through the same door, knowing nothing more than when she entered? No. She couldn't. She *had* to know. She had to know it all.

"I'm Sandra Harper, and I've been using quite a bit of time searching for you" she said, still not expecting an answer. She froze completely when that answer came, spoken by a deep, dark voice.

"I know who you are" he just said. His voice, although silent, seemed to knock the air out of her, seemed to take a firm grip around her throat and prevent her from breathing. Could he do that? She wasn't sure. She stood still for a moment, then slowly tried to breathe again. No problem there. Apparently, he still hadn't moved. She was sure, however, that something had been choking her just a few seconds earlier. She looked around in the room, but it was as empty as before, no other people than the two of them were in there.

"Listen," she said, slowly raising her voice "I didn't come all the way here for nothing! I want to know who you are and why you... why you..." She looked down. She couldn't get the words out. Couldn't accuse him of the crime, even though she knew he had done it. Had she been just a bit more rational, she wouldn't have gone out, looking for him in the first place. Sadly, she wasn't rational. Sandra had always been too curious for her own good, but never before had her search for thrills led her to a... a *mass murderer*.

"Tell me" she said firmly "Tell me *now*!"

"Strange line of thought," he replied slowly, again taking her by surprise.

"You know who I am. You know what I've done. You also know what I could do to you... still, you decide to come here. Very brave decision, Ms. Harper," he mumbled, then looked up for the first time.

Her breathing turned shallow. She had never expected him to be handsome, but she hadn't prepared herself for *this*, either. His skin was pale, almost white, and the entire left side of his face seemed to be distorted, his mouth in that side grimacing as if he was angry, leaving his mouth slightly open to show off his less than white teeth. Both his eyes were cold and menacing as they stared at her, his poisonous green irises giving off a

dark gleam. His left eye seemed to be smaller than the right, both socket and eyeball, which only served to destroy his appearance further. A scar also ran across his right eye, showing that he had certainly not gotten away with his deeds undetected. The scar, seemingly deep enough to reach his skull, ended on his nose, where a chunk seemed to be missing from the tip.

He stood up slowly, calmly walking towards her. Their eyes were fixed on each other.

She wanted to run. She wanted to open the door and just run, not caring where she would end, as long as it would take her away from \*him\*. But she had no escape. Her limbs would not take orders from her, her body was stiff as stone and heavy as lead. Not a single movement did she make as he slowly, ever so slowly, walked over to her.

“A brave decision, indeed,” he mumbled.

“You might end up useful to me... you have a bit more spine than the average human,” he remarked, almost sneering at the word ‘human’.

Her vision started to blur. Her consciousness was failing, but as she passed out, she heard the last few words from him.

“I’ll come for you someday, Sandra Harper... I am Areus. Just Areus. The next time you hear from me, you \*will\* do what I say,” he said coldly. As he leaned closer to her, now just a silhouette in her eyes, he whispered.

“Oh... and welcome to The Requiem”

Author's Comments:

When I first read the World of Darkness and Vampire: The Requiem rulebooks, I instantly fell in love with the setting.

The mood inspired me to write this, which was actually done only a day after I got the first glimpse of the dark roleplaying world of White Wolf's creation. To all who like D&D, and to all who do not, I can recommend the World of Darkness game!

I hope you liked my little story!

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# IN HIS EMPEROR'S SERVICE

## Chapter 1

By Jonathan Taylor

Subject: Warhammer 40,000

\*\*\*\*\*ENCODED TRANSMISSION\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*TO: INQUISITOR RESTRICTED \*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*FROM: RESTRICTED \*\*\*\*\*

SUBJECT: PROCUREMENT OF RESTRICTED  
LOCATION: STATION MARAK ROGUE TRADER SPACE

\*\*\*\*\*MESSAGE BEGINS\*\*\*\*\*

Inquisitor RESTRICTED I have sent the Guardsman you requested. I have briefed him on the mission you outlined. He will attempt to contact Rogue Trader Lincoln Sandhammer and recover the RESTRICTED . Kale shall pose as a Mercenary for hire, as Mr Sandhammer has made it known he is in need of one proficient with Xeno devices. Kale has been briefed on the proper handling of RESTRICTED .

Unless miscalculations have been made, Mr Sandhammer should allow Kale direct access to the RESTRICTED , after which recovery should be possible without compromising integrity. I have relayed that Mr Sandhammer and any of his associates are disposable.

It is not my place to question a Lord Inquisitor, but I am unable to fathom what makes this Kale so necessary for the retrieval. My offer still stands for the use of the Officio Assassinorum, for the retrieval.

\*\*\*\*\*MESSAGE ENDS\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*ENCODED TRANSMISSION\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*TO: INQUISITOR RESTRICTED \*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*FROM: RESTRICTED \*\*\*\*\*

SUBJECT: PROCUREMENT OF RESTRICTED  
LOCATION: STATION MARAK ROGUE TRADER SPACE

\*\*\*\*\*MESSAGE BEGINS\*\*\*\*\*

The following are taken from the notes left by Kale and his comments during the debriefing. Some parts of this document must be viewed with suspicion as Kale has proven, 'defiant' in the past. The events transcribed take place after Kale had successfully been employed by Mr Sandhammer and taken aboard his ship.

"So you know a lot about Xeno tech then?"

I looked up, in fact I had to crane my neck almost completely vertical to look into the face of the Rogue Trader. They said he was big, but maybe he just had a way of looking at you that made you think so. A brief twinkle in his eyes made me wander, yet again, if this guy could read my mind.



"Enough." I said. Be abrupt, tell him nothing say nothing, do nothing be nothing.

"Well lets hope so!" The big man laughed as a large and unexpected hand clapped me on the back. Only years of experience and training stopped me from keeling over winded.

"Now, my dear Ohmi, would you be so kind as to show our new guest to his quarters?" He said while turning to look at the figure who had been busy with some obscure piece of tech at the workbench.

"Hmm? Ah yeah, sure whatever." I could have sworn I heard a barely audible click as she finished speaking, akin to a Vox even though she didn't even have a respirator.

I subconsciously began to size her up as she moved past me, at least one leg appeared Bionic, as did her right hand. Through the shadow of her hood I could see various cables serving some purpose snaking down her neck, as well as some kind of bionic eye. And a servo arm a Techpriest.

I was about to comment when I remembered... something unpleasant. And decided to say nothing.

She must have noticed something amiss, as she frowned at me.

"What? You never seen a Techy before? Think that all my bionics make me a freak, do ya?"

"Huh? No, of course not I think you're... very normal." Damn it.

She continued to frown. "Er sorry, I was just wandering how Sandhammer got a Techpriest in his employ."

"None of your business. Now stop all this jawing and let me show yer the room so I can get back to work." She turned her back on me, such a normal everyday occurrence. So why in the hells did it make my chest ache?

I followed her down the narrow corridor, as I suddenly began to feel the floor moving beneath my feet. Damn, not now! I cant lose it here! I saw the Techpriest sway slightly as she walked along the corridor, eh?

"Is this ship taking off!?"

"What you say!?! Course it is, you did sign on to go on an expedition didnja? Where you think we going? Explore the basement perhaps?" She smiled, seemed as if that was a joke. I think.

"Oh yeah, no I'm just hungover. Had too much amasec back at Qators." Damn damn damn.

She snorted. "You mercs arse always drinking it like it was to oil yer gears, heh. Don't be drinking on my ship, you hear? I'm gonna have to check your bag when we get to your room." She indicated to my Bergen.

"Uh, sure."

Moments later we had arrived at my 'room'. Heh, a pair of bunks in what appeared to be an overused storage locker for spare machine parts. Oh great, I wonder who I would be sharing with? Hopefully not some thief. Damn those sticky fingered Ratlings.

"Hello? Techy to crazy guy!"

Huh? Oh, she was talking to me again. "What?" Stop thinking!

"I said: Do you like being on top or on the beneath? Then you just kinda fazed out like a bad pict feed, hehek."

Hehek? Was that her version of a laugh? It sounded, recorded. Almost. Wait, what!?

"Er, the top?" I said, my teeth getting an urge to chatter as I felt realisation dawn on me.

Her face almost seemed to glow for a second before settling into her normal fixed smile. "Good, cos you would have had it anyway. The bottom bunk is mine. Right, now excuse the mess, but I'm sure I cleaned the top bunk. Once."

She grinned, showing perfect white teeth, such good teeth. Maybe they were handcrafted? Shut up.

As she began sweeping random objects of unidentifiable trash onto the floor off her bunk, I began to pull off my bergen. Glad to finally have the thing off my body, I casually went to swing it onto the top bunk, as her servo arm swung out and grabbed it before it could leave my fingers.

"Hey! What are you... ah."

She began probing the bag with her hands, sitting on the side of her bunk.

"Contraband check! Of course, hehek."

I decided to nonchalantly lean against the wall of the room. Maybe she wouldn't find it? Of course she'll find it, she is a ruddy Tech! She probably already knows its there! Damn, stop thinking. 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Boom.

"Hey, whats this!?" She squeaked, excitedly as she grabbed it. Yanking it out of the bag she allowed the rest of it to fall heedlessly to the floor.

Oh yes, she found it.

Wrapped in what appeared to be nothing but an ordinary length of brown dusty cloth, was an unmistakeable shape. A casual glance would say it was a sword. A close look would say it was an interesting design. An inspection would say...

She began to untie the knots with expert hands. As the knots became undone, the techpriest gently tugged off the the cloth revealing what was hidden there.

"Oooh...." She held it in both hands, the blade resting on her bionic hand, the hilt resting on her gloved hand. The blade was pointing away from me, the hilt was within reach. And her servo arm would put a hole through me.

"Its all white and gracefull and its got runes on it!"

She looked up at me then, and for a moment I saw... saw, a... Techpriest holding my sword. Yeah. "Beautiful," I said without thinking.

\*\*\*\*\*MESSAGE ENDS\*\*\*\*\*

To be continued. . . .

Author's Comment:

I originally wrote this story after seeing a picture drawn by a Mr Culexus of Deviant Art, he had drawn several Rogue Traders, all female from varying walks of life. I quite liked the Techpriest. I asked permission to use the characters and away I went. That and the fact that I was sick of reading stories about Sphess Mahreens and wanted something with normal humans in it.

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# THE BATTLE

By Beth Connelly

Subject: Warhammer

We advanced slowly across the frost covered ground. The greens, browns and reds of our armour contrasted against the innocence of the white land below our mud sodden shoes. The soldiers were screaming out for victory in this war. The opposition stood on a small hill overlooking our pursuit with scorn. Their archers were ready and waiting but so were ours. We moved to what felt like inches until they took over the process. I, in my traditional costume was waiting in the ranks for the signal to attack, we were poised and ready.

The commander gives the signal, we move, first the chariots then the Wild riders with the glade guard, and then, in all its glory, the Warhawk rider approached. We massacred the Hoards of chaos. They fell one by one until none were left and we stood victorious.

"You can't do that!" He shouted once his army was destroyed.

"Why not?" I asked, it was legal to annihilate his army. I smirked at the thought.

"Because..." he started but could not finish as I waved the rules in his face. It was then he noticed that I was right.

"See? It's perfectly in my right to kill your army off" I smirked and he huffed.

It was the third battle in a row that my Wood Elves have conquered against a range of opponents from the Hoards of Chaos to the Vampire Counts. To think it all started in a Christmas present.

"Maybe next time" I promised my sullen opponent.

## Editor's Comments:

Since Miss Connelly didn't send any comments with her story, I will take the opportunity to say a few words:

I've known Miss Connelly, as 'Kasabe' on and off for a while now, and her writings have always struck me as original and imaginative.

This story threw me a bit when I first read it; it's not exactly the sort of thing someone thinks of when you mention 'fan fiction' is it? But that's the point of fan fiction I think: taking something and making something new and unexpected out of it, which Miss Connelly does very well.

You can reach the author at: [Bethan\\_connelly@hotmail.com](mailto:Bethan_connelly@hotmail.com), or visit her home page, at <http://kasabe.deviantart.com/>

# TOMORROW LINGERS

## Chapter 1

By A. Reynolds

Subject: Star Trek: The Original Series

\*It's a good thing I'm a nurse.\*

That was Christine's first thought, after the initial flutter of panic and shock had faded away.

\*A good thing I have access to medical scanners, medical supplies, medical \*knowledge\*. A good thing I've been so damn dedicated to studying Vulcan biology, and Vulcan human biology. The optimum ratio of haemoglobin to cuproglobin for oxygen absorption, the unique sound of the Vulcan human heart...\*

Her thoughts trailed off into the half panicked, half eager, confused chaos to which they kept recurring at the moment. This was a \*life\*. This was a tiny, defenceless spark of life taking refuge in the depths of her body. A hunted being hiding in warm, dark, blood enriched folds, clinging on with every ounce of determination, every imperative of evolution and the natural drive of cells to multiply and continue. Could people tell that there was a minute being clinging to her for survival? That the world outside her own body was as lethal to it as the empty depths of space beyond the skins of the Enterprise were to her?

She cradled her arms around her body, hugging herself, it seemed. Hugging something that she thought she might love, even though she had never set eyes upon it. Hugging something that would destroy her life as she knew it.

'Are you cold, Christine?'

She almost jumped out of her skin.

'Oh oh, no, Len,' she said quickly, dropping her arms to her side, turning back to the supply cupboard that she had been steadily reorganising into a wilderness of nonsense.

'Christine,' McCoy said in a softer voice, closing his hand around her wrist and moving it away from the cupboard. 'Why don't you break off your shift early, and go take a rest? Unless you want to kill a patient by mislabelling any more of these drugs? It's been a strange couple of days. I certainly wouldn't have wanted to have Spock's immortal soul jostling about in my head. I don't know how you stood it!'

'Oh er it was ' she began, then shook her head. She really was living up to the image of the dumb blonde today... Was this how it would be from now on? Her thoughts constantly split between two living beings? 'I don't know. I guess it was harder for them for the captain, and Mr Spock, and Dr Mulhall. I mean, they were marooned in well, in \*nothing\*. I know Mr Spock, for one...'

She trailed off again. The one imperative she had gained from Spock on his leaving her consciousness was \*don't tell\*. He was private, he kept his thoughts and feelings close inside himself. The last thing he wanted was her babbling about all those things running loose in his ordered mind.

But if he knew the thoughts and feelings that had been snaking in her mind... Surely he knew? He must know what Henoah had done with her. The evidence of his body and her mind would spell it out, surely it would... And Henoah had behaved as any proper,

suave, right minded villain from literature should do. He had been given almost total freedom after an imprisonment of aeons, and he had grasped his chance. She blamed him as little as she blamed Spock.

Henoch, she recalled, had been seductive, charming. He had been dark and smooth, coming alongside her like a cat, with the warmth of a cat in a sunbeam. His voice had been a low purr in her ear. He had used every fibre of his body of Spock's body to entice her. The scent of him, the sight of him, the \*aliveness\* of every cell of his being, the soft fingers of his mind probing into hers, stroking her consciousness, drawing her in...

It had been she who had leaned forward first, her lips that had moved towards his, her hand that had slipped about the hot skin of his neck. Perhaps he had done that, using Spock's telepathic powers to bewilder her mind. Perhaps he had cast out a line, and caught her, and ever so gently reeled her in. But she had not been bucking and thrashing on the hook she had been hauling herself towards him, hand by hand, desperate for the hunter's touch, desperate to pass his lips and become part of him.

'\*Chris!\*

McCoy's voice snapped her out of the fantasy. She had been falling again... Oh, it \*had\* been a fantasy. It had not been Spock. It had been Spock as so many women must want him to be emotional Spock, smiling Spock, lustful, ruthless, powerful Spock. Spock's body driven by another's mind. That body had been exquisite. But when she thought about it, when the clouds of lust parted for a moment, sadness stabbed through. Spock's mind had been absent. \*Spock\* had been absent...

'\*Chris!\*' McCoy snapped again. His hand was cupping her elbow. His blue eyes were filled with concern. He was slipping his medical scanner back into his pocket, and trying to nudge her to walk towards the door.

She shook herself. 'I'm sorry, Doctor. I don't know what's wrong with me,' she said confusedly, trying to smile.

'\*Go to bed\*,' he said emphatically. 'Now, that's a medical order. Do you hear?'

'Yes, sir,' she murmured, wrapping her arms about her torso again. 'I will. Thank you. Thank you, Leonard.'

'That's it,' McCoy nodded, propelling her gently into the corridor as the door slid open. 'You get your rest.'

As the door hissed closed he took his scanner out of his pocket again, taking it to the desk and transferring the results to his medical tricorder.

'You're going to need it,' he said, running his eyes over hormone levels, blood pressure and heart rate. 'You're definitely going to need it.'

\*\*\*\*\*

Christine went to her quarters feeling lighter than air, heavier than lead. She felt like a concoction of clichés, full of every mixed emotion that every woman who had ever found herself in such a situation had felt. But then, what woman had, precisely, found herself in this situation? Non corporeal beings, mind control, having intercourse with a man's body when his soul was absent, with a man she had loved for years who wasn't even there...

No. It was an age old story, but she couldn't imagine that anyone had ever experienced it quite as she was right now.

She sank into the antique wing back armchair in her quarters in a dreamlike state, curling her feet up underneath her body. She had always liked this chair, from her earliest memories of crawling into it as a tiny girl and feeling the safety of the dark wings that seemed to protect her. A safe place in the dark, old fashioned, barely used parlour, where she could sit and curl her dark hair around her fingertips and think of things beyond that room and beyond that world. No one ever thought of looking for her there, of chivvying her to the music practice and extra curricular study that was continually pushed on her as a bright child in a good family. She slipped through the net, and she sat in the darkness, and thought... She had always imagined finding herself somewhere outside of New England tradition and safety. She had never imagined this, though...

She touched a hand to her abdomen, let it lie there softly. Hard to believe that there was another life form growing in there. There was no difference beneath her hand. Women were supposed to be able to \*tell\*. She couldn't tell not by anything but the cold, clear science of medical scanners, and by the undercurrent of fear that the results had provoked. She had only tested herself because she knew what had happened, and knew it was a scientific possibility, not because she had experienced some mystical, intuitive insight. She had formed a theory, ran the appropriate tests, and examined the results. Spock would undoubtedly approve.

Spock...

What was she to do about Spock? For now, this was \*hers\*. It was her secret, her problem. It had very little to do with Spock. It had everything to do with Spock...

How was she to approach the logical, unemotional, upright First Officer of the Enterprise, and tell him, 'Sir, it appears that you have gotten me pregnant. Neither of us were exactly consenting in the act. Nevertheless, I have decided to keep it.'

She could not even begin to imagine how Spock would react. That news, she knew, would pierce straight through his rigid, controlled exterior like a poisoned arrow. It would stagger him. But still, she had no idea how he would react.

In all of her fantasies about Spock, she had never imagined this...

\*\*\*\*\*

Her first hint that the secret was not solely hers was when McCoy kept looking at her strangely. Then when he suggested, very casually, that vitamin supplements were a good idea for any woman of her age to consider. Then when, on seeing her coming from the storeroom with a heavy box of medicines, he practically snatched it from her arms and carried it over to the supply cupboard himself, muttering under his breath about it being crazy that nurses were expected to do the jobs of orderlies on this ship.

She stopped in her tracks then and there, folded her arms across her chest, and asked him plainly, 'Leonard, what exactly is it that you know about me that's got you stopping me from doing my job?'

He met her blue eyes with the clear gaze of his own, and said directly, 'I know that you're pregnant. And I know that \*you\* know that you're pregnant. And I know precisely who the father is. I'm pretty certain that \*he\* doesn't know, though.'

Christine exhaled swiftly. Although she had known what he was going to say, hearing him state it like that was a different thing.

'He doesn't need to know yet,' she said, shaking her head with a quick, dismissive smile. Odd that she was avoiding the direct subject of the pregnancy by talking about the one

facet of it she had hardly allowed herself to face up to yet. 'It's not going to help him to know.'

'Christine, \*you're carrying his child\*,' McCoy said insistently. 'He has a right to know. He doesn't even know he slept with you, does he?'

'He didn't sleep with me,' she said in a low voice, her mind turning against her will to the sight of him, lustful, naked, aroused. 'Hench slept with me. It was all Hench, none of Spock.'

'Christine.'

McCoy reached out, took both of her hands, squeezed them gently in his. Her first thought was how warm and reassuring his hands were. Her second was that they were not nearly as hot as Spock's hands had been...

'Christine,' McCoy repeated. 'This isn't just some one night stand. It's not like if you don't tell him he'll never know. Spock's going to be a father. He deserves to know that before it starts getting obvious.'

She looked up at him, startled dismay in her eyes. It was going to show. Of course she knew that. But to have McCoy state that obvious fact suddenly set in concrete everything that was going to happen. She was going to bear and give birth to a child. She lived on a ship of four hundred and thirty fit, athletic, young people who, day by day, wore sleek, fitting uniforms. There was no way of disguising this with baggy clothes or the excuse of weight gain. The baby would grow, and it would become obvious, and then everyone, \*everyone\*, would know.

'I'll tell him,' she said finally. 'I will, I promise. I just need to find a good time.'

McCoy actually laughed at that. It was not a merry or a cruel laugh. It was just a manifestation of his reaction to the idea of finding a \*good time\* to tell Spock that he was going to be a father, when as far as Spock knew he had never come closer to Christine than touching her hands one time in sick bay when they were both drunk with the Psi 2000 virus.

She smiled, and then laughed too. It was, after all, a relief that someone else knew and that the one person who did know was the single most valuable person on the ship to her in her condition.

'Come on, missy,' the doctor said gruffly, taking her by the arm and leading her towards his office. 'I've been waiting to talk to you about this. We need to discuss medical monitoring, food supplements, your work schedule. I've got a lot of medical literature to go through with you.'

She smiled again, thinking of the hours of private study she had put in after duty in her quarters recently.

'If it's about Vulcan human pregnancies, Leonard, then I've probably read it,' she told him frankly. 'But I would be very happy to discuss it all with you.'

To be continued. . . .

Author's comments:



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# TAKE UP THE SWORD

By Jacy Rae  
Subject: Bleach

The Arrancar gathered in the dark room, watching their leader, Aizen Sousuke, intently. The brunette overlord was perched on an elegant throne, where he was flanked by Tousen and Gin, his non Arrancar subordinates.

“The time has come,” Aizen said, “to assert our power over the worlds of Earth, Soul Society, and Hueco Mundo.”

There was an uproar of cheering.

“The time has come,” Aizen continued, rising from his seat, “to take up the sword and move into battle!”□

For dramatic effect, he had placed his Zanpakutou on the floor before him, and he swept down to scoop its hilt into his hand as he said “take up the sword.” The blade gleamed as he held it aloft. Aizen sheathed the sword and began to cross the room. Gin’s blue eyes, normally narrowed to offset his cheeky grin, flew wide open as he watched the scene. Then his smile got even wider.

“Those fools in Seireitei do not know what they are dealing with,” said Aizen. “They will be unprepared.”

Nnoitra leaned back in his seat, smirking.

“They do not believe that the Arrancar are complete, or even possible, but we will show them otherwise.”

Halibel’s eyes widened, then rolled.

“Look around at yourselves and your brothers and sisters! You can see that we ARE capable of such things!”

Grimmjow found himself unable to stifle his laughter; Yami had to clap a hand over his mouth to get him to be quiet.

“And we will march upon the other worlds to prove that we are the most powerful beings in existence.”

Ulquiorra, per usual, just stared without making any sort of expression.

“As for the ryoka, Ichigo...well, I do not consider him a threat. I alone contain more power than him in my right hand.”

To emphasize the point, Aizen hoisted his Zanpakutou into the air once more.

Tousen heard the shifting and coughing of the Arrancar around him, and asked Gin, “What is the fuss?”

Gin leaned over to whisper what had happened into the blind man’s ear.

Tousen immediately started giggling.

“Tousen?” Aizen rounded on his subordinates. “Do you care to explain the humor?”

Grimmjow broke free of Yami's grasp and collapsed on the floor in a fit of laughter. He rolled about, gasping for air and pounding the ground.

"WHAT is so FUNNY?" Aizen growled.

"Ahem." Ulquiorra cleared his throat. He removed his left eye, crumbling it into a shower of rainbow glitter, and set that glitter, imbued with his memories, aloft in the chamber. Aizen absorbed the memory, and saw the whole scene from Ulquiorra's point of view:

\*\*\*\*\* "The time has come," Aizen says, rising, "to take up the sword and move into battle!"

He swoops down to pick up his Zanpakutou, but fails to notice that when he does so, the rear of his robes split completely in half, revealing his underwear to all present.  
\*\*\*\*\*

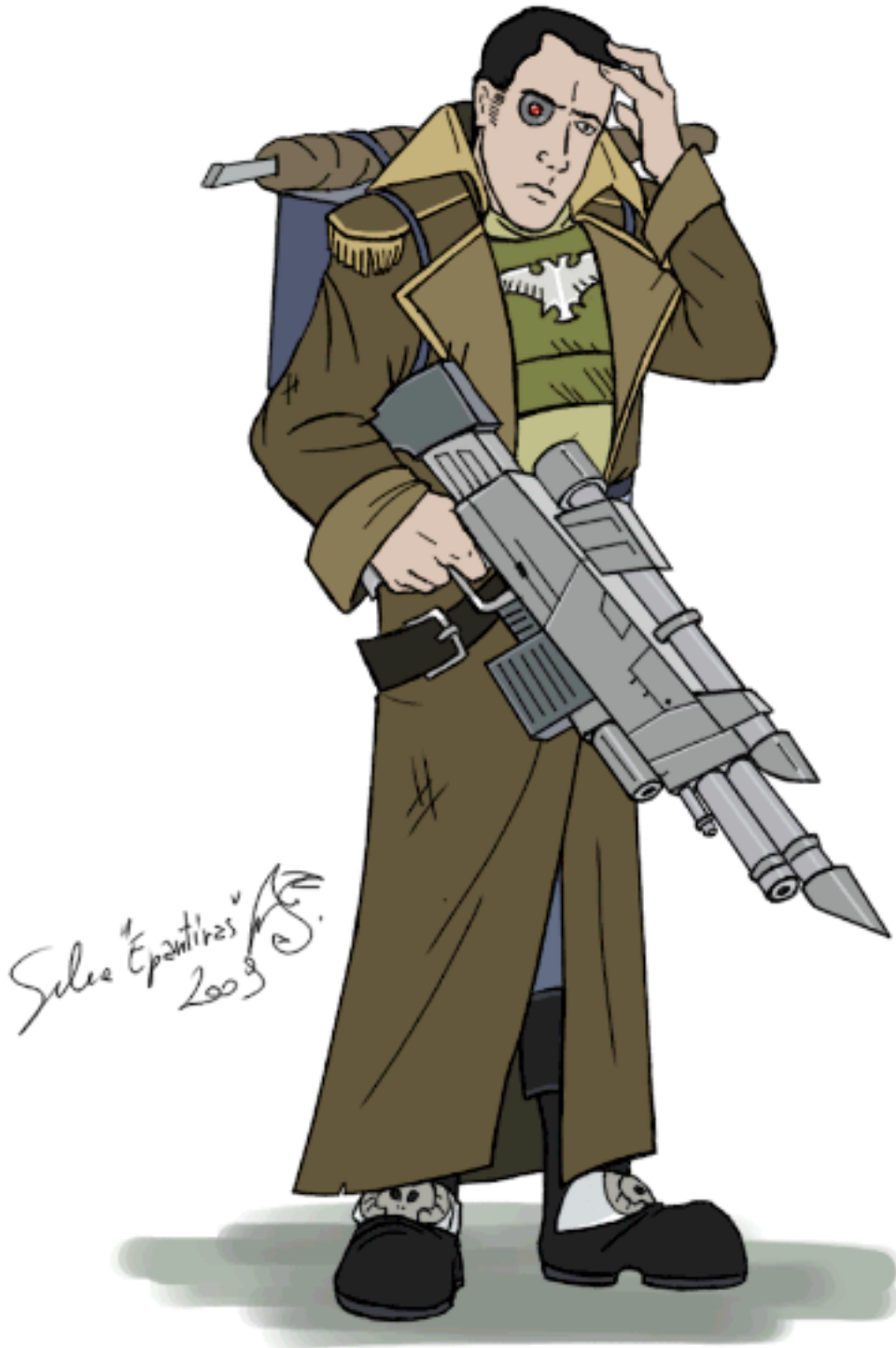
Aizen's face turned red as he craned his neck around to look. Sure enough, there was a large burst seam in his robes, in exactly the right place that all the Arrancar could see his boxers patterned with Chappy the Rabbit.

For the first and last time in recorded history, Aizen squealed and ran out of the room in a flurry.

The incident was never spoken of again.

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## PICTURES CORNER



Magnus Kale from 'In His Emperor's Service'; submitted by Jonathon Taylor, drawn by the highly skilled Epanitiras reachable at her home page: <http://epantiras.deviantart.com/> who graciously gave permission for it to be used here.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A Curious Question:

One of the many fine people to contact me was a miss A name withheld who asked me this curious question:

‘ ... The majority of my stories aren't fanfiction exactly; they take place in worlds based on worlds others created. If that makes sense, of course. My question for you is: Are those stories eligible? Or would only soul fanfiction, without original characters, be accepted? I don't write stories without characters of my own. ... ’

To which I replied:

‘ I f you are a fan of something, and you write a story set in that literary universe, that counts as fan fiction. The way you describe it, it might be a bit more ambiguous, so basically, if you think it's fan fiction, that's good enough for me.’

What do you people think?

## Casting Call

Like what you see? I sure hope so.

Wanna get more? To subscribe, please send an e mail to: [fanficmag@gmail.com](mailto:fanficmag@gmail.com) with 'Subscription' in the subject line that is, if you haven't already .

Got a great story you want to share? We'd love to read it: send contributions as text in the body of an e mail to: [fanficmag@gmail.com](mailto:fanficmag@gmail.com) in the following format:

Subject line: Contributing.

First line: Author's name, e mail address, Author's home page;

Second line: Genre WoD, Naruto, Warhammer, etc. , Story name, Word count;

Text of Story.

Author's comments.

Send any pictures associated with the story as attachments to the e mail.

### Contribution Guidelines:

#### 1, Length:

Up to 3,000 words is optimum; I'm willing to go up to 5,000 words; longer stories can be published as serials by arrangement.

#### 2, Foul language:

In moderation, I have no problem with vulgar language; it depends on how much, and how it's used: if your characters have a conversation and curse two or three times, that's fine; if there's hardly a sentence in the whole story they don't curse, that's a problem.

#### 3, No netspeak:

If one or two characters speak in netspeak, that's no problem, but the body of the story has to be recognizably English.

#### 4, Format.

Do NOT use indents: double space between paragraphs;

All text will be published in the same size and font, so any fancy formatting tricks won't work. Sorry.

#### 5, Editing:

I will not edit your stories; they will be published exactly the way you submit them. By the same token, I will not fix typos.

#### 6, Sex:

It's normal, it's natural, sex will not get your story disqualified, but NO pornography!

6.1, anything even hinting of pedophilia will be thrown out immediately.

6.2, stories touching on rape will have to handle it very delicately.

7, Spelling:

If you have a spellchecker, use it: like I said, I won't fix typos.

8, Property:

I'm not asking for any exclusive rights: any story you submit is still yours: I'm not even looking for first printing rights; I'm asking for non exclusive printing and archival rights.

In simple language? I'm asking for permission to publish your story in the magazine, and to archive the story so people can go back and read it again.

9, Re publishing:

If a story's already published, on DA or Fanfiction.com or elsewhere, that's fine; as long as you own it, you can submit it.

Other fan art:

1, Poetry:

Poetry is no problem, just so long as it follows the same guidelines as fiction.

2, Pictures and Drawings:

Pictures and drawings may be published by arrangement.

Original fiction:

I am not opposed to original fiction if you have a story you want to publish here; but this is for fanfiction, so any original writings will have to take back seat.

## Postscript

Well, that's it: my first foray into the world of publishing.

I hope you enjoyed reading these folks' stories as much as I did.

Good luck, and G d bless.