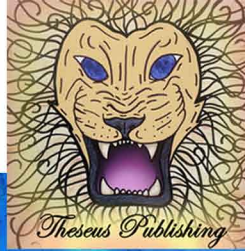


Issue 9 November/December 2013



Theseus Publishing Online Magazine

Home to a variety of Sci-Fi and Fantasy Short Stories.

What's Unique in this Edition?

Editors:

Becky Hayes
and

Tasha Williams

**It's
Christmaaaaas!**

So expect: 'An Unexpected
Gift' Flash Fiction

A Catching Fire film review

A

FROZEN

REVIEW

and a fantasy-book review on
internet favourite; *Angelfall*.

Enjoy!

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20. What's happening Next Issue?

MERRY CHRISTMAS



From

TROM

and a Happy New Year ~

50 Word Stories

His Android's Unexpected Gift

by Connell Wayne Regner

The ribbon flew, the paper flew and there it stood. The present he didn't want. The box said, 'Cinderella's Intergalactic Adventure' as if he would ever play with that. Being polite he opened it, found a remote controlled spacecraft, and laughed. "Now there're adventures anyone would love." his Android beamed.

(See more of author's literary works at [paragraphplanet](http://paragraphplanet.com), home.wtd-magazine.com and fiftywordstories.com)

Unwanted

by Lewis Christian

It was Christmas Day and all was well in my house. I say all was well. The dog had the shits and we'd lost the crackers. The day couldn't get any worse. And then Auntie Joan came over and it did. She announced she was pregnant. Great. Another unwanted gift.

Littered

by Anna Edmond

Presents had been as regular as raindrops. Bows littered alleyways, ribbons draped from roofs and boxes lay unopened as people hid within their own boxes praying that the monster of Christmas would leave. It had been 792 days, but the stars remained tainted with tinsel.

Creature

by H. James

A wet black nose appeared through the torn corners of the box. Ed's heart soared,

'You got me a puppy?!'

His parents exchanged glances as a jumble of 7 legs and 12 eyes blinked at Ed.

'His name's Blaze.' said Mum, as flames shot out of his mouth.

Ed fainted.

The Probe

by Lewis Christian

Shunty Claus, he said his name was. I didn't know what to believe. All I knew was that he was diddy, green and had four wonky eyes popping out the back of his nose. 'I come in peace. Here is a gift, a token of friendship,' he said. It took the doctors two hours to get it out!

Hold My Heart

by Jake Moon

'Hold my heart, just for one second, go on!'

My fingers almost seized up as the hot blood ran between them. The beats matched my own. Then, a light. A change.

I looked down as I saw I finally had a heart of my own. A copy. His gift.

For this issue our theme was
**‘AN UNEXPECTED
GIFT’**



ENJOY

Catnapped

by T.Smith

When someone says 'it happened in a heartbeat', they don't usually mean it literally. They actually mean a few seconds, where they stand in shock, and everything goes in slow motion as events crash and burn into existence, leaving as suddenly as they came. But for me, it truly did happen in a heartbeat. And in that heartbeat, I changed from who I was, to who I am.

I should really explain better. You see, it was like any other night - only it wasn't. After returning to my dingy flat from my job as a curator, I actually decided to exercise for once. Why did I need to exercise you may ask? Avia had said my legs were looking like a trolls - and out of the trolls I had met, that was not a pretty sight.

So I ran, and ran, and ran, past the motorways that circled in three hundred and sixty different degrees around my head, past the upside down skyscrapers and past the park with the neon roundabout. I clipped the WindSweeper 5000 to my head, in an attempt to keep my whiskers back. Going for a jog when you are a Felinkit isn't an easy task, particularly with the smog filled winds that seem to plague Troubanol just around dusk.

Eventually, I ended up on the border, somewhere that pedestrians didn't really go near. There was no reason not to, no big red Warning signs, no armed guards, but it was just an unwritten rule that we didn't go to the border. There was something strange about it,

something dark. But, after taking one more look at my troll legs, I had to keep going.

I wish I hadn't.

As the ground reached even darker shades of brown, I continued to run, the lights and sounds of the Troubanollian highways becoming just flickers in my peripheral vision. It was quite nice to hear silence for once, even to see one colour that wasn't neon and flashing. My mind felt quite calm, and I ran faster, so what happened next was totally unexpected.

I disappeared.

I'm serious. I did.

One minute I was surrounded by the tranquil darkness and the next I was in chaos.

The sky was red with meteors striking from all corners of the sky. Flurries of people and creatures of all species rushed past, all with determination and strife in their eyes. The floor was cracked, and I could feel my paws slipping inbetween them, so much so that I knew if I slipped and fell, I would be trampled by the masses. I tried to turn back but there was no portal, no sign that I'd even been a part of any world other than this one.

But what was this world?

I pushed my way through the crowd, not exactly sure where I was going. I saw a few black and white tents, each bearing flags with lions drawn on them. I didn't understand, what could this mean? It was at that point that I felt a talon grip my shoulder. I turned to see a human with the head of an eagle staring at me with frustration.

'Another Felinkit not at the right tent?' he sneered, 'Honestly, I don't know, come with me!' The eagle

gave me no choice and dragged me towards one of the black tents. I tried digging my claws into the ground, but to no avail, it was either follow or be crushed.

'Who are you?' I spluttered, as I began to feel breathlessness as reality finally hit me. How could a simple jogging trip turn into this? Was I dreaming? In a simulation perhaps?

'Don't play coy Felinkit, now get in, and do your duty!' The eagle disappeared as I was pushed into the tent, the entrance closing behind me, forming a sealed wall.

'Ah, the last one! Great!' came a voice, as a male Felinkit walked towards me. Despite my disorientation, my first thought was of his beauty, he had shining emerald eyes that peaked even my interest. He pulled me up and walked me towards a line of about twenty or so other Felinkits. It took me a few moments to realise, once again, that this was not where I belonged. I pulled away from his grip.

'Wait! Where is this? Who are you? How did I get here?' The questions came out of my mouth like bullets as the fellow Felinkits looked at me with pity. The male Felinkit smiled, as if he had heard these questions hundreds of times before, and turned to me.

'I am Henroar, and I am the leader of Division 5 - the Felinkit sector.' I went to speak, but he continued.

'You, Elena have been chosen to join us in a scheme Troubanol have been devising. A scheme to improve all the races, and save the world.' I let out a laugh,

'Are you actually serious?! I was going for a jog!' No one else was laughing, were they really buying all this?

'We are serious. We have been tracking your

movements for weeks, our informants have decided that you are good enough for our program. Your life changes here.'

'What if I don't want my life to change?'

'You have no choice anymore Elena. Welcome to District 5.' It was at that moment that two other Felinkits that I had not noticed before, grabbed me on either side and made me join the line. Before I could struggle any further, a bright orange light began to shine over us all. I looked around at all the others, they were beginning to show signs of panic now, some were even crying and clawing at each other to find a way out.

'You can't do this!' I cried as the light began to grow brighter, making me squint. My eyes closed, and suddenly, I was anew.

When my eyes opened, the world was different. There were colours I had never even dreamed of, nor could describe, and sounds were more than just sounds, they were symphonies. I looked down at myself. I was armor clad, with cylinders of blue serum attached to my limbs. My tail held a variety of weapons. I stepped over to the corner of this area, that was new and yet familiar, and saw my eyes. They were pitch black. Then I felt my heart beat as I breathed in.

There were two.

'I see you're awake Elena, welcome to your new life.'
I lunged.

Fame by D J Rowe

“It’s not going to work, Clive. No way is she going to choose the box.”

“Bludger, how many times must I tell you? It’s not what’s inside the box; it’s how you sell it.”

“But how do you sell a box full of woe, pain, and suffering?”

“Marketing, my dear demon, marketing.”

With a wave of his hand, Clive and Bludger changed their demon appearances to the latest in Greek fashion.

“But it’s not going to work. She’s got to choose the box and she’s got to open it. And you can’t lie on what’s inside.”

“That’s what we have the other boxes for. And this,” said Clive holding up a single denarii coin.

“What are you going to do with the coin?”

“Watch and learn, Bludger. Watch and learn.”

The pair of demons walked up and knocked on the gate to the Greek courtyard.

After presenting themselves to a slave, the pair walked into the courtyard.

“May the Gods bless your home,” said Clive with a bow to the master of the home.

“And may they bless your journey and your business,” replied the owner. “What brings you to my home?”

“We hear it is your daughter’s birthday and we’ve been asked to provide her with the choice of a gift. Bludger, the boxes, please.”

Bludger brought out five beautifully carved boxes.

“These are very expensive boxes. May I ask what they contain?”

“I’m afraid that I’ve been charged to only tell the contents of the boxes to your daughter and that she is to choose but

one of the boxes. The orders were very specific from the patron that we represent.”

“Well then, I suppose there can’t be much harm in letting my daughter pick her birthday gift. Daniel, fetch my daughter and tell her she has guests waiting in the courtyard.”

It was not much longer before the owner’s wife, daughter, and their companions were gathered in the courtyard to look at the pair of Greek strangers and their five boxes.

“So, I get to keep the box I want?”

“And, everything inside it,” Clive said with his best bow and smile.

“So, how do I choose?”

“Fear not. I know the contents of these boxes and I will not steer you wrong.”

“So, what should I do?”

“Let’s make the choice easier. Choose two boxes.”

The girl looked at the five boxes and pointed at the first and fourth box.

“Bludger, take away those boxes.”

“But, I thought those were the boxes that I was choosing.”

“Did I promise not to steer you true?”

“Well, yes, you did.”

“Then I can truly tell you that the one box contained nothing but empty promises and the other contained nothing but broken wishes. You are far better off on your birthday without those.”

“Oh, well, I guess that I am. What of the other boxes?”

“True gifts may be found in them as selected by the Gods themselves.”

“So, do I now choose the box that I, uh, want?”

“You mean the box that you get to keep?”

“Yes, the box that I get to keep.”

“I’ll tell you what. You choose the box and then you can

either choose to keep it or reject it.”

“Then, I choose this box.”

“And do you wish to keep or reject it. Bludger, no helping the girl.”

Clive turned to look at Bludger who played innocent.

When Clive turned back to look at the girl, Bludger gave a quick shake of the head to the silent question from the girl.

“I, uh, reject it.”

Saddened by the girls choice, Clive removed the box and presented the remaining two boxes.

“And what was in that box?” asked the girl.

“Oh, it was empty. It’s only worth was the craftsmanship of the box itself. A fine box but it was also a test to see if you had a discerning eye to puzzle out the true gift in these boxes.”

The girl, feeling pleased with her choice, turned her eye to the final two boxes.

“And how will I choose amongst these two boxes?”

“I can tell you that this box contains more wealth than all the other boxes combined,” said Clive tapping the one box and slipping the denarii inside.

The father smiled at the sounds of wealth. “Well, I should think the choice is obvious. Daughter, choose that box.”

“And an excellent choice it is. I’m sure that your daughter and you will be very happy with your riches.”

“Wait,” said the girl. “What’s in the other box?”

“Oh, you wouldn’t want that box. Trust your father.

You’re better off with this box. I’ll just put this other box away.”

“Yes, dear. Listen to the man. Choose the box with the money.”

“You said this was a puzzle? Correct?” stated the girl.

“Yes, I may have used those words but your father is giving you excellent advice.”

“Still, I want to know what’s in the other box?”

Bludger fretted for this was the moment of truth. How could Clive reveal the contents of the box and not have the girl choose the box with the denarii coin?

“Choose this box and you will become famous and remembered for all time.”

“Remembered for all time?”

“Yes, for all time.”

The father groaned as Pandora made her choice and opened the box.

FROZEN

FILM REVIEW BY BECKY HAPES

Recently I went to the cinema to watch *Disney's* latest venture *Frozen*. In keeping with the christmassy sort of theme for this issue I decided it would be the perfect film to review.

I should begin by saying that I really enjoyed it and would definitely recommend other *Disney*-nuts to go and watch it. It's the perfect balance of humor, action, adventure and just overall *Disney* magic.

I will keep spoilers to an absolute minimum but the story basically focuses on two princess sisters; Elsa and Anna. Elsa is the eldest and has the ability to create and control ice and snow. After an unfortunate accident when the sisters are children their parents are forced to hide Elsa's powers away from everyone, including Anna. Once close the two sisters begin to drift apart as a result.

When Elsa eventually inherits the throne of Arendelle she is terrified of revealing her powers to the outside world and as a result remains isolated in the castle. Anna on the other hand is completely the opposite to her sister, and is desperate for some human interaction. She ecstatically waits for Elsa's summer coronation day so that the gates can be finally be opened and she can meet visitors from surrounding isles. On such day things quite

obviously don't go entirely to plan and the events of the film are quickly set in motion as a result.

The film offers a whole range of characters, from singing trolls, to an adorable reindeer, to a rather annoying talking snowman... Now don't get me wrong, the film would not have been the same without the addition of Olaf the snowman, but I did have quite mixed opinions on his character. There is no denying that he does help offer some comedic relief to all of the film's more serious scenes, however I did feel that he was mainly just there purely for children's entertainment. Nevertheless I do now believe that it would not be **Frozen** without him and he has begun to grow on my slightly after watching it over. Once you get past the fact and accept that he is a talking and singing snowman he's not really such a bad character.

I would have to say that all the main characters in **Frozen** steal the show in their own different ways. Anna is the adorable and high-spirited character who sees the positives in the world, Elsa is the isolated character who we all relate and sympathise with, and Kristoff is just the awesome guy with the "talking" reindeer. What's not to love?

My next point on the film would be my thoughts on it's ending. I found that it actually offered quite an unexpected twist for a **Disney** film. We all know that **Disney** isn't a stranger to betrayal and shocks (a.k.a **Lion King** - sob) but the twist just seemed a lot more

shocking in *Frozen*, perhaps because it was people rather than lions? Who knows. Nevertheless it was definitely a good ending and rounded off the story perfectly. But then again, I am someone who is always up for a good old-fashioned happy ending.

Overall, I would urge all *Disney*-lovers to go and watch *Frozen* (if you for some reason haven't already). It's a completely feel-good, magical marvel that will put a smile on your face and thaw a frozen heart!

I GIVE *FROZEN*:

10/10

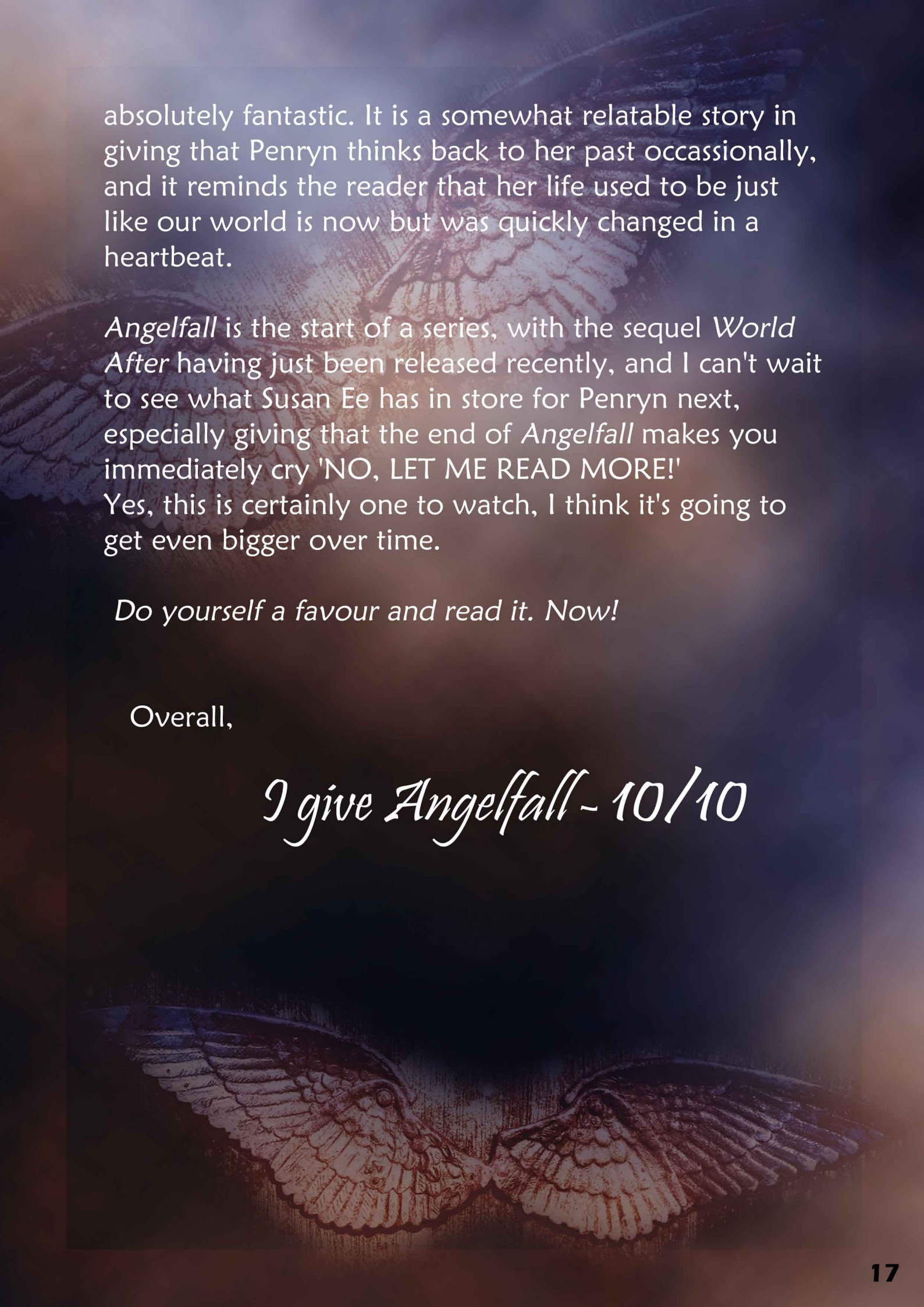
Angelfall

Book review by Tasha Williams

Angelfall, by Susan Ee, has been described as an 'internet phenomenon with over 8000 different five star reviews and counting. The story has become one of the most talked about books in the fantasy and dystopian genre, in particular within the BookTube community and through several social media sites. So, as a result, *Angelfall* by Susan Ee was finally published this year by Hodder, and I finally got the chance to read it. It's safe to say that the hype is definitely well deserved.

Angelfall is set in a modern America, a few months after angels have invaded Earth and taken over, destroying the land that humans know as a result. Millions are dead, and thousands are suffering, trying to find food and generally stay alive. The story focuses around a young girl named Penryn who, despite being young, is the leader of her family; given that her mother has psychological problems that have worsened as a result of not being able to get her medication, and her younger sister who is wheelchair-bound due to a mysterious cause.

However, Penryn's world soon changes forever when the angels take her sister. She will do almost anything to get her back. There is a bit of everything within this story; there is action, betrayal, slight humour, and even some romance. The story is engaging, gripping and



absolutely fantastic. It is a somewhat relatable story in giving that Penryn thinks back to her past occasionally, and it reminds the reader that her life used to be just like our world is now but was quickly changed in a heartbeat.

Angelfall is the start of a series, with the sequel *World After* having just been released recently, and I can't wait to see what Susan Ee has in store for Penryn next, especially giving that the end of *Angelfall* makes you immediately cry 'NO, LET ME READ MORE!' Yes, this is certainly one to watch, I think it's going to get even bigger over time.

Do yourself a favour and read it. Now!

Overall,

I give Angelfall - 10/10

CATCHING FIRE

Film Review by Tasha Williams.

To say I was excited for *Catching Fire* to come out in the cinemas would be an understatement. I thoroughly enjoyed the first film, and though I wasn't a huge fan of the book series, *Catching Fire* was definitely my favourite out of the three.

For those of you that need a quick reminder of *The Hunger Games* - the events of the trilogy take place in a dystopian world named Panem where, once a year, two children between the ages of 11 and 18 are chosen from 12 different districts to act as 'tributes' in a tournament of sorts, where the last person standing wins fame, fortunes and riches. The Games acts as an example of the corrupt Capitol's mercy against the Districts that rebelled in a war many years ago. That is until, Katniss Everdeen from District 12 enters the games, and through strokes of luck and continual skill wins the Games, but with fellow tribute and supposed lover - Peeta Mellark.

Catching Fire continues where *The Hunger Games* left off, with Katniss and Peeta having to experience the life of the Capitol and realise that the Districts are seeing them as beacons of hope and are rebelling against the Capitol to fight the injustice and suffering that they receive daily. I particularly enjoyed the film as it was full of energy and continual suspense, despite the fact I had already read the book I was on the edge of my seat.

The Katniss - Peeta - Gale love triangle continues, as well as Katniss' struggle to decide what life she wants to lead and realising that the decisions she makes aren't always the ones

that please her.

The film was gripping, and extremely emotional at times, as we get to see Katniss and Peeta enter the arena again in celebration of the 75th Hunger Games (the Quarter Quell). As a result of this we see a bigger plot unfold that makes way for the astonishing finale of the third and final book of the series- *Mockingjay*. A book which is rumored to be being split into two films in order to put in as much detail from the books as possible.

Overall, I think *Catching Fire* was one of the best films of the year and definitely one of the best book adaptations I have ever seen.

Therefore, I give *Catching Fire*:

10/10

*And what about the **Next Issue?***

AN ARROW
TO
THE
HEART

A large, glossy red heart is the central focus, pierced diagonally by a black arrow with a white feather. The heart is surrounded by a thick, textured red cloud that resembles smoke or blood. The background is a bright blue sky with soft white clouds. The text 'AN ARROW TO THE HEART' is written in a black, hand-drawn, slightly irregular font, with the words stacked vertically on the left side of the heart.

More info will be available soon at:
www.theseuspublishing.weebly.com