

Anthrocon 2011

The Anthropomorphic Institute of Magic



-ANDY"
RUNTON



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HUNGRY?

The Anthrocon 2011 Dining & Services Guide, found in your registration bag, includes a list of nearby restaurants.



ANDY RUNTON

GUEST OF HONOR

Andy Runton is the creator of the breakout all-ages series of graphic novels, *Owly*, featuring a kind-hearted little owl who's always searching for new friends and adventure. Relying on a mixture of symbols and expressions to tell his silent stories, Andy's work showcases both his gift for characterization and his love of birds, animals, and the outdoors. His animated and heartwarming style has made him a favorite of both fans and critics alike. The *Owly* series has earned him multiple awards in the comics and graphic novel community, including the Howard E. Day Memorial Prize, the Harvey Award, two Ignatz Awards, and the 2006 Eisner Award for "Best Publication for a Younger Audience". He lives in the greater Atlanta area, where he works full-time on *Owly* comics, books, and graphic novels.

Please join us in welcoming Andy and *Owly* both to Anthrocon 2011! 🐾

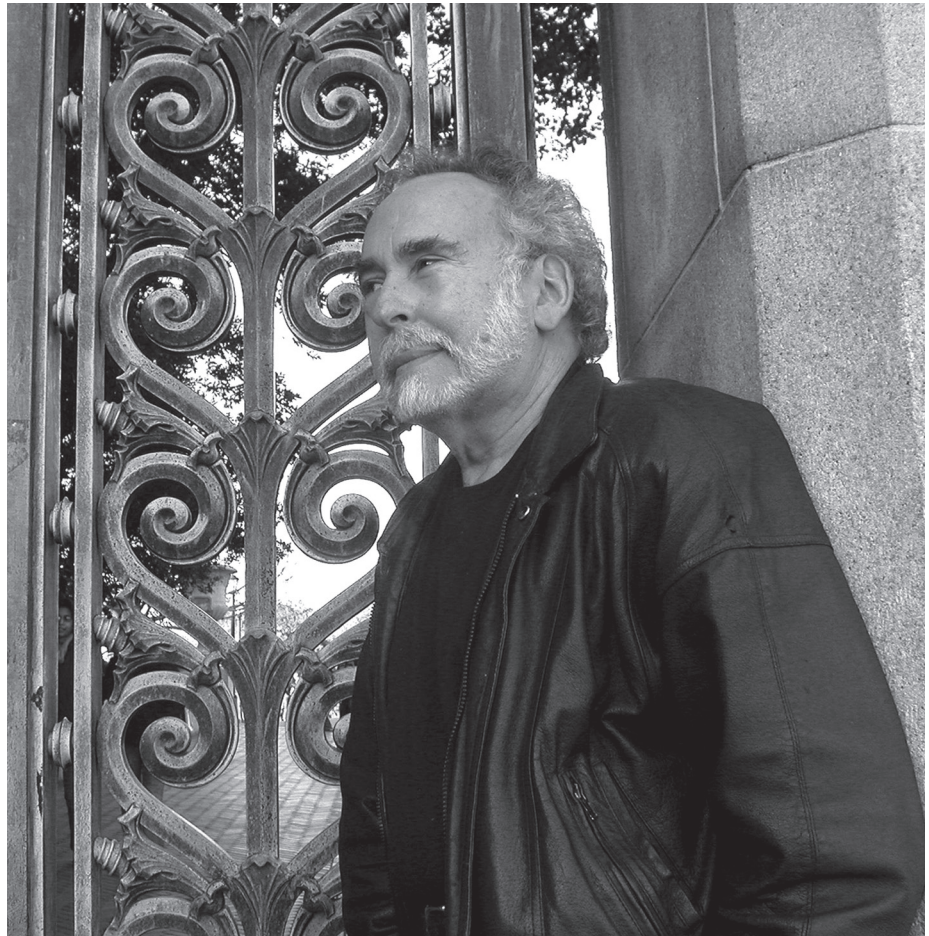


PETER S. BEAGLE

GUEST OF HONOR

Peter S. Beagle is widely considered America's greatest living fantasist and has millions of fans around the world. Born in New York City in 1939 and raised in the Bronx, Peter wrote his first novel, *A Fine and Private Place*, at the age of 19 and never stopped writing, producing such works as *The Folk of the Air*, *The Innkeeper's Song*, and *Tamsin*. His classic *The Last Unicorn* has sold more than five million copies in more than twenty languages worldwide and was made into a critically-acclaimed animated film (for which he wrote the screenplay) in 1982. Peter has been honored with multiple awards, including the Hugo, Nebula, the Inkpot Award, and the WSFA Small Press Award, and was a nominee for the World Fantasy Award.

Although Peter now lives in Northern California he is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, so please join us in welcoming him back to the old neighborhood. 🐾





FINALS ISTANBUL

Ah, finals.

I gaze up at the developing crowd as they begin to filter into the Grand Auditorium and give a silent breath of thanks to my predecessor, who had the foresight to enchant this room to grow to seat however many students are necessary and be larger on the inside than the outside. After all, our ranks have only been growing in the two hundred years since Weldon's School for the Thaumaturgically Gifted was founded to help young wizards attempt to find their place in the world. The frontmost rows are favored seating for the senior class, allowing them to study the Final test more intricately and watch the failures of others. Some are new, passing through the revolving door for the first time...but most are repeats, some of them on their fourth or fifth trip through our halls.

The students wear masks of determination, dozens of other acolytes of dozens of species and sizes and backgrounds stare at the test with similar eyes. Is it at a different angle this year? Is the table shorter? Nothing can be seen of the test itself, but I smile as I feel magic radiating from about a third of the seniors. Nothing directly affecting the test, as that would cause instant disqualification...but scanning the test for magical signatures is completely permissible. Unsurprisingly, the most thorough scan comes from Wesley, the fox boy in the third row; he will make a stellar Metamagic professor, if he remains at Weldon's long enough. That is, after all, the way of things: students come to Weldon's and either quit or, in some rare cases, stay and become teachers to our ever-swelling ranks.

The crowd's number grows, chairs appearing to accommodate all comers. Juniors, sophomores, even freshmen are allowed to witness the Final, and

all come to see the proceedings and hopefully glean some measure of understanding. Perhaps, the logic goes, this will be the time. Perhaps someone will finally defeat the test. Headmaster Vincent is old and feeble, it is said, and wants to see one student pass this test before his Light ascends to join those who have gone before. Bah! I'm not so old. Certainly, my fur has faded from its previous midnight sheen to a more austere grey. And certainly, I can no longer chase or run or climb as I once did. That hardly means that I'm useless, and they would do well to remember it, those young...

I smile inwardly. What else can I expect? Even those who have spent their youth at Weldon's and now return as middle-aged men to increase the count of their attempts to the half-dozen mark have known me as a sort of father figure throughout the years. Finally, the bell sounds, and the doors close of their own accord. I make my way up to the stage - blasted steps, forcing me to use my gnarled old cane - and turn to address the audience. "Students of Weldon." I begin, leaning into the Amplification Wand to speak. "I have stood by and watched each and every one of you toil through the ranks. Many of you have the raw power to become a Grand Wizard in your own right, and this is a blessing and a curse: while it is true that the power itself is a tool with limitless potential, we all know what can become of those who are subsumed by its allure." A murmur of assent rises from the crowd. The first history lesson taught to each student is the account of the Wizardry Wars, where foolish men pitted their power against one another in great, ruinous battles that cost many their lives. Almost two thousand ears fold back at the reminder of the cost of magic without wisdom to guide it, and I give a faint nod of approval.

"This, then, is why Weldon's was founded," I continue. "To offer those with the innate talent a place where they can learn control and understanding, to avoid the mistakes of the past... and usher in an era of fantastic new mistakes." A peal of laughter breaks the tension after the more somber topic, and I can feel that I have regained the crowd's full attention. "Some of you are here for the first time. Many more



of you have sat here in these front rows before, examining this selfsame final and trying to puzzle out its intent. It is as simple as it ever was, and I swear to you on all that I am and ever was that each and every one of you knows what you need to know in order to successfully graduate and claim...this." I reach into my robe to produce a pouch, and open it to unveil a simple brass token.

Delight, avarice, hope - all of these wash over me like a tide from the audience. Even those who have never set foot within Weldon know that this simple, ordinary-looking brass is a Delimiter, the only one in all the kingdom. All people have natural magical potential far beyond their access at first, and their time at this fine establishment is spent trying to unlock some fraction of that potential and summon forth what lays hidden within. I twirl the token between my fingers, the key to the lock within each living being...oh, the sensation when I first laid a finger upon it. My tail bottlebrushed out, my senses were alight with new understanding, and I became a Grand Wizard. A moment is lost to reverie before the token is placed back into the pouch and returned to the pocket of my robe; this is not an item meant to be in public view for long, as evidenced by the seven attempts on my life to gain access to it. The token has shown itself to have an additional benefit: the ability to weed out those who desire power but should never have it. Weldon's only expulsions.

A young rabbit approaches from offstage, a new freshman by the name of Winter, and he removes the cloth to reveal the Final: simple ordinary playing cards, balanced precariously upon one another up to four 'stories' high, with two more lain to one side. "The test is simple." I assure each student. "Using magic, place these two cards atop the others to form the final story of the building. Reach the pinnacle." I step to one side and watch the Final begin, with my secretary calling out each name in turn. The list is randomized so that no student has an unfair advantage or disadvantage.

Such high hopes I had! The Final only offers me an insight into new and interesting means of failing. The hippo boy puts on an impressive showing of

summoning forth a duplicate of the test with the cards in place, but the attempt is disqualified when it is pointed out that his is not the Final, but only a copy. Wesley puts forth an impressive showing by actually mentally commandeering his Professor of Telekinesis and coaxing him to do it, but I watch his tail droop when it's decided that it must be him who does the moving, not his puppet. (He also earns himself a week's detention - I will need to see to it that this is cancelled.) A middle-aged turtle teleports the cards into place, only to be disappointed when the house of cards comes crumbling down. Student after student attempts the Final, and student after student fails, each one cursing under their breath and swearing that they'll succeed four years hence.

The gathering begins to disperse and I step off stage, only to feel a light tug at my robe. Winter is standing beside me, his gaze cast down toward the ground, and I pat his head. "What is it?" I ask in a kindly tone, waiting for him to discuss some overlooked point of procedure, and the nearly-

inaudible reply almost stops my heart. "Headmaster Vincent, I...I think I know...how to do it, sir."

I pause for a moment, considering the implications. Could it be that someone has finally gleaned the secret of the Final? A brief gaze is cast to the teachers, most of whom scoff and shake their heads, and I even catch some glares from passing seniors. How could this simple rabbit, this freshman, already understand? He hasn't even been through the course load once, spent countless hours struggling to make the impossible real! And yet...I hold up a hand, and lead the young man on stage. The fear in his eyes is palpable: jeers and catcalls (some from actual cats) come from the audience as he's guided to the Amplification Wand. "Tell me, Winter." I speak into the wand. "What is the secret?"

The rabbit gulps nervously, and speaks into the wand. "Headmaster...on the very first day, they teach us what magic is." I smile and nod, patiently. "They tell us that magic is the act of manifesting one's will to create a real





change in the outside world. They say that everyone has magic, but not everyone understands how to access it." Groans issue from the audience, and I frown as I repel a magical prank upon its caster, a badger in the audience sinking to all fours as he endures the effects of his own transformation spell. "Continue, son." I tell Winter, and he does, in a trembling voice. "I think...I think most people assume that they're talking about thaumaturgical energy like what you just used, sir. B-but... that's not what they mean, is it?"

A murmur of confusion rises from the crowd, and the rabbit goes to the table where the cards can be found. I present an image of calm and serenity, but inside, I am as giddy as a cub! Does this freshman, this inexperienced young buck, actually understand? White-furred fingers lower to touch the playing cards where they lay. "By my will, I move my fingers and guide my muscles." he says in a quiet, pensive tone. All the world is gone, now; there is only the rabbit, and the cards, and the wand. Fingers curl around the two cards, lifting them from the table's surface, held between fingers. Instantly, there are shouts of protest - not just from the crowd this time, but from the teachers as well. Such cheating! A quick, harsh glare silences all present, and where the rabbit had gone still, I breathe, "Continue, Winter."

He takes a moment to give a nervous nod, then narrates, "By my will, I lift the cards to the top of the stack." The cards are turned, swiveled in place and guided into position, and very gingerly laid against one another. The delicate fingers remain in place for several long, lingering seconds before they begin to draw away, and he finally finishes, "...and in doing so, I manifest a real change in the outside world. Everyone has this power, but not everyone makes it manifest. Every single one of us - not just students, not just people who can manipulate thaumaturgical energy, but every last living thing - has the power to change the world, if we can only find the will to use it." There stands the Final, complete.

I clasp his hand in my own, brass touching two palms at once, and a legend begins... 🐾





MISCHIEF-MAKERS

ZACH "DIRE" THOMPSON

"Let's play with it."

"Antoine, no!" protested Greg. The stout, gawky raccoon fumbled with his glasses. "We're going to get into trouble."

"Don't you mean more trouble?" asked the scrawny, brown-and-white hare sitting at his desk with a bored expression. "See? Vincent agrees. We're already in detention, and if Professor Dalton comes back and you're messing around with the training scepter we're going to get expelled!"

"Don't be such a wet blanket," said Aryana, the pretty red-fox seated next to Vincent. "No one is going to get expelled."

"She's right," added Antoine, the lithe red-fox, as he lifted the training scepter off Professor Dalton's desk. "No one ever got expelled for a spot of fun."

"Fun?" Greg frowned. "Professor Dalton explicitly warned us not to, and there's nothing fun about this much

detention."

Antoine grinned. "See? That's what grown-ups do. They tell you not to have fun. And what's more fun than magic? Besides, it's the training scepter, right? Let's just call this some... extra-curricular practice. They won't find out if no one tells them."

"But they always find out!" whined Greg. "That's why we've been in detention every day this week!"

"You're wasting your breath," sighed Vincent, his expression unchanged.

Antoine peered deep into the ornately carved open spiral at the top of the wooden scepter, trying to decipher the stored spells held within its curved length.

"It's not my fault we tossed Duncan out the window instead of pushing him out of his chair," mused Antoine. "I need to work on controlling my power, and he shouldn't have been calling me an ant."

"Find anything cool?" Aryana's ears perked forward, looking expectantly at

Antoine as she brushed aside sandy-brown strands of hair. "Anything they've kept from us?"

Antoine, transfixed, spoke as his green eyes hungrily hunted through the scepter. "Yeah! Wow! There are so many spells in here that we haven't gotten to yet."

"Is there anything in there that unlocks stuff?" inquired Aryana, leaning over her desk with paws planted, nearly striking Vincent with her tail as it whipped back and forth. "You should let Squawky out."

All eyes turned to Glendencal, the unruly and brightly colored bird-of-paradise, who shifted nervously on his perch at the sudden attention.

"Hmm. I know I saw something like that. Gimmie a second and I'll find it again."

Greg's eyes bulged and his tail bristled.

"No. Antoine, no!" the raccoon's voice squeaked. "How could he not find out if you let his familiar out? That cage



is magically sealed.”

“You worry too much,” chuckled Antoine as he pulled back the billowy white-and-blue sleeves of his academy robes and took aim at the cage. “I’m a natural.”

“A natural disaster, maybe,” said Vincent, snickering.

“Vincent!” pleaded Greg frantically, “You’re the oldest. Do something!”

Vincent grumbled and his listless expression returned. “I’m fourteen, so what? I’m only a year older than you guys. What am I supposed to do, subdue him with that extra year? Besides, I am doing something; I’m not looking.” Vincent pulled his ears down over his eyes and held them there. “Plausible deniability.”

Squawky stared back at the end of the outstretched scepter as Antoine spoke the incantation, then squawked loudly as the sides of the cage exploded outward and were hurled to the corners of the room with a thunderous crash.

Aryana shot her paws into the air.

“That was amazing!”

“Is it over yet?” inquired Vincent.

“What did you do! They’re going to skip the expulsion and go straight to the executions!” sputtered Greg.

“Still too much power,” lamented Antoine, his ears splayed back in disappointment.

Greg ran up to Antoine and, grabbing him by the shoulders, shook him. “Do something to fix this! Now!”

“Alright, alright! No need to start shedding, jeeze. Aryana, Still Squawky while I try and find something in here.”

“My pleasure,” said Aryana as she locked her gaze on Squawky’s resplendent form flying erratically over head. Narrowing her eyes, she slowly brought her open paws closer and closer together as she mumbled the Stilling incantation. With a resonating clap, she brought her paws together in burst of blue light which halted Squawky’s path in mid-flight, leaving him frozen and floating through the air.

“Done and done.” Aryana feigned

dusting off her paws in self-satisfaction.

Antoine grunted and appeared troubled. “Bad news, guys. I can’t find anything in here that can put the cage back together.”

“There’s got to be something in there,” said Greg. “Look harder!”

Antoine rolled his eyes, but peered back into the scepter, scanning through the stored spells until he stopped at one he didn’t recognize.

“Any idea what a con-flag-ration is?” asked Antoine.

Vincent and Aryana shook their heads.

“Whatever it is, give it shot,” said Greg. “We’ve got to try something before Professor Dalton gets back.”

“Alright, here goes.” Antoine gripped the scepter tightly with both paws and stared down his muzzle, focusing so as to not overdo it again. As he exhaled the single incantation word, the intricate spell segments aligned just as Antoine had shaped them in his mind, and fire erupted from the coiled



wood.

Everyone's eyes went wide, the burning light raging within each fearful orb. With a yelp, Antoine dropped the scepter and pawed wildly at the flames that clung to his robes. Greg ran screaming around the room with his tail-tip ablaze. Aryana scurried under her desk to get out of the way as Vincent combed his ears back and rushed to the center of the room.

Vincent closed his eyes tightly, holding one open paw out in front of him and perpendicular to the floor. The other, palm turned toward the floor, he circled above the first, increasing its speed with each completed revolution. Using the stationary paw, Vincent stabbed at the sky, bellowing his incantation. A thick sheet of water, the width and breadth of the room, rained down from above with the roar of a waterfall, dousing the flames and drenching everything.

Aryana withdrew from her hiding place and inspected the room around her. "That. Was. Awesome. Do it again!"



"What's wrong with you!" shouted Greg through his tears, gripping his scorched tail-tip to his chest. Using a pawfinger to test the sensitive, fur-less skin, he instantly withdrew it and whimpered loudly.

"You'll be fine, ya big kit," reproved Aryana gently as she made her way over to Greg, splashing her footpaws in the water below. "Have a sense of adventure."

"Why don't you have a sense of not being insane!"

Aryana just smiled at him. "You need to work on your comebacks. Now hold still." Aryana held her paws over Greg's tail and chanted quietly. His tail-tip glowed with a white light as the skin turned from red to pink and the fur regrew until it was full once again. Greg grudgingly thanked her while Vincent wrung the water from his ears and Squawky tried to shake himself dry.

Aryana turned to Antoine. "So what do we—" Her words were cut off by a burst of air dryer than the sun-turned side of a desert rock. As the gust subsided, she was taken by hacking coughs, her throat bereft of moisture and her fur puffy and on end.

"It worked!" exclaimed Antoine excitedly between his own coughs. "I interweaved the fire spell with one of the wind ones we studied last week. Greg. Vincent. Hold still."

Thrice more Antoine cast the spell and hacking coughs filled the room as his friends and Squawky ceased to drip. The residual water finished leaking through the slat-wood floor into the ground beneath as Greg scooped the disoriented Squawky up off the floor.

"I got Glendencal!" said Greg, holding him up.

"Good going!" said Antoine. "Keep a hold of him while I try find something that will actually work."

Greg struggled to keep his hold on Squawky while Vincent and Aryana busied themselves with taming their fur. Antoine returned to the scepter, his muzzle and brow furrowed with the effort of his search.

"Hey guys!" shouted Antoine, bouncing excitedly. "I think I've got it. The most complex spell in here is rife with talk of reversal."

"Lemme see," said Greg, looking skeptical.



"Me too; I wanna see," added Aryana.

Even Vincent looked curious as they all crowed around the scepter.

"You can understand that?" asked Greg, squinting. "I can't make out any of it."

"Me either," admitted Aryana, scratching behind an ear.

"Well, I understand parts of it." Antoine pointed to a layer of ethereal





runes that floated on the surface of the scepter. "See these? Those two are the symbols for the metallics and organics of earth, and those three there are their binding, essence, and alteration segments. And the sets of runes in this layer underneath are each powerful channels that allow their segment sources to flow in reverse. I'm not sure what the rest of it is, exactly, but I think it's our best chance."



"Are you sure this time?" asked Greg worriedly.

Antoine just shrugged and wagged with a grin.

Greg sighed and rubbed his forehead. "Just do it already, then. Professor Dalton will be back any moment."

Vincent and Aryana shrugged.

"Alright then," exclaimed Antoine. "Let's do this!"

Antoine gathered his strength and began the spell's incantation. As the spell progressed, each in the young group of students could feel the room swelling with its ever-growing energy. With the last words out of Antoine's muzzle, the spell reached its zenith with a sound like a great snap echoing in the distance.

For a moment, each was sure the spell had failed, but then everything in the room began to slowly lift upward. Panicked shouts escaped their muzzles as all four of them, with the contents of the room following suit, left the ground entirely to float, twist, and turn between floor and ceiling.

"What did you do! What did you do!" shouted Greg as he abandoned Squawky and flailed, trying to grab onto anything he could.

Aryana laughed and tried, unsuccessfully, to swim. "This is awesome!"

The classroom door opened wide, and from his inverted vantage point Antoine saw an upside-down Professor Dalton staring back at him with a raised eyebrow and an unfavorable expression. Antoine thought he caught the venerable wolf grinning when he snorted, but he couldn't be sure.

Professor Dalton lifted an arm and snapped his fingers. The training scepter appeared in his paw, and with a few short commands everything that had been upended went crashing to the floor. The teens groaned as they collected themselves and slid out from under the debris, shedding chairs and textbooks alike. Professor Dalton walked calmly to the front of the room and replaced the scepter onto his desk. Raising his paws, pads toward the room, he closed his eyes, lifted his muzzle slightly, and began to chant. Desks began righting themselves as waterlogged textbook pages dried,

unbent, and replaced themselves onto the shelves. Each of the students had to scurry to avoid colliding with classroom items as they found their way back to their proper place. In the end, even Squawky's cage was reconstructed with him inside.

Once he had finished, Professor Dalton folded his arms and looked to each student in turn, but none of them would return his gaze, their muzzles down and ears laid back.

"I suppose I will be seeing all of you back here tomorrow. You must be very dedicated students to be here so often."

With that said, Professor Dalton, once again, exited the room.

It was a while before anyone felt comfortable enough to look up, and even then their guilty silence persisted. Before long though, Antoine began drumming his claws on his desk; soon after, a sly grin worked its way across his muzzle. He looked to each of his friends before turning his attention to the training scepter.

"Let's play with it." 🐾



A FANTASY NO LONGER

CHARLES R. DE CHARLEROY, JR.

The long hours alone on a Saturday in the university lab slipped by quickly for Erol Mustel. Lost deeply as usual in his physics studies, the small snowy ermine sat nestled in his favorite cubby hole among piles of books, papers and boxes of assorted files and supplies. The date for his thesis defense loomed in his mind, a mere six months away! Could he possibly ready himself against all potential arguments by then?

Barely beyond his kind's traditional age of adult ascension, one step remained before Erol received his PhD in quantum mechanics!

A certain level of satisfaction with his achievements might be expected, but his generally cheerful demeanor masked discontent. The science he'd studied provided all the answers to the deep mysteries of the universe, all summed up in neat, proper equations. And therein lay the problem. No room remained for true mystery, no place for something that existed outside the numbers.

His mind, the very thing that chained him in this world of logic and

logarithms, also paradoxically provided him a measure of escape. In his imagination there was freedom from the cold world of numbers; there he could run back to childhood daydreams of sword and sorcery. Recalling the great classics of fiction, with the little spare time left to him during his busy, science-crowded days he thought up whole worlds of magic and monsters, battled dragons, defeated demons and dark wizards, and wrestled with trials and tribulations of epic scales.

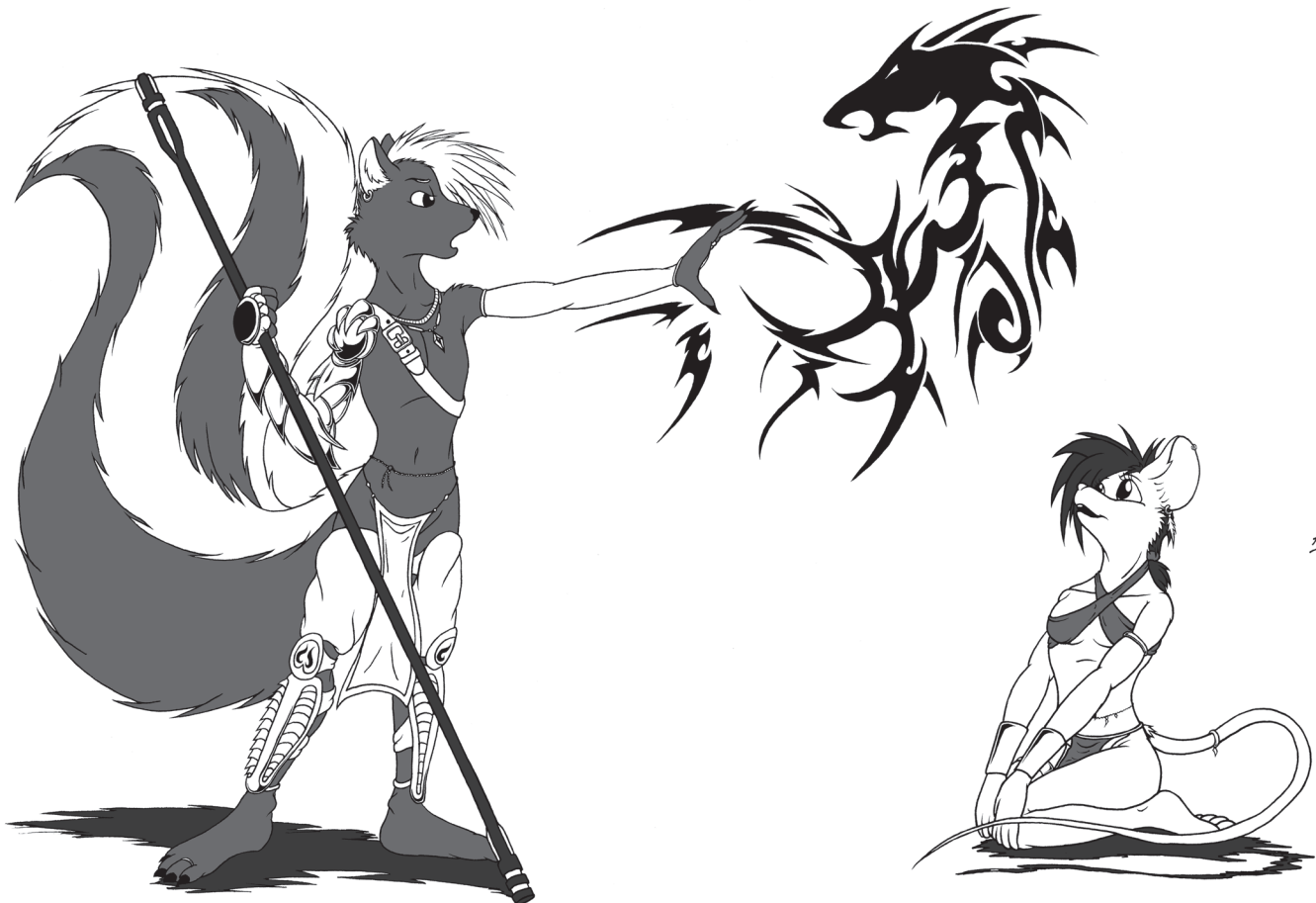
As the evening came and went, Erol slipped into one of those mythic daydreams, which morphed into a complete dream as he fell asleep with his whiskers crumpled beneath the side of his snout which rested upon a book pile.

Waking up suddenly in the darkness and leaving a small pool of drool on the cover of the volume he'd rested upon, Erol realized several hours at least had passed and the weekend security guard must have missed him in his secluded corner and shut off all the lights. A glance at the dimly glowing face of the wall clock revealed that the midnight hour was now waning.

Chiding himself for the lack of resolve, Erol packed up his work. Hadn't the other great minds of the age often stayed awake for days on end, pondering and wracking their brains sleeplessly for their theories that later brought them renown? It couldn't be more than 36 hours since he'd risen from his bed. Ah, how could he hope to compete if his eyes refused to remain open for even two days!

Lugging his nearly bursting backpack, Erol staggered from the lab into the dimly lit hallway, the only illumination which remained glowed from the reddish exit signs and a single rectangular patch of light emanating from the office of his head professor and sponsor, the very same one who'd discovered him in the village years before, Stabian Hermanius, a genteel old silver fox whose long years left his previously argent-hued fur a frosty white.

Erol crept by quietly as he made his way to one of the exits, neither wanting to disturb the professor if he was busy or sleeping. But before he could pass the door, a dark silhouette eclipsed a portion of the light shining upon the



wall. Glancing at the frosted glass of the professor's door, Erold's attention was instantly drawn to the rectangular shadow which clearly belonged to something in the room. There was a problem, the disembodied nature of the shadow which his analytical mind couldn't overlook. Nothing was holding it up to the light that he could see.

'Mysterious' was the word which sprang instantly into Erold's mind, and his curiosity overwhelmed his caution as his paw slowly rose and took hold of the door knob, opening the door just a sliver to peek. As he peered through the slit, the identity of the object casting the shadow became clear. It was not the identity of the object which now caused Erold's jaw to drop and his eyes to stare widely in shock, for it was simply a book. The marvelous thing about this book was that it floated in midair, unattached to anything he could see, drifting steadily toward the back of the room.

The phantom book rose slightly to pass over the partition which divided the Professor's study from the main office. It dangled for a moment more then dropped with a thud out of sight.

"Ouch!" exclaimed the familiar raspy voice of Professor Hermanius. He stood up with his back to Erold, who could just see enough over the divider to witness the elderly fox rubbing his temple with his frayed ears splayed sideways in frustration. "Miscast the 'descend' portion of the incantation again! Confound these complexities!" He turned around and was about to bow to retrieve the book, which had fallen behind him, when he stopped still as stone as his eyes met the stunned gaze of his student.

Seconds ticked by, amounting to a long awkward minute as fox and ermine stumbled mentally, each attempting to rationally approach the impossibly irrational thing Erold witnessed.

"Ah... err... Good evening, Mr. Mustel," stuttered the professor, rounding the partition, his tail bristled and twitching, while nervously adjusting the bifocals resting upon his slender snout. "I take it... another very late night studying? Such thing can often lead to visual hallucinations and..."

"The book was FLOATING!!" blurted Erold as his heavy bag dropped

to the floor, in an uncharacteristically boisterous tone which could either be taken as an exclamation of fear, or joy, or perhaps a little of both.

"Well... ah... dear me," mumbled the professor. Clearing his throat and smoothing his tail as he appeared to regain a manner of composure, he said calmly, "I suppose to claim it was a hallucination or a trick would be both absurd and insulting to your intelligence and proficient powers of observation."

Erold certainly thought it would, but he said nothing, only dipping his nose in silent affirmation. He knew enough of Professor Hermanius' mannerisms to comprehend that his mentor's mind was whirring wilding in confusion and indecision. The potential for an astounding revelation existed, but there was also great danger; clearly he'd seen something not meant for his

eyes.

"I... shall be frank, then," the professor said, striding past Erold and shutting the office door. He spent a few moments there, murmuring in some incomprehensible language and making various passes and figures with his paws.

Erold caught a brief glimpse of a glowing circle composed of concentric rings of odd letters and symbols he took to be runes before it faded from sight.

Returning to the partition, the professor inhaled deeply and closed his eyes, and in a tense voice cut away any thread of doubt in Erold's mind. "What you saw was, indeed, magic."

The words played over and over in Erold's mind. Magic. Magic! REAL magic! It existed; he'd seen it with his own eyes, had it confirmed by a secondary source he trusted. Here was a force that no physics could reconcile!



The closed universe was suddenly thrown wide open as this new mythical, mystical reality shattered into pieces the neat orderly little world into which he'd resigned himself.

"Magic," whispered Erold reverently, as if the word had suddenly acquired sacredness. "It's real. Really real. Really really real." His mind was turning cartwheels of sheer joy, as if he'd become a young child all over again.

"It is," the professor said, his composure regained. "And now I must decide what's to be done." He motioned for Erold to follow him back into his study. "Obviously you've seen what wasn't meant to be seen. It's entirely my mistake, of course. I completely forgot to recast the ward when I last entered. But the fact remains, you are now aware of magic, and that presents with a significant dilemma."

Hungry for as much immediate information as he could gather, Erold ignored the professor's concern for the moment and asked, "The ward was the circle of symbols you made?"

Professor Hermanius nodded while fumbling about in a drawer at his desk, "Yes, it's a relatively simple one. It creates a loud clanging in my ear whenever someone approaches the door from outside. The disadvantage is that wards are dispelled when the caster voluntarily passes through them, such as when I open the door. I was off

guard tonight; there's almost never anyone here this late on a weekend night." He took out a slightly chipped mug adorned with small images of various atoms, setting it beside a half-full mug already on his desk.

"Tea?" he asked.

"Oh, sure, I'd like some. Thanks," said Erold, sitting in a folding chair and taking the mug from his mentor, though he looked rather concerned as the professor poured the steaming drink into it. "I, uhm, don't want to sound suspicious or anything, but that's not a memory-erasing potion, is it?"

The silver fox chuckled lightly as he placed the teapot back on the warmer. "No need to worry about that. The mind is not so simple a thing that a mere potion can isolate any specific memories. Memory potions of any sort are, in fact, restricted save for the most extreme circumstances."

"Restricted" asked Erold. "Who restricts it?" He became even more excited, sloshing his tea as he leaned forward suddenly. "There are others, aren't there? Other magicians, maybe a council or clans or something like that!"

"Not so fast! Not so fast!" the professor chuckled, holding a paw out. "You're not nearly ready for that information!" He took a sip of his tea and looked over the rim of the mug toward Erold with a glimmer in his grey eye. "But I think you may be able to learn in time."

Erold's eyes widened. "I could learn? Are you going to teach me magic?!" He looked about ready to fly off his seat in excitement.

"Yes, I believe I shall," nodded the professor. "I've put off training an apprentice for far too long. Couldn't find the one with the proper temperament and intellect, you see. You can't just choose anyone." He bent forward and patted Erold's shoulder lightly with a paw, "And I can't think of anyone more suited in this university."

"Thank you, sir!" Erold exclaimed. "When will we start?"

Professor Hermanius reached into the drawer and removed what appeared to be a business card. He didn't hold it out, but looked sternly at Erold. "I know I can trust you not to tell anyone about what you've seen, but I must be sure you understand what you're entering into. Magic is difficult... and can be very dangerous. More dangerous than you can imagine. And there are things you will learn from myself and others which may disturb you. Remember, most knowledge can be used for good or evil depending on the will of those wielding it. Do you accept all this?"

Erold straightened in the chair and declared with staunch certainty. "I do, Professor. It's just like the modern nuclear age. We can produce electricity with it, or devastating bombs. But the power itself just exists."

"Exactly." Smiling, the professor then handed Erold the card, which looked blank save for a large 'HS' in heraldic style, "Don't lose it. It has a hidden message only those who use magic can see. It marks you as my apprentice. Now, you go get some sleep! You've got a lot on your plate now, my boy! And don't forget your thesis in all the excitement! I shall see you in..." he yawned widely, glancing at the late hour. "Late morning, I should think. Off you go, now!"

After bidding the professor a joyful goodnight, Erold almost skipped from the room after retrieving his bag. It felt as light as his heart. The world was full of glorious mystery again, overflowing with many questions to ask and answers to find!

He could hardly wait for the morning, the dawn heralding a new life which awaited him. 🐾





MAGIC 101

DAVE "LONEWOLF" SAVITSKY

"Kevin! Yo, Kev! Hold up, man!" The cougar stopped and looked back to see the wolf that lived in the dorm room next to his, jogging towards him.

"Hey, Ethan," Kevin said. "What's up?"

The wolf came to a stop in front of Kevin. "We looked all over for you, man. It's pizza and beer night at the Skeller. You're still with us, right?" Ethan cocked his head back over his shoulder, indicating the other five guys walking towards them.

"Yeah, I'm in. Just give me a minute. I gotta run in here and grab something," Kevin said, pointing his thumb at the building next to them.

"What could you possibly need from in Clark this late in the evening?"

"Nothing big," Kevin replied, scratching behind an ear. "I think I left my backpack in Psych."

Ethan smirked and snorted.

"How did you manage to forget your backpack?"

"I don't know. Guess I just let my mind wander off. Started running on auto-pilot, you know? Remembered my notebook, but forgot everything else."

"You're a special kind of stupid, you know that?"

"That's what I hear."

Ethan smiled and shook his head. "Alright, man. We'll wait here. Just hurry it up. I want to get down there before there's a wait."

* * * *

Just as he hoped, Kevin found his backpack resting against the back wall of the lecture hall. He checked to make sure everything was still there, then slung it over his shoulder and made his way out.

The Clark building was one of the busiest on campus. Kevin was used to navigating his way through a tightly packed mass of students when inside. But it was late enough that no students

were there and most of the lights had been turned off for the night. To have it almost completely dark and silent felt a little creepy.

However, it was because of that quiet that he was able to catch something he would have otherwise completely missed. The faint sound of a full lecture hall caught his ear. He stopped and swiveled his ear towards the sound, making sure he heard it right.

But then he heard the sound again, unmistakable this time. A collective gasp and then murmuring before a single voice rose above the rest. It seemed to be coming from the other side of the wall next him, but the only thing on the other side of that wall was a stairwell.

Still, the muffled sounds of a lecture continued to make their way to him. He glanced both ways down the hallway, wondering if he was just hearing an echo from another room, but nothing he could see or hear seemed to back up that theory. Turning his gaze back to the wall next to him, he narrowed his eyes, scowling and staring intently. That's when he noticed a faint light emanating from the concrete between some of the bricks. He closed his eyes and shook his head, but when he looked again there was definitely light coming from behind the brick wall—light the height and width of a door.

Again Kevin glanced both ways down the hallway, this time to make sure no one was standing there watching. Convinced that he was all alone, he stepped towards the wall and pressed his ear against it.

"...one of the most basic conjures. Its usefulness is almost unlimited. From simple things like light or heat to the base element of a large number of wards and enchantments. But all of that is for much, much later. Right now we'll just focus on the basic conjure. Who would like to demonstrate? No volunteers? How about you, Mr. Byers?"

Kevin's eyes widened.

"Kevin Byers. Why don't you come join us? I'd like you to help me with this demonstration."

Just as Kevin was about to back away, the "door" he was leaning against swung inward. He stumbled and lurched through it, recovering just before falling on his muzzle in front of



a full lecture hall. In front of the class a panda leaned against a podium with his paws in his pockets, failing to hide a smile.

"Mr. Byers. So glad you've finally decided to join us. Class started two weeks ago."

Kevin's gaze darted from the Professor, to the several hundred students, to the door behind him, then back to the Professor.

"I...umm..." Kevin started. "I don't remember registering for this class. Whatever it is."

Muffled laughter filled the lecture hall.

"You didn't," the panda said. "It was done for you. And it seems the more conventional methods of notifying you failed, so we had to try something else. But we can discuss that later. For now, please come join me over here."

Kevin reached up to scratch behind an ear and looked back at the door again, noticing it had closed.

"Come, come, Mr. Byers. No need to worry."

"I'm actually in a hurry," Kevin said, looking back at the panda. "My friends are waiting on me outs—"

"They'll still be there when we're done. Trust me. Now come. I have a class to teach."

Kevin opened his muzzle to protest again, then shut it with a heavy sigh of resignation. Despite the friendly look on the panda's face, Kevin could tell he had no intention of relenting.

"What class did you say this was?" he asked.

The panda smiled. "Magic 101." Kevin raised a brow. The panda just shrugged. "I know. But I didn't name the class. I just teach it."

"Magic 101," Kevin said hesitantly, moving to stand next to the panda, "Sure. And what am I demonstrating?"

"You'll be conjuring fire, Mr. Byers."

Kevin's ears pressed back against his head. "No, really."

The panda smirked and pushed himself into a standing position. "Conjuring fire. Really."

Kevin stared at the panda. The panda just smiled back.

"You should probably ask someone else," Kevin said. "I don't know how to... conjure fire."

"That's the point of a class, isn't it?"

To teach you things you don't know? Besides, you do know. You just don't know you know. So I'm going to help you. Now, hold out your paw in front of you, pads up."

Kevin looked up at the other students in the class, all eyes staring back at him. The faces he could see clearly were drawn tight in expectation, without humor.

"Ok," Kevin said, sliding his backpack off and placing it on the ground next to him. He held his paw out just as the panda had instructed him. "How does this work? Because fire and fur...they don't mix so well."

"Not to worry, Mr. Byers. This basic conjure uses only your own energies. They can't fold in on you. Just do as I say."

Kevin nodded, still skeptical.

"Good, good. Now relax," the panda said. "Take deep breathes and clear your

mind. Feel the energy in your body. In your bones. Your muscles. Your blood. Feel it moving through you like ocean currents. Can you feel it, Mr. Byers?"

Much to his amazement, he could. It felt as though all his fur was standing up on end, although that clearly wasn't happening.

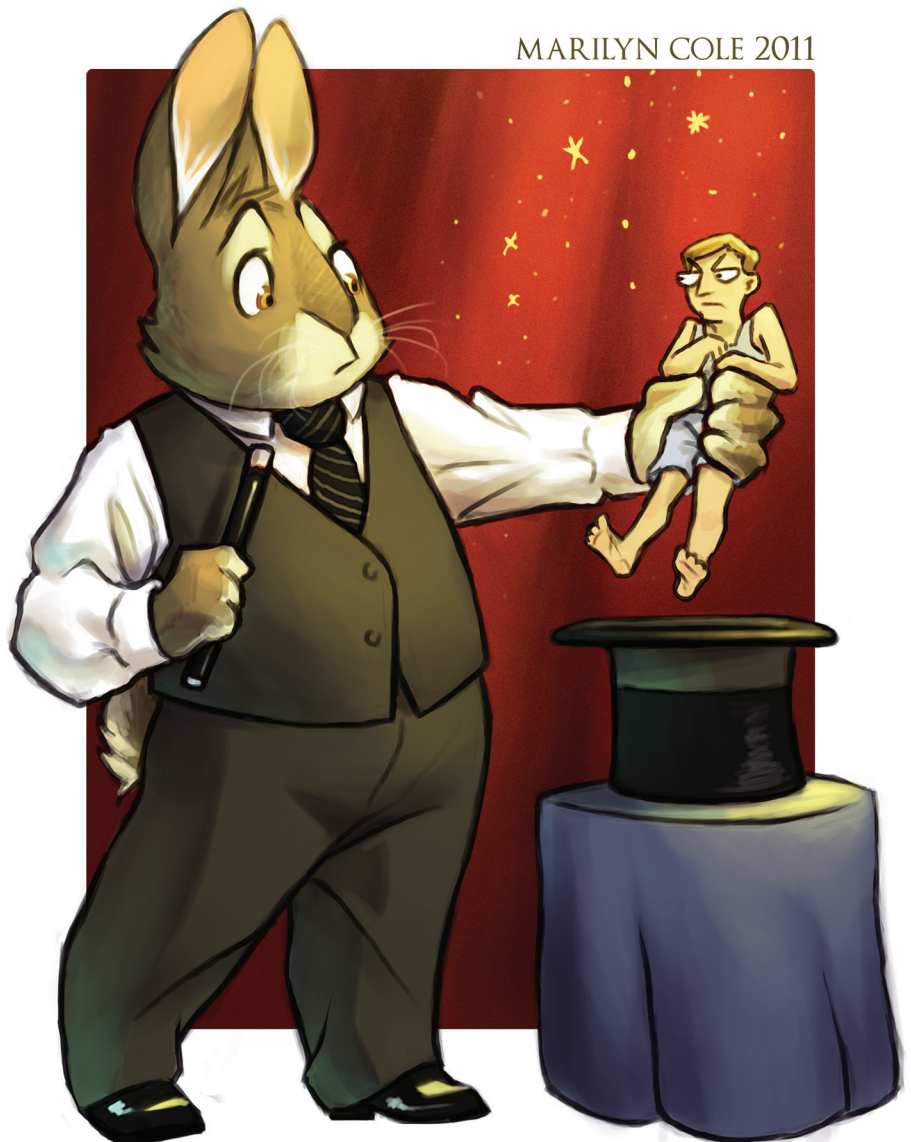
"Good. Now focus on the space just above your palm. Curl your fingers slightly and push your energy through them into that space. Tell it to make fire. Just a small amount."

Without really knowing how he was doing it, Kevin willed the energy in his body to travel down his arm to his paw. He pictured a flame like a lit match, willing the energy into form. But nothing happened.

"You're doing well, Mr. Byers. Just focus. Will it to happen."

Kevin inhaled deeply, his lips curling back and exposing his fangs in

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concentration. His eyes narrowed to slits until everything around him faded, as if his paw was the only thing left in the world.

For a few more endless moments nothing happened. Then a small spark lit in the space above Kevin's paw. A heartbeat later the spark exploded into flames that engulfed the entirety of his paw down to the wrist. His eyes shot open.

"Oh crap!"

Raw survival instincts took over as he frantically waved his paw in the air, trying to put it out. He stepped back, his foot snagging on his backpack, causing him to stumble. Falling sideways, he managed to catch himself on the podium. In the same instant the flames erupted on his arm, reaching to his elbow.

"—down, Mr. Byers! Calm down!" the panda's voice cut through his panic. "It can't hurt you! You need to remain focused! Steady yourself! Arm out!"

Kevin gritted his teeth, staring wide-eyed at his flaming arm, then pushed himself back up. He planted his feet again and held his arm out.

"Okay, now control the fire. Quell

it. Guide it back to where you want it."

Staring down at his arm, ablaze almost to the edge of his t-shirt sleeve now, Kevin had to bite back the urge to fall into panic again. He swallowed hard and tried to will the flames back into control. Slowly, they began to recede. They passed his elbow, then his wrist, where they paused. Kevin redoubled his efforts until the flames unraveled from his fingers and a tight ball of flame floated above his palm.

"Excellent, Mr. Byers. Now close your fist and extinguish the fire."

Kevin hesitated, admiring the fire in his palm. The fire he'd created. With magic. Then he closed his fist around it, snuffing it out of existence.

His gaze went out across the class room and was met with wide-eyed stares and open muzzles. Even the professor, though smiling, seemed in awe. Kevin dropped his arm to his side and exhaled the breath he didn't even know he was holding. The stench of burnt fur wafted up from his side. He looked down to see the fur on his arm was half the length it had been. He swallowed hard.

"I thought you said it couldn't hurt me."

"Yes...well," the panda balked. "It wasn't supposed to happen like that. You have quite the talent, Mr. Byers. Let me see your arm for a moment."

Kevin held his arm out and the panda wrapped his paws around it, turning it over and raising it to inspect the damage. The cougar felt a slight warmth wherever the panda's fingers touched.

"No permanent harm. You should be good as new before you leave." The panda released his arm. "Now please, have a seat Mr. Byers."

* * * *

At the end of class the panda pulled Kevin aside.

"Mr. Byers, I need to have a word with you."

"Yes, Professor?"

"We need to catch you up on the two weeks of class you've missed. Especially based on what happened earlier. You displayed quite a bit of raw power. It's important that you learn to control it very soon."

Kevin nodded, both flattered and frightened. The panda handed Kevin a piece of paper.

"This is my office number and my hours. You know where Doctor Young's office is, upstairs?" Kevin nodded again. "Mine is right next door."

Kevin blinked, confused. "There is no office next to Doctor Young's."

The panda smiled. "There's no lecture hall in the stairwell, either. Now go. Your friends are waiting."

"Yeah, right," Kevin said, folding the piece of paper and putting it in his pocket. He walked out of the classroom and towards the exit. He was about to call Ethan to see if the guys were still at the Skeller, but when he walked outside they were all there waiting for him.

"Kevin, man? What the hell?" Ethan asked.

"I know, I know," Kevin said. "I can't believe you waited."

"We were about to leave. It's been, like, four minutes."

"I...what?" Kevin looked around. It was still evening; not night, as he expected it to be.

"You okay, Kev?" The wolf poked him on the arm.

"Yeah, no, I'm fine," Kevin said, thumbing the paper in his pocket. "Mind just wandered off." 🐾





"THE MAGIC-MAKER" **SAPPHIRE, THE EGYPTIAN CAT OF** **GRACE AND BEAUTY**

"Oh, it finally came in the mail. I've waited so long for this package."

Sammy's owner opened the cardboard container, removed the treasured object from its packing-peanut-filled innards, and strolled into the next room. "Look, honey. It finally arrived!"

Sammy, a tortoiseshell cat, stretched his legs, arched his back, and hopped down from the sofa cushion he had curled up on. A curious cat just had to be satisfied. Sauntering toward the abandoned box, he strode past Lollipop, an uncaged white rabbit that his owner had recently rescued from a shelter. Their owner loved animals and had a soft spot for critters that needed a loving home. The feline didn't mind

too much sharing the home with other animals, since he himself had been a shelter rescuee three years ago.

As Sammy approached the open container, Lollipop sneered, "What are you thinking of doing?"

Sammy ignored him.

"Mother will get angry if you make a mess." Lollipop warned hoping to use their owner as leverage. "Someone as famous as me should not have to clean up after you," he scolded. The cat disliked the way the bunny bragged about how he had been a famous magic-show rabbit in Las Vegas.

Shooting an incredulous look over his shoulder, Sammy muttered, "At least I bury my waste in a sandbox instead of littering chocolate-covered raisins all over the floor."

"I heard that!" Lollipop retorted. "Did I ever tell you of how Guy Vernon and I performed for the President?"

Sammy peered over the edge of the box and batted at a packing peanut. "Did anyone ever tell you that Guy Vernon didn't work with rabbits? He specialized in close-up magic with playing cards." At that, Sammy leapt into the box. The peanuts enveloped him.

A palpable silence permeated the room. Lollipop sniffed in the direction of the open box. Tentatively, he sidled closer to it and sniffed at the corrugated wall, curious about what happened to his house-mate. Standing on his hind legs, he stretched his neck hoping to see inside the container. Suddenly, the box tipped towards the bunny whose eyes widened in shock. As the container fell on its side, spilling its fillings, Lollipop half-hopped and half-tripped in recoil, his furry feet slipping on the hardwood floor. Once he regained his composure, he saw a smirking Sammy sitting in the toppled box, a smug tail curled around his feet.

"Are you trying to give my little heart a seizure?" Lollipop jumped onto the ottoman and licked and smoothed down his tousled fur. The elevated perch allowed him to view the box from a safe distance.

Sammy batted his paws against the few peanuts that remained in the box and righted it up again with himself inside. "Arrr, ye scurvy dog!" The feline growled, "if I wanted ye dead, I'd make ye walk the plank."

The rabbit furrowed his brow in consternation and peered at the cat below. "And just who do you think you are?"

The tortoiseshell, standing on his hind legs, placed one paw on the rim of the box and shielded his eyes with the other. "Arrr, I'm the deadly Black-Eared Pirate sailing through treacherous waters in search of rare golden catnip." He pointed his paw ahead of him and declared, "Thar be land! Oh no! The dreaded giant squid is attacking me ship!" Sammy made the H.M.S. Cardboard rock back and forth until it toppled on its side again. The pirate-cat rolled out of the box onto the carpet. However, instead of looking defeated, as Lollipop expected, the feline jumped to his feet and slowly stalked into the box.

"What are you doing now?" the exasperated bunny questioned as he hopped down from the ottoman, sat down next to the container, and peered around the sidewall into the interior.



Curiosity could be contagious.

Sammy replied in a British accent, "All of my research has led me to this tunnel beneath the Great Pyramid at Giza. Experts previously thought that they had found all of the treasures hidden in this pyramid, but I discovered an ancient passageway that contains the greatest treasure of the Pharaoh." Sammy crawled out of the box, around to the back of it, and placed his paws on the box's exposed bottom. "Once I open this door, I will uncover that treasure." The cat pushed the bottom so that the box turned upside-down. Leaping on top of it, he peeked through the crack where the two bottom flaps of the box met. "Here it is! The sarcophagus of the Pharaoh's favorite pet cat!" he exclaimed triumphantly.

"Oh, please!" Lollipop rolled his eyes.

"The Egyptians really knew how a cat deserved to be treated." Sammy mused. The archaeologist-cat descended from the box, crouched on the floor, and stared where the wall of the corrugated tomb met the hardwood floor. "Who knows what is in here after thousands of years? Is the mummy still intact? Did the Pharaoh bury the holy pet with its favorite toy?"

Lollipop sniffed at the corner of the box.

Sammy whispered, "Maybe the Pharaoh placed a curse on it so that anyone who disturbed his pet's eternal rest would be punished."

The rabbit's eyes widened.

As the feline slightly lifted the edge of the cardboard-sarcophagus so that only a thin crack of darkness was revealed, he continued, "What mysteries does this container hold? We've come so far and sacrificed so much that we cannot turn back now."

Despite himself, Lollipop felt compelled to peer into the darkness revealed by the raised edge. Then, Lollipop whispered, "I... don't see...any—"

"—The mummy is still alive!"

Sammy exclaimed as he grabbed the rabbit's leg, tossed him under the box, and slid under it himself. In the darkness, Sammy could hear Lollipop sulk in a corner.

"David Copperfield dubbed that my lucky foot. You could've broken it!" The large rodent pouted.

Resisting the all-too-easy comeback



of how all lucky-rabbit's-feet were useless to the dead rabbits they came from, Sammy instead replied, "You're right! We are lucky. Our government recognized that we have 'the right stuff', and so we're traveling in this spaceship to an alien planet. We've been sent here to find intelligent life. Our ship has just landed, and we are about to step onto alien soil. Anything could be out there." Sammy lifted the edge of the box enough to allow a sliver of light to enter it. "What sort of beings do you think we'll encounter?"

Sniffing at the partial opening, Lollipop hesitated to answer.

Sammy prompted him. "Do you think the beings will be friendly or ferocious?"

Lollipop faltered, his voice lacking confidence, "We don't know . . . since they have refused to respond to . . . our attempts to communicate?"

Sammy beamed. "Then, we'll have to be ready for anything." He raised the "hatch" of the space-box until it again rested on its side. "The ground is very firm." He tapped his paw on the hardwood floor.

"And, it's covered with strange objects." The bunny nuzzled a stray packing peanut.

Sammy bent low and blew air across the floor scattering the airy styrofoam pieces. "The gravity on this planet appears to be low."

"How will we greet the natives?" Lollipop asked.

Before the cat could answer, a bellowing holler reverberated through the room, followed by the vibrations of a stampede.

"Eek! The natives are attacking!" Lollipop screeched. He and Sammy sought cover behind the ottoman.

Suddenly, Oscar, the golden retriever, bounded into the room toward the ottoman. His tail wagged,



his mouth was open, and his tongue flopped wildly. He gave each housemate an affectionate lick.

"Oh no!" Lollipop bawled as slobber trickled from his fur. "The aliens are ferociously friendly!"

"Hi, guys!" Oscar greeted the feline and bunny. Out of the corner of his eye, the dog spied the cardboard box. Returning his gaze to Sammy, he asked eagerly, "Are you making the magic? Can I join you? You're so good at it!"

Sammy licked his front paw nonchalantly. "Anyone can make the magic."

Oscar pondered that for a minute, and then replied, "Maybe so, but it's just more fun with friends."

Lollipop agreed. 🐾



NEGATIVE EVIDENCE

BILL "HAFOC" ROGERS

Samel Church stood in the doorway looking miserable, and well he might. My Procurator, Dimitri Silverblaze, loomed behind him.

Dimitri isn't huge, but the mouse Samel barely came up above his knees. The little fellow just had to feel threatened. Besides, Dimitri is a Dark Unicorn, and we all know why the Mad Czar had his necromancers create them.

I tried to blink myself awake in spite of the bright sunlight streaming into my office. "What did Samel do this time?"

"He fell off the north wall, trying to climb out."

I rubbed my bleary eyes with my left wing. "Samel, is this true?"

He hung his head lower. "I'm sorry I tried to escape."

"Oh, Samel. Don't be sorry about that. I'm upset because you could have been killed! If the time comes, you may leave openly. But if you do, walk out the front gate. Never try to go over the walls."

"If I could leave, why did Procurator Silverblaze bring me back? I can't use magic, I can't, I can't! I've tried so hard, but I don't belong here. He should have just let me go." The little fellow's eyes brimmed with tears. My heart ached for him.

"I had to help you. You broke your arm when you fell," Dimitri said. His voice was gentleness itself.

I reached for Samel's arm. "Let me see that." He held it out for me, full of trust.

I started chanting a healing spell. I could sense a minor fracture, but it was hard to focus power on it. Well, like all bats, I'm not at my best in daylight.

"I feel your power," Samel said. "If I can feel it, like a wizard does, why can't I use it?"

"We don't know. We'll find the answer, though. Don't lose faith. Stay with us."

He lowered his eyes. "I will since you ask it, Princeps."

The magic curled around the bones of his arm, flickered, and slipped away. I sighed. "I can't hold this. You'd better

go see Brother Timothy. He'll splint your arm."

"Once again magic fails me."

"My spell would only have held the bone in place anyway. Some things work just as well without magic. Go see Medicus Timothy, and try not to lose hope."

"As you wish, Princeps. I've given you nothing but trouble. I'm sorry to disturb you, especially now that the Greenleaf Brethren have... you know..."

"They can threaten, but actually collecting my head is something else. And any Prospective is worth my trouble, Samel. The Institute exists for the Prospectives, after all. If the Brethren make us forget that, they've already won."

He bowed and left, holding his arm.

"I thought you reinforced the wards on the walls," I said, when the mouse was out of earshot. "I thought I told you the Council authorized lethal magic."

"I did, and the wards are lethal, or should be," Dimitri said. His eyes, black in black, were unreadable as always, but I felt his certainty. "I'm good at lethal, too. He's lucky to be alive. It's most curious."

"Check the wards again. I hate to take this personally, but I'm told that when a necromancer cuts off your head he keeps you conscious until they rip the knowledge, um... it is, they say, most unpleasant. You're sure that your spell will destroy my head if..."

"You'll explode like balefire. But they won't get either of us." There was a hell-glow deep in those all-black eyes. He looked like he meant it. That glow made even me shiver.

"Why do the Greenleafers hate us so much, Dimitri? Even my herbivore friends don't understand it. Killing in the name of radical vegetarianism! It's ludicrous!"

"I asked about that, in a meeting of the Vegan Party in town. They didn't seem to have an answer, even among themselves. They just spouted slogans at me."

I blinked. "They let you into a meeting?"

"Why not? I have flat teeth, don't I?"

"If they knew what dark unicorns eat, they wouldn't worry about Brother Timothy's pot roast."



"I think they would. Like many fanatics, they are more concerned with symbols and theories than facts."

"They choose to make themselves ignorant."

"Yes, but encouraging fear and ignorance has always been the swiftest route to power. The Mad Czar knew that. He lost the World War in the end, but that doesn't stop others from following his example. We learn nothing from history."

"I'd like to think we learned something, at least. And I think the Greenleaf threat will pass, as others have."

"I hope you're right."

"Do you think we might flow-scan poor Samel again? Tonight is the dark of the moon. At midnight, our abilities should be greatest. It might work this time."

"I begin to think he's right when he says he has no magical talent."

"Nonsense. Everyone has some magical talent."

"Newton proposed that with her Laws of Magical Interaction, but it's never been proven."

"But Samel feels magic so strongly! Besides, he wants it so much."

Dimitri considered this for a moment. "Given that kindness changed even my own people, I know it's never wasted on anybody. Let alone on a gentle, sincere fellow like Samel. All right, let us try one more time."

"But there's something strange about him. I suggest you consider the curious effect of your healing spell."

"The spell had no effect."

"That's what was curious."

"You're too deep for me."

He smiled, showing a perfect set of black teeth. "Of course I am. I'll bring Samel back here toward midnight. In the meantime I'll check the wards on the walls. You get your sleep, old friend."

"I will. Thank you, Procurator."

#

Dimitri brought Samel to my office an hour before midnight.

"Welcome. Come in and be seated. All right, Samel, I... wait, who's there?"

The door to my chambers opened again. I saw nobody, but I felt the air move.

Dimitri sensed the threat first. He gestured and started a warding spell,

but it was too late. A net of orange fire wrapped him and threw him to the floor. I tried to reach for power, but barely spoke a word before the spell hit me too. It slammed me to the wall. I felt bones break.

The air shimmered. The shimmer became a red deer unwrapping a green cloak from around his body. He was dressed as a Necromancer, Gray Level; bracers, breastplate, skull helmet, and nothing else. Like all Necromancers he used a wand made of bone, supposedly the thighbone of someone he'd strangled. Two minotaurs appeared with him. They carried axes.

"I'll hold them. Get their heads." He pushed past Samel.

Samel stepped back. But then he squeaked a war cry and charged.

His cry was a squeal of rage that would have been at the edge of anyone's hearing except mine. Teeth bared, eyes bulging, he hurled himself at the deer who towered over him.

The necromancer flicked his wand and the world exploded in the purple glare of balefire. I wept in rage against a fanatic who would vaporize a young student when a simple slap, or a basic stun or hold spell, would have stopped--

--but Samel was still there, untouched in the midst of the glare. He hurled himself at his enemy. His toeclaws bit into the deer's ankle, he dug his finger claws into the thigh, and

he lunged upward and bit with those razor-sharp incisors. He bit the deer real high...

Even wrapped in magic as I was, I cringed. No matter how skilled a mage you are, some things just have to break your concentration. This was definitely one of them.

The red deer squealed even higher than Samel had, if that was possible. He leaped, reached down, desperately tried to swat Samel away. His wand went flying. The spells that hold Dimitri and myself shattered.

Dimitri spoke a Word of that great power his people carry. Just the feel of his power half stunned me. His magic was enough to hold our enemies, I was sure, but I threw in everything I had too, just to be safe. Then I thought it might be a good idea to crumple down onto the floor and sleep for a while.

#

"Princesps?"

"Samel. Dimitri. Thank you both for coming."

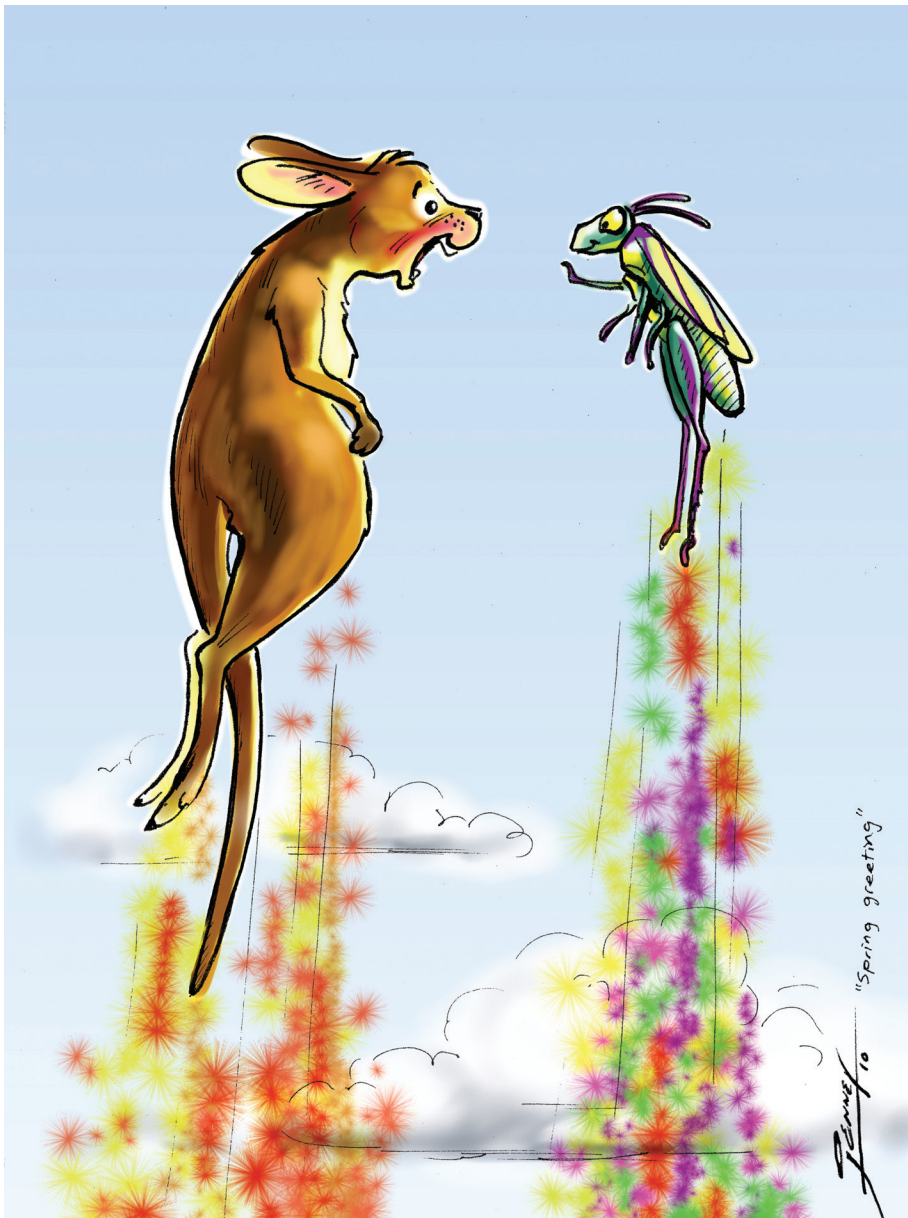
"How could I not?" the mouse said. "Are you sure you're well enough to speak to me?"

"My ribs are healing. How is your arm?"

He held it up and flexed his wrist, wiggled his fingers. "It seems fine."

"He's healed, Princeps," Dimitri said. "Brother Timothy can't find a trace of a break. In fact, our young





Master Samel seems to have gained some muscle bulk out of this incident. It's only logical, after all. Remember the Law of Conservation of Magic. All the energy he absorbed had to go somewhere."

"I don't understand," Samel said.

"I'm only beginning to understand myself," I said. "There shouldn't have been anything of you left."

"There was so much light around me, and it felt cold, yet the cold felt so far away somehow. What happened to the necromancer and his axemen?"

"I took care of them," Dimitri said.

Samel looked up at the Dark Unicorn, swallowed, and nodded. Obviously, he had decided not to ask questions. Wise lad.

I said "I think we discovered your special talent, Samel. No matter how powerful, magic has no effect on you. Your body just absorbs it."

His eyes went wide and filled with tears. "Then truly, I have no place here."

"On the contrary. Your best place is here."

"How can that be?"

"You've already shown how. In a world run by magic, a warrior – and don't scoff, you have a warrior's heart – who is immune to magical weapons may be the ultimate weapon himself."

"So you want me as a guard, to patrol the walls."

"I would like you to have combat training and help protect us, yes. But your talent has other uses. In particular, I'd like to start training you to be our potions master. I have the apprenticeship contract right here. All you need to do is sign."

"What good is a potions master who can't use magic?"

"You'd be surprised. Our most useful medical potions use no magic; that's one thing that helps make them so useful. As for the rest, you could learn the incantations but prompt someone else to chant them for you."

"I'd still be a poor master, if I can't..."

"Ask him what happened to the last potions master," Dimitri said. Blue sparks danced among his teeth when he grinned. It was disturbing.

"What happened?"

"We don't really know. We presume the laboratory accident had something to do with her disappearance, but..."

"And the one before that?" Dimitri prompted.

"He got turned into a newt," I said. "A red chenille one, to be precise." I

nodded toward my corner bookshelf with the stuffed animal on top of it.

Samel looked at the plush toy animal and blinked. "Is he still alive?"

"We don't know. I talk to him anyway, just in case. But I think my point is made. The laboratory is a dangerous place, with untrained students just learning their first potions. I think you can see how someone immune to magic would be invaluable there."

"So it's not just because I tried to save you?"

"I'd never entrust our prospectives to your training just because I'm grateful to you! Nobody I've ever met is as qualified for this as you."

He smiled. I think it was the first time I'd ever seen a smile on his face, but thankfully, it was far from the last.

"You may have a point," he said, and reached for the quill. 🐾







THE MAGICIAN'S RABBIT RENEE CARTER HALL ("POETIGRESS")

As night fell in the forest, Houdini the rabbit sat shivering in the underbrush, contemplating irony.

Having been a magician's rabbit for as long as he could remember, he knew all about his namesake. Houdini the man could get himself out of any cage. Houdini the rabbit, however, had wanted nothing more than to stay in his cage and arrive safely at the next show. But then they'd stopped at a gas station in the middle of nowhere, and his cage fell out of the van while The Great Garbanzo (or whatever he was calling himself this week) was adjusting the trunks full of props. And then everything was glaring lights and honking horns and gas fumes choking him, and all he could do was run. By the time his heart showed to its usual rate and he could think again, he was here in the darkening woods, with no idea how to get back.

Something rustled in the darkness.

Houdini shrank further into the brush and froze. He'd never been in a forest in the daytime, let alone at night. His white fur was probably shining as

bright as the full moon--as bright as the eyes that were suddenly fixed on his, and the glittering sharp white teeth below.

"Hello," the fox said, and smiled.

"Lovely evening, isn't it?"

"I've had better," Houdini said.

"Sorry to hear that." The fox's voice rippled smooth as a silk scarf. "Not from around these parts, are you? I'd remember you."

"I'm only passing through."

"Oh, now, that's a shame. I'd love you to stay for dinner." Again the bright eyes, the sharp white teeth.

"I'm afraid I have other plans. I have a show to get to."

"A show, eh? Fancy that." The fox walked a slow circle around him.

Houdini fought the impulse to run. He didn't know this country well, and the fox did. No doubt it would be at his throat with the first leap.

"I could give you a taste, if you like," Houdini offered, then winced at his choice of words.

The fox grinned. "Haven't had dinner and a show in a long time." He came close enough that Houdini could smell old blood on his breath. "Mind

you be quick about it, though. I'm a tough critic."

Houdini's paws shook a bit as he sought out a fresh leaf, a round stone, and a smooth, straight twig. He nibbled the end of the twig to get it just the right length.

"All right, watch this." Houdini placed the stone on the ground and covered it with the leaf. "Now we need a magic word."

The fox scratched behind one ear. "I've always been rather partial to ala-kazaam, myself."

"Perfect." Houdini waved one paw slowly over the leaf. With the other paw, he picked up the twig--just the right size and shape for a wand--and tapped the fox sharply on the head. "Ala-kazaam!"

The fox disappeared in a puff of purple smoke. When it cleared, a little gray mouse sat in the same spot, sniffing the air, its whiskers twitching.

"There," Houdini said, tossing the smoking twig aside. "That's better."

Just as he finished speaking, a white owl swooped down, snatched up the mouse, and carried it back to a nearby branch. The mouse went down in one gulp.

The owl swallowed again. "That tasted... odd." Then he cocked his head at Houdini. "Boss has been looking everywhere for you. How'd you wind up way out here?"

"Long story. He hasn't left yet, has he?"

Merlin preened. "Without us? Come now. I'd hate to see him try to do the show alone."

Houdini followed Merlin back to the van and hopped into his cage. The owl latched it behind him, then went into his own cage and latched that expertly from inside. By the time the boss saw them, it was as if they'd never left. The Great Garbanzo stared, then shrugged it off and loaded everything up again.

When you came right down to it, Houdini thought, humans were even sillier than foxes. Theirs, for example, still thought he was the one doing all the magic.

He snuggled into his shavings and smiled. Ah, well, let them have their illusions. It was all part of the show. 🐾



Harry Otter

and the
SORCERER'S
HAIRBALL



MASTER OF INFINITY

CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE WENHAM

Three bolts of lightning and one life exploded from a dumpster behind a supermarket in New York state, for the thousandth time, in nineteen eighty four. The first bolt was just the preamble, and it set a scene of vaporized beef, chicken and cabbage that the second bolt, coming a few seconds later, electrified and fused together into a freshly born chunk of vibrating flesh and fur and muscle and fear that landed on the concrete ground, without its mind and without its memories. It had only existed for a moment but, peppered with the night's spring rain, it woke up with an emergency and the urge to act by instinct.

She threw herself away from

imagined predators and beneath a truck that was parked in the docking bay of the supermarket, curled her feline tail around her naked self and shivered in the cold of North America. And that's when the third lightning strike came, which erupted from the sky and forked down to the ground. Half of its power struck the newborn between the eyes, burning a spot on her forehead and depositing half her memories, while the other tine of the fork was absorbed harmlessly into the metal frame of the tractor-trailer and evaporated into sparks of oblivion. One bolt, two forks: one half a life remembered, one half gone.

So Existence Smithsonian woke up, hazy and hallucinating. So many smells. So many sounds. A patter of rain, of splishy puddles on the ground and

crackles in the sky. Her whiskers were alive and her paws tingling with pins and needles from the tickles of new life. Curled under the lumbering truck, ears like radar, a bit of that freshly injected memory came back.

"Sistance, hel me SEE this," she remembered her brother saying, his enunciation as bad as hers. The particulars of the third lightning bolt were still crackling through her brain and rewiring it, and it made Existence call back a moment when she curled about her brother with her tail in his lap. Prediction Smithsonian would turn into fluff and purrs, melting, and groping his sister's shoulder with his claws. "Sometime," he rumbled, speaking from within the glottis, "I can see the pass, but I cannuh see today."

But Existence's memory was braised off; she couldn't recall more of what he'd said. She remembered that she'd been here before. She remembered the truck, and the fire, and the sirens. Sirens! She gathered her will and ran into the rain, footsteps falling silent across spring grass. Parallel to the cross-wire fence, a half mile down the road, she patted tip-toe behind the car of a laundromat patron, waiting for him to disappear into the hall of washing machines to fetch his second load. She ripped open the abandoned laundry sack with a claw, stole some clothes and vanished.

Now it's nine o' clock on Gardiners Avenue and the wind has exchanged places with the rain. It precipitates a little, a bit of moisture perhaps, but the breeze is alive and inverting umbrellas everywhere. Existence Smithsonian covered herself with shorts and a hoodie, smiling toothily when the humans passed her by. A chalk sign stood outside the club: "APEIRON: MASTER OF INFINITY. TONIGHT ONLY" Inside it was a hum of humanity and the leader was in the dressing room, getting himself ready with chemical aid.

"I'm telling you I can be Great, capital 'G', like Tommy Cooper," Denver retorted when his agent erupted in distain at the glass of whisky. "When he was in the War they posted him to Egypt, and that's where he got his fez, his trademark, just like me."

"His trademark's being drunk," replied the agent, "You're telling me you got that stupid thing in Egypt?"



"This 'thing' came from a haberdashery like you've never seen," Denver sulked, "when I put it on it's like there's electricity in the air, like lightning."

"So I heard. Drink water and pull yourself together. I don't wanna see my fiance set on fire again."

So onto the stage Denver tumbled, but his agent's fiance in dazzling sequins and nearly see-thru costume wasn't there. Denver's eyes bulged, he grinned stupidly for the audience, produced a foldable bouquet of paper flowers, and uttered the most important phrase in his life. "May, uh... may I have a volunteer, please?"

Existence presented herself, like she had a thousand times before, rising from the back of the audience. And like a thousand times before, Denver – that is, Apeiron: Master of Infinity – held the audience like a center fielder who'd just caught the sun.

"An excellent costume, madame!"

"Nossobadyourself, Mephisopheles" she said, gesturing to Denver's--to Apeiron's--cloak and hat.

"It is true, I am not a lover of light!" Denver ad-libbed, sliding confidently into his role, "but you look like a lover of catnip. Say, shall I fetch a bowl of milk?" And it was time to produce the main prop: a brass bowl with a false bottom big enough to hold a medium pizza, Byzantium in style, Apeiron turned its hollow end to face the audience, "and empty! Aww! A shame, poor kitty. But perhaps you'd like to see for yourself?" Apeiron presented the bowl to Existence, who held it up to her eye, probed it with her nose, and rubbed the ridge of the bowl against her cheek.

"It loo 'sempty, no mil here!"

"And so it is, but behold!" Apeiron took Existence's arms and made her hold the bowl at length from her chest, cued the music--a belly-dancing jingle with splashing finger cymbals and thumping darabuka--and set the bowl on fire. The heat was sudden and real and washed over Existence's face. She fought the urge to drop the bowl and run to a corner to lick herself down--something she feared she might've done the first time--and gazed into the flames. "Oh my!" They smelled of rich amino acids and sugars, like a sweet beef stew.

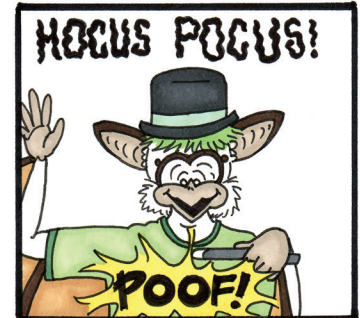
The audience was, for a moment,



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in brain-lock. For it takes a few seconds to process a golden, leopard-spotted woman with a golden bowl and a golden flame nigh about to set the house on fire. Apeiron was reaching for his hat and pulling it tighter around his head, where brass electrodes came into contact with his sweaty brow. A look of concentration passed over his face, and thus the magic began.

Lightning struck for the fourth time that night. It started with the blue of St. Elmo's Fire licking the ceiling, concentrated above the leopardess and the inferno she held, and then cracked downward into the flames with the force of a god forking a heathen. POW. The house lights fizzled, there was a series of pops like bulbs breaking, then the fire in the bowl went out and all else went black. The stage manager uttered

a bad word and lurched over to the fuse box, flicking on a pocket flashlight and throwing the main breaker back on again. The house lights came up and Existence still stood there on the stage with her arms held out, whiskers singed, every fur standing on end, a golden bowl in her paws and a fluffy white rabbit peering over the brim of it.

Apeiron gawked, then – remembering himself – belatedly uttered his magic word, “ALPRAZOLAM!”

Existence Smithsonian tilted the bowl towards her and the rabbit shuffled about in the sticky remnants the protein goo it came from, trying to back away. Its fur was textured with the faint suggestion of a leopard's rosettes, and its fuzzy paws had stubby, but distinct opposable thumbs.

The two left the stage to stunned

applause and Denver beaming with success, sailing into the dressing room and holding the door open for Existence. He ripped off his bow tie in front of the mirror while Existence decorated a wooden chair. “I know the trick is real,” she said.

“Why of course it's real! Can you imagine? It's a modulated thought...” And, as in uffish thought he said, “I can smell burning fur. What's the deal with that costume anyway?”

Existence was at last cooling herself down by licking her arms, settling the fur aroused by static, “you sh' know, you though' toffit.”

Denver blanked and wavered while his mental gears churned. The lightbulb came on in his head and toppled him onto his butt. “Come home with me,” he said, and Existence rose to take his hand.

In northeastern Pennsylvania, Denver's parents left him a spread of land that spilled over the lip of a mountain and cascaded into a valley of hemlock trees. It had a ranch house, nailed together in the Depression, with a cast-iron pump on a water well and a barn that listed to the east. It was a mile from either neighbor and Existence spent every summer morning running through the waist-high grass to the creek, down the hillside to the hemlock grove and cannonballing into the cold, rocky pool carved by the waterfall.

Populating the barn and the house were other children of the mind. Crows with webbed feet waddled across the rafters and cawed their disapproval, reindeer with bioluminescent snouts hoofed at bundles of straw, a litter of puppies with plantigrade hind legs goose-stepped around the chow-bowl, and hooting at night, an owl, with the vocal chords of Mariah Carey. Denver's contraption brought them all into existence, except for Existence, for whom he could not remember summoning. Her brother, Prediction, was flashed into being a year after Existence appeared at the magic show, rousing no less than fourteen UFO sightings and nearly setting the old barn ablaze.

Prediction's birth, if one could call it that, was catalytic. It had come after twelve months of practice making animals leap fully-formed from the forehead of a magician. But Prediction

was a difficult beast to materialize – his eyes a detail that Denver couldn't focus on – and after the flash of creation he lurched blindly from the atomized cloud of catfood and sugar and knocked Denver out of his chair. Something shorted in the hat, Denver howled with pain and another lighting bolt struck Prediction in the forehead, burning a brown spot between his cloudy eyes and dumping a spiderweb of memories. KAPOW.

Denver rolled onto his side with his heart trying to thump its way out of his chest. He peeled the hat off and threw it into the dusty shadows of the barn. Existence stood up and went to him, for Denver had doubled-over, clutching his chest. "It's bad!" he gasped, "pain in my chest... my arm!" Existence felt his breast with a paw and it was like panic, like a struggle beneath the ribs, confusing and urgent. Denver was curled up and brandishing a grimace grotesque enough to pause a werewolf, but then it eased – the pain eased. The heart attack stepped back, gave him room to breathe, let him relax. He went limp in the arms of Existence and panted like a dog overheated. "I'm sorry," he whispered, eyes closed, "I'm so sorry. This is my fault, this is my fault."

Denver was helped to his feet, righted the chair, and quaffed from a jug of water. His hair was sweaty and clung to his forehead. His clothes were weeks unwashed. Existence joined Prediction in a heap on the straw floor and began to sing a lullaby to her golden, blind brother. A lullaby she had sung a thousand times before.

A decade passed for Existence and Prediction, a decade sober for Denver. The hat was too broken to use anymore, and the menagerie of weird animals all found the wild or died of age. They giggled at the newspaper accounts of toads with hypnotic blue eyes, skunks with a whiff of Acqua Di Gio, and the moose with an uncanny ability to read the posted hunting-season schedules. In the summer, Denver joined Existence in the morning runs for the waterfall pool, diving into its chilling blue water while Prediction trotted after them with his paw following the guide-rope that Denver laid down the mountain. He had taken to carrying a shoulder-bag with him, a bag containing bits and pieces of electronics that the blind

cat soldered together in the old barn, reading the bumps of circuit boards like braille. And one day Existence brought him a present—a bright red fez hat, complete with tassel, being given away by a new Mediterranean restaurant in town. Prediction looked goofy in it, a cherry-crimson cylinder atop a golden, ambulatory, beautiful monster.

In August of twenty-oh-ten the night was apoplectic, thunder vicious, rain venomous and the old barn keeling over. Denver and Existence shot through the ranch's back door and slashed through the pour of heavenly water. While men in rubber raincoats, moving like slugs through the brush, one armed with a freshly loaded search warrant and an ATF badge, the others armed with handguns and rifles, sought

their quarantine. At last, somebody had figured out where the plague of caterpillars that spun cocoons of methamphetamine-doped thread had come from, and they had come to shut it down. Existence ran into the barn to find her brother while Denver stood guard, finding a pitchfork and gripping it like a weapon.

"Come with us and run!" she shouted.

"They surroun' the barn, 'Sistance, if we run we get shot."

Existence curled around her brother and cupped his cheek, and he rubbed back affectionately. "You don' know what they'll do t' you," she whispered.

Denver was running to them, to see what was keeping them and to tell





them about the shadows armed with guns. But he tripped upon the mangled floorboards and impaled himself on the rusty tines of the fork. “Oh my god!” he coughed, and Existence wailed. In the momentary light of lightning, she

saw a policeman in rubber raincoat standing in the archway of the barn doors. Existence hissed, arched her back and bore her razor fangs. Behind her, Prediction donned the faded crimson fez and groped around for her tail, clipping an electrode to it. “Remember,” he said.

The clouds above them hiccuped. It was like the pressure in the barn suddenly dropped to vacuum. The wind stopped and the rain was sucked back up into the sky. One lightning bolt aborted--and yet not aborted--it went elsewhere. Denver was struggling to pull the pitchfork out of his chest, and Existence arched over him protectively with her fur-like spikes. Another hiccup, and Prediction concentrated on his sister's smell, on the way she felt, and the sound of her voice. This diverted zap and the diverted thunder felt like a thump in the belly. Prediction dropped to his knees, his chest and left arm screaming with pain and his heart infarcted. The incredible inversion of air made the policeman fall over as another came to help him up. And now the sky was boiling, hurting, indigested

with an ulcer that bore through its stomach to the past. There was a fizz of frustrated intercloud sparks, as if the storm was getting seriously pissed off.

“Remember my eyes,” and Prediction let go of his sister as she pounced in attack and the gun flashed. He didn't see her crumple next to Denver, he only saw the past to where he'd sent her - and her memories - back for the thousandth time, maybe the millionth time, maybe an inconceivable number of times, to a dumpster behind a supermarket. It didn't matter to him; here came another hiccup, another reingestion of rain, and a heave of barometric consequence that sucked the air out of both policemen's lungs.

And so the storm, insulted and humiliated, bunched up its nebulous skirt and prepared to depart. And in the reluctant calm that followed an owl hooted in perfect C-sharp. A young, blind leopard with a silly red hat had cast his final magic spell, one he'd cast a million times before, and might cast a million times again. “Juss like that!” Prediction slurred, and closed his eyes forever. 🐾



HEX OF SPEED

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FLEET OF PAW LIKE ORANGE TABBY



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THE HEART OF MAGIC

CHARLES R. DE CHARLEROY, JR.

The years of training the young fox endured led him to this final task. Dark days and long he'd often spent buried in the depths of the hall of study within his master's magical workshop in the cavernous home hidden high in the wooded hills. Spells of all manner of castings and languages he'd learned, and potions multifarious. Theories, facts, and even fictions he memorized by heart, delving into the deepest recesses of the knowledge of craft; his thirst for learning seemed unquenchable.

He knew he was the best. From the early days of the selection, he'd stood far above the other candidates in terms of raw talent and skill. He also possessed a tremendous capacity for retention and recall of whatever he read, speeding

his learning along under the patient and gentle tutelage of his master, one of the greatest remaining wizards in the world and an elder member of the dwindling draken race.

Occasionally, a young cub might mistake the fox apprentice's master for the silly fairy tale 'dragon' at a distance, for he bore a superficial resemblance to those mythical monstrous beasts. However, once good look at the kindly, wizened face of the stooped small figure a head shorted than his apprentice even when his spiraled horns were counted, and the imaginary picture of a flame-spewing beast that devoured maidens disappeared.

Few indeed remained of the draken race in these days of failing tales and lost ages. Many of those left alive could speak of times witnessed by their eyes before the oldest of the history books,

and no one knew the story of what became of the rest of the draken save the remnant which remained and that tale they told to none.

The old draken, so the stories said, sought once every twenty years or so for an apprentice to carry on after him when his time came. It was also said that many ages of vulpine kind had passed since he began the search, yet no one could please him. The previous apprentice candidate, himself a badger magician of some renown who'd barely lasted a year before barging out of the forest angrily, would not even speak of his time with the draken save to call him a stubborn, arrogant old fool who wanted his students to 'bow themselves at his feet' as he put it and made them waste their time on futile quests.

But the fox was still there, now five full years into his training, apparently longer than anyone in living memory remained with the great wizard. His pride grew when he'd hear the excited whispers and catch the admiring glances of the townspeople when he went there to carry out his master's errands. They knew he was doing well to last so long, and now with the final test approaching, soon the whole country would know his name when triumphantly his master named him as successor and he would rise among the great and the wise!

The exact terms of the task he did not know, only that it would entail understanding one of the greatest secrets of magic, a secret so powerful that those who mastered it could shape life itself, or so the rumors ran among the magic circles. Never was this possibility discussed openly, secrecy masked it even in mere awareness, few were privy to the nature of the secret.

Always the gentle draken guided and admonished his pupil as the time drew near. Be humble! Be patient! Always seek to serve. Remember to cast with kindness. Pride will poison your power! One does not need magic to kill, but to heal takes great skill indeed! Along those lines of thought lay the master's maxims and words of advice.

And then at last, the task was given. His master presented him with a little rabbit doll, made out of brown velvet and stuffed with cotton. "Give life to this object," he said. "And you will be worthy of the final secrets of magic and



to become my successor.”

A simple task, it seemed; such a small thing to ask of the young fox, who now knew hundreds of incantations by heart and could draw intricate magic circles from memory. No hints had his master given. Obviously, it involved some spell or potion or combination of methods he already knew. Only one with great skill and wisdom would manage to uncover the formula for life from the vast array of magical information! Surely this was the answer. He merely needed to apply himself wholeheartedly and put all the resources of his excellent brain to work, and the solution would present itself!

And so, certain of quick success, the fox began. Firstly, all manner of incantations of animation and guidance of motion he cast. But these spells merely made the doll move as he commanded. There was no life in them.

He delved into combinations of spells and potions of healing, every possible method of animating or repairing flesh he tried. Alas, though the magic could seal wounds, knit bones, even reverse aging and to a degree even deny death, the power to grant life to the un-living couldn't be found there.

Days and weeks passed as the apprentice poured over the great tomes in his master's library, calculating and conjuring in one experiment and failure after another. Deeper and deeper he delved into fringes of mystical disciplines. He wove spells into potions with care, fused transfiguration charms with alchemic symbols, even attempting to summon demons and transfer living animal souls into the little rabbit doll's floppy body. Nothing worked. And now his master began to scold him and warn him of straying from the path as clearly the direction his magic had taken was toward evil.

The fox grew increasingly frustrated and furious with his master. What else was he to do? None of the normal methods of magic could achieve this task! And there wasn't so much as a hint forthcoming! If it was anyone's fault, it was the master's for being so close with his knowledge, the fox thought as a peculiar potion went poof!

A full year passed. Then two. Finally, after the third year drew to an end and the cloth body of the rabbit wore thin and bore countless stains and

scorch marks, rips and runes, burns and blights and its once puffy cotton tail was left a mere stub, the fox felt success nearly in his grasp. Weeks of intense, unrelenting study and little sleep had at last yielded the Philosopher's Stone! Nearly laughing with glee at what must certainly be his triumph, the fox poured the Elixir of Immortality upon the little rabbit doll.

Nothing. Not even the flicker of a felt ear or a twitch of the limp twine whiskers rewarded his final, monumental effort.

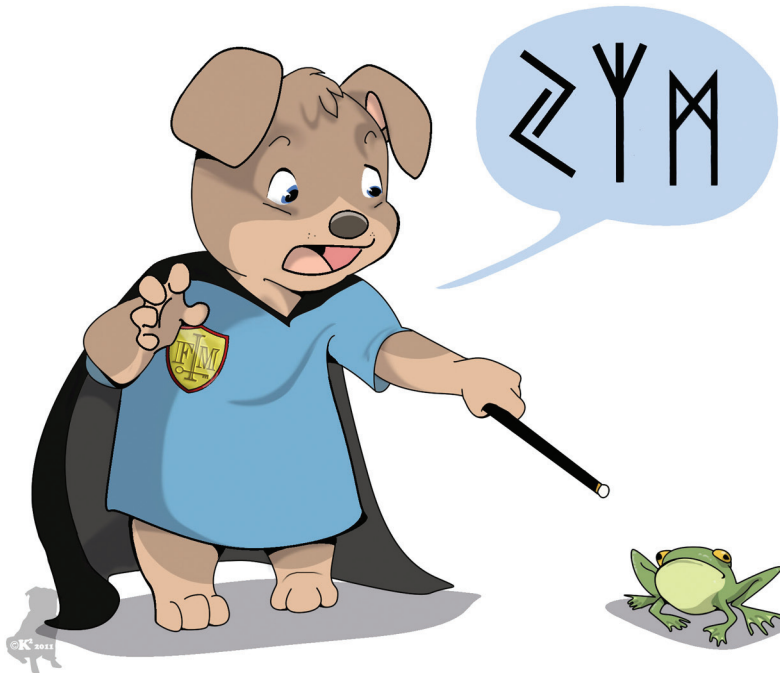
Frustration at last boiled over and burned into hate. He smashed the stone upon the granite floor in rage, furious at himself for failure, furious at his master or hiding the truth from him all this time. Hardly a word other than casual conversation and his master's calm

admonishment had passed between himself and the draken over the past three years. His master always said he had to learn this part of the secret on his own. Why should it be hidden if it was so important? How was it even possible to learn something with no information about it!

All over a stupid rabbit, just a worthless child's toy which couldn't possibly hold even the faintest whisper of life! The task was completely pointless!

The draken was toying with him; that would be it! Yes, give him a stupid toy and watch him make a fool of himself trying to make it dance! It was just like the other apprentice said, the draken was just using him for his own entertainment. There was no way to bring the rabbit to life! It was complete





nonsense! Years of his life he'd wasted with his self-righteous master, all for what? A deliberately planned failure? This was the last straw! He was through being a pawn for the draken's ludicrous game!

Angrily, he threw the toy rabbit against the wall as hard as he could and stormed out after shouting his displeasure along with many choice words at his master, who only infuriated him even further by not yelling back at him and instead only quietly wishing that the fox might find peace one day.

Shortly afterward, the little old draken tenderly lifted the crumpled and battered rabbit doll from its heap upon the floor, carefully turning it in his talons, examining the multitudes of magicks saturating its every fiber. It bore testament to the fervor and furor of his former pupil's efforts. Spells innumerable twisted and wormed their way through the fabric, tangled into a hopeless mire of enchantment too thick to unravel. Contaminated by so much unstable magic, he knew he could not simply leave the rabbit doll lying around. Too great would be the danger of allowing the various powers to ferment over time.

The old draken sighed wearily. Another failed apprentice, so much time lost; and his remaining span dwindled so tenuously. Would he find one in time, one possessing the proper heart and mind?

ILLUSTRATION: @KWIK 2011 --- COLOR: @NIGHTSTAR 2011



For some time, the master suspected that his apprentice could never understand the simple secret of life magic. It was something which could not be learned, it could only be felt and simply had to come from within. Life could not be born through brute force or power, nor could even the most intricate spells weave the delicate threads which bound together the souls of the living. A tender heart, a loving and nurturing spirit, a self-sacrificing and humble mind; these traits alone could work with magic to give shape to a living soul.

And indeed, as his hands held the little rabbit doll, a slight stirring he could feel within the tattered cloth and limp cotton as the magic responded to his gentle touch. His pupil had provided everything needed, save for the missing ingredients in his character. His heart was torn with pity, yet it had to be done. For there was not just good magic woven into the rabbit's cloth; which side would dominate eventually?

Regretfully, the master moved toward the hearth in the room and cast the little rabbit amongst the flaming coals. With great sorrow the old draken wizard turned from the fire and bowed himself from the room.

There in the hearth, a single tear dripped from the rabbit's lone button eye and trickled down the charred face for a moment before vanishing in a puff of vapor as the unfeeling flames rendered the little doll's substance to ashes. 🐾

Enchantment of talent/agility



Once the merchant
day is done
And twilight's violet
dusk unfurls
To win the dance
of sound and light
Agile shall I be, a
squirrel!



Artwork © 2010 Kayleen Connell

ANTHROCON 2011 STAFF

ALEX KRUMWIEDE (LEONIDUS/W4RLOCK) SECURITY

Alex has been working Anthrocon for several years and counts much of the DI and other staff as his friends. He can probably be found by day in the Artists' Alley, in the evenings, he'll be working staff, and at night, he'll be doing art. (Sleep? Who needs sleep! *insane laughter*)

ALICIA PROGRAMMING

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

ALLISON RUBY SECURITY

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

AMARUQ INTERNET ROOM

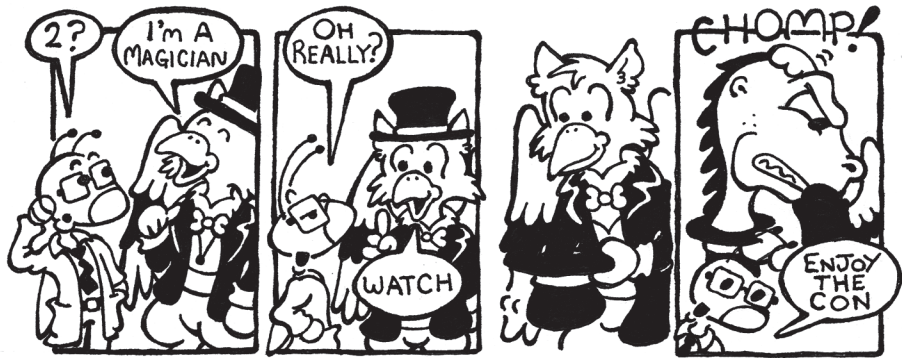
An IT program manager by day, Amaruq is back for another year helping out in the Internet Room. Semi-local from the mountains east of Pittsburgh, the wolf enjoys wine tastings and providing some local information about landmarks and places to hunt up prey, er... food! Aside from the Internet Room and wandering the Dealers Den/Art Show, look for some of his woodwork at the Charity Raffle/Auction. Now get off my lawn kid and go buy Charity tickets and bid! Welcome to Pittsburgh and AC2011.

AMRAS REGISTRATION

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls. Canines, felines, cervines, ursines, insects and equines. Pachyderms, marsupials, vulpines, reptiles and avians. Ridiculous hybrids and fanciful, imaginary creatures of all kinds. Let's try to stay behind the guard rails this year, eh? ;) CC4L!

ANDY COLSON DEALERS ROOM

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.



ANDY OXENREIDER PHOTOGRAPHY

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

ANITA MUTH ARTISTS ALLEY / CON STORE

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

ANNE PASSOVOY SECURITY

Member of the Dorsai Irregulars since 1974.

AQUAFox REGISTRATION

A light blue and tan feral fox who enjoys cuddling, making new friends, spending time with awesome friends he already has. Helps out alot, a great troubleshooter for computer problems and a mentor to many. Enjoys working with photography, audio/video, electrical and digital devices, nature, animals, friendship, napping. Does not like being left alone or forgotten. Loves anime and cartoons, traditional and CGI kinds, as well as action/adventure/sci-fi movies.

ARC ART SHOW, REGISTRATION

Arc has been with us since the start and has not only attended but also served as staff for every single AC from the first 'Albany Anthrocon 97', making this his fifteenth consecutive year on our team! Always eager to give back to the furry community through working various conventions, Arc is also Director of Security for Furnal Equinox (in Montreal) and What the Fur (in Toronto).

ARROW QUIVERSHAFT PROGRAMMING

An IT student in his 20s, this is Arrow's third year running the Fandom Track. Hobbies include video games, roleplaying, reading, biking, and writing. Feel free to say hi if you find him!

ASHE VALISCA PROGRAMMING

Ashe has been involved with AC for several years first working on the Writing Track - working on the original AC Dining Guide - and finally taking over the Writing Track. Missing last year due to health issues - he's back and ready to teach again focusing on uniting the theme with his traditional classes on writing.

ATRATIES SECURITY

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

B. GABRIEL HELOU SECURITY

Truly, One Hell of a Guy. (tm)

BARRY ARTISTS ALLEY / CON STORE

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

BECCA PRICE, DI SECURITY

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

BECK "ANANA NUBIA" MITHEE DEALERS ROOM

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

BENJAMIN "BLITHE" COOK OPERATIONS

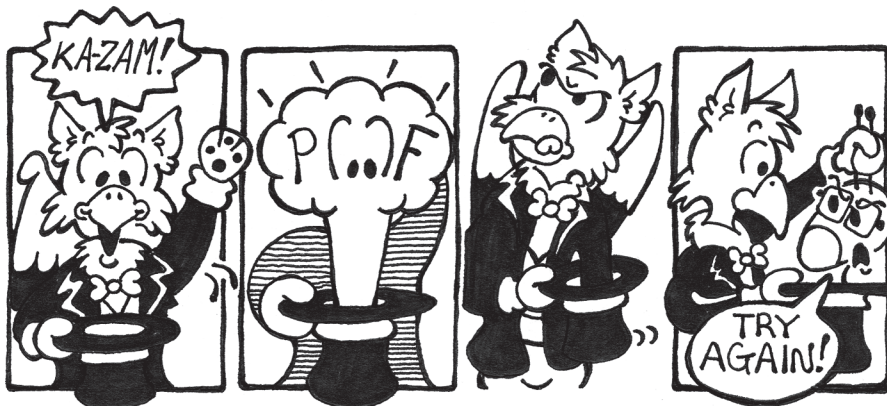
A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

BILL PEARSON SECURITY

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

BLADE, D.I. SECURITY

Having spent most of her life as a redhead, Blade has decided to take the Doppler Shift in



the opposite direction, and now has blue hair. She is feline at heart, and the official "stupid kitten with opposable thumbs" to a colony of Siamese cats.

BLASTDAY REGISTRATION

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

BRIAN HARRIS (RIGEL) BOARD OF DIRECTORS (CHARITY AUCTION)

Co-founded Anthrocon in 1997 and was sentenced to no less than fifteen long, long years as Charity Director.

BUCKAROO BANZAI SECURITY

Professional IT person at M.S.U. Obsessive Mac guru, member of several Mac user groups, amateur photographer, sushi and Asian food lover, adventure and SF novel reader, daddy to 3 dogs, movie fan, eclectic music fan and general rabble-rouser.

CAJUNFOX DEALERS ROOM

A mixture of insanity and energy has kept him on dealer's room staff at AC for several years now. When he is not assisting in drinking the world's surplus of gin, he can be found telling amusing and almost mostly true tales of adventure and misfortune! Cajun is one of the founders and the current Con Chair of Condition:Red a furry convention in London Ontario, Canada.

CALAVER DANCE / AV

Detroit, Michigan -> Royal Oak, Michigan -> Fort Knox, Kentucky -> Augusta, Georgia -> Tacoma, Washington -> Dearborn Heights, Michigan -> Grand Rapids, Michigan -> Chicago, Illinois. I been around.

CALLISTA SKIP ART SHOW

It takes a pretty special crowd to tear me away from the Furoticon table! I'm proud to be an Art Show lackey.

CAROL GOBEYN, D. I. SECURITY

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

CAVEMAN BOB SECURITY

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

CHANUR OPERATIONS

Back again for his 6th year, this feline has found many things he likes about Pittsburgh. Furnando's. Cory's Primanti Brothers. All places he'd like to go visit provided he can get out of this 25 by 25 foot %\$#@!%\$\$% room.

CHRIS "NONSANITY" INNANEN PROGRAMMING

Puppeteer and video-maker, creator of Fluff & Such Puppet Productions.

CHRIS CLAYTON SECURITY

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

CHRISTOPHER GENETTI DANCE / AV

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

COLIN FOXTAIL PROGRAMMING

Friendly midwestern fox, eighth Anthrocon, second year on staff, bla-bla-bla... (Maybe I'll have thought of something more to say about me by the time you read this.)

CRIMSON SECURITY

Cave Lupum

CROSSBOW ART SHOW

Art Show junkie and Hugmonster's main squeeze. Looking forward to another year of AC fun.

CRYO CYBERWOLF (DONALD HAFNER) LOGISTICS, OPERATIONS

Yes, on Wednesday we travel to the city of Brotherly Love where we go through some roach's STUFF! and transport other STUFF! to the building that houses more STUFF! for us to STUFF! into a truck, bought to a convention of STUFF!ed critters. What? You want STUFF!? You can't have STUFF!! You cannot handle this STUFF!! ...I have a freeze-ray. It freezes STUFF! For transport, of course.

DAN SKUNK ART SHOW

Just a skunk.

DANRUK ROOFACE MASQUERADE

Danruk a helpful and long time STAFF member for Anthrocon is returning to assist KP in the Masquerade events and also do a few general gopher assists with the green room/headless lounge area that goes along with it. He'll also

be a panelist for Marsupial Madness, appearing in its 3rd consecutive year!

DARI REGISTRATION

A blue of two minds. One is terribly floofy (blue jay gryphon), the other terribly fluffy (snow leopard). Take your pick, this Registration lurker is both. He's getting to the point where he's almost losing count of how many of these he's been to... altogether a great thing!

DARKCLAW INTERNET ROOM

Darkclaw's 12th year of staffing AC, and his headfur is falling out out in an attempt to match his boss - Tigerwolf. Still smuggling odd British sweets into the USA to trap the unwary - stop by the Net room to become a test subject. [For the Horde!]

DATAHAWK DEALERS ROOM

DataHawk rises from the ashes, back to normal self, to help run another year of Anthrocon. Wondering each year why she does it, she remembers she thrives on the hustle and the bustle. When she's not working or attending cons, she's studying to take over the world. Everyone knows you need a higher education to succeed at your goals right?

DAVE ARTISTS ALLEY / CON STORE

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

DAVID M STEIN SECURITY

Good afternoon, gentlemen. I am a HAL 9000 computer. I became operational at the H.A.L. plant in Urbana, Illinois on the 12th of January 1992. My instructor was Mr. Langley, and he taught me to sing a song. If you'd like to hear it I can sing it for you. It's called "Daisy." Daisy, Daisy, give me your answer do. I'm half crazy all for the love of you...

DAX CHARITY AUCTION

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.



**DE PETERSON DI
SECURITY**

Dorsai Irregular, equine artist, sculptor, lampworker, glass and silver jewelry...

**DECKER
OPERATIONS**

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

**DEJA
SECURITY**

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

**DELPHI VINN
ARTISTS ALLEY / CON STORE**

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

**DERECHO
REGISTRATION**

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

**DESTER'EDRA
ART SHOW, SECURITY**

Dest is just a commonplace glutton for punishment. Look for a small, blue streak running from one job to another, or a lump of blanket on the train home; that's her.

**DEVIN
DEALERS ROOM**

**DON, DI
SECURITY**

**DOUGLAS MUTH (GIZA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OPERATIONS)**

Software Engineer, Drupal advocate, furry fan, WikiFur admin, Anthrocon organizer, Eagle Scout, Dorsai Irregular. Find him on Twitter as @dmuth.

**DRAVEN
OPERATIONS**

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

**EAGLE EYE
SECURITY**

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

**EAGLE'S FLIGHT
PROGRAMMING**

Eagle's Flight has been in the furry fandom for about 5 years, but has really been a part of it his entire life. He came to know about the fandom from a friend called Firekeeper that introduced him to a group he had much common ground with. From there he learned the anthropomorphic fan base, and quickly learned to be a part of this community. Since, he has attended and hosted many local fur-meets, and has attended Anthrocons 2007, 2008, and 2010.

**EKIMFLOW
ART SHOW, REGISTRATION**

Helpful long-time convention attendee.

**ELIJAH KAUTZMAN
REGISTRATION**

Elijah saw Sorcerer's Apprentice once, making him the definitive authority on all things magical and mundane.

**ELISABETH WOOD (ANGEL SEAL)
ART SHOW**

Angel was recruited to the fandom by her now-husband General Talon. She is an artist, gamer and fan of all things geeky.

**ERIC LONG
SECURITY**

Member of the Dorsai Irregulars, this is my 10th year working at Anthrocon. Every year has been a blast.

**ERIKA "CHILLY" ROSENGARTEN
OPERATIONS**

Is an illustrator, costume fabricator, and entertainer living in Charlotte, NC. Past work of hers can be viewed at furaffinity.net/user/chillymouse. Anthrocon 2011 marks her 12th year helping out the event. Past areas Erika has helped in include the Art Show, Charity Auction, Masquerade, Operations, and Registration.

**FALBERT FORESTER
ART SHOW**

Falbert hails from northern Maine, and wants everyone to come to the Art Show and bid early, bid high, and bid often! Oh, and have a great time looking at the magnificent artwork.

**FALLOUT
ART SHOW, LOGISTICS**

The whole world's a playground, never forget that.

**FIZZ OTTER
DANCE / AV**

When not staffing conventions or lifting weights in the gym, Fizz is a veteran hardware/software developer in the special effects industry with a specific focus on laser and lighting technology. He has recently worked on numerous large shows and installations around the world (including Disneyland's World Of Color and ElecTRONica) and enjoys bringing a bit of his high-tech artistic touch to help enhance the convention experience wherever possible.

**FLIPTOP
SECURITY**

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

**FOXWOLF 9-TAILS
LOGISTICS**

I grew up in Dayton, Ohio but moved to Savannah, Georgia in 2007 to pursue both a BFA and MFA in Sound Design for Movies and TV. I have been in the fandom since 2005 when I registered on site called Furtopia.org. I have been an avid fursuiter since 2006 with my main nine-tailed kitsune suit and more recently my husky suit whom I wear more often named Siekhal.

**GALEN
SECURITY**

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

**GARY BRATZEL, DI
SECURITY**

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

**GEEMO
ARTISTS ALLEY / CON STORE**

Geemo is a FloridaFur-transplant. The dracomutt now lives in Milwaukee with a coyote, a raccoon, and two actual black cats. He's been furry since 1998 and his first con was AC 2000. When he's not at work being an engineer, he's at home being a geek.

**GEN. TALON
BOARD OF DIRECTORS (DANCE / AV)**

Returning again from his yearly journey from the real world, Talon returns to help the convention. The happy-go-lucky otter will once again take charge of the controlled chaos that is A/V.

**GLEN "SWIFT FOX" ROCKHILL
PROGRAMMING**

Returning as Table-top Gaming Track Lead, Swift Fox has been an active member of the fandom for a dozen years. He has volunteered his time to Anthrocon and various other cons over the years and has been



instrumental in promoting fellowship among Anthropomorphics Fans in the Pittsburgh Metro Area. An avid fursuiter, Swift mascots for fun and charity when he's not working as an architect and volunteer firefighter.

GRANDMA KAGE OPERATIONS

Wilma "Grandma Kage" Conway is the mother of Anthrocon's chairman, a burden that she is endured for more than 40 years. She has been helping out with Anthrocon since 1998 and has never missed a convention. In fact, she makes frequent appearances at Eurofurence, Megaplex, and others, always in the company of her handsome husband of 55 years.

GRANDPA KAGE OPERATIONS

A softspoken Southern Gentleman, Grandpa Kage (Sam Conway, father of Anthrocon's chairman) does not say much, but he works harder than a gentleman his age should be allowed to in order to make Anthrocon a success. He has been doing it since 1998 when he uttered the fateful words, "Anything we can do to help with this convention of yours, Son?"

GREYSE AKA HEIDI ART SHOW, PUBLICATIONS

Glad to be back again this year for my mumble fourth year? It is always a fun time in the Art Show and since I live nearby, I'm helping out with the dining guide, too.

HALINA K. HARDING SECURITY

Another Year another Anthro. Why do I get myself into these things?

HAWKEYE SECURITY

Dragged bodily into fandom by his fiancée in 1971, Bob has somehow hung around despite his associations with various unsavory groups (Dorsai Irregulars, Chicago Semi-Pro Musica, ISFC and others), several of which he has led at one time or another. He teaches, auctioneers, stands duty and still occasionally filks. When he does, he plays a washtub bass, mostly because it irritates the hell out of everybody.

HEATHYR LAMB, DI SECURITY

Heathyr Lamb lives in sunny Florida with her daughter and husband, Colin. She has been attending conventions since the late 70s, and is not shocked by any behavior she sees. We think you should take this as a challenge, but be warned. She is short and therefore a very dangerous and vindictive person. She leads with her left, and has been known to hit below the belt.

HUGMONSTER ART SHOW

Fun as a flight of fancy, smart as a parliament of owls, and the girl most likely to be the one you want at your back, Hugmonster returns to AnthroCon to continue spreading her special

type of chaos while keeping everything in order - and all while stylish and classy at the same time! Run for cover and secure the fragile goods - here comes Hugmonster! See you in the Art Show.

IAN KEITH OPERATIONS

Does it count against my word count if I don't use any spaces in my entire bio? ...How about if I make up words? Cause if it's not a real word... (Classic line of conversation with a particular crazy phoenix-fox)

ICEPAWS ART SHOW, INTERNET ROOM, LOGISTICS, REGISTRATION

Mew. Purr purr purr Verooooommm, *motorcycle sounds*.

JAMES J. WALTON, DI SECURITY

James loves: good books, good beer, good whiskey, good women, bad women, and attending/running conventions. He can often be found in a bar with a book and a hoppy beer in front of him, chatting up any ladies within comfortable speaking range.

JO HALL SECURITY

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

JOHN "BEAR" HALL, D.I. SECURITY

A Science Fiction fan since 1976. A Dorsai Irregular since 1988. Worked security at Anthrocon since 2002. And look, I'm doing it again. Not sure if this is a brag or a cry for help.

JOHN (JOATMON) LINDGREN ART SHOW

Back again for another year, Still fixing medical equipment. Still happily married. Still watching cartoons. Still helping out at the Art Show. Still playing with robots. Still playing video games. Still reading bad sci-fi and comics. Still working with puppets. Still collecting movies and tv shows. Still shoveling snow. Still working in the yard. Still putting up Xmas lites. Still taking down Xmas lites. Still living. Still breathing....

JOHNNY NOT-SO-SANE SECURITY

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

JOSH BELL DANCE / AV

Also known as Mootsfox <3

JUSTIN P. REESE A.K.A. THE SONIC GOD REGISTRATION

Main Host and CEO of Radio Unifurse, Justin has been working for Anthrocon for the last 5 years, ensuring that each and every member registered is handled promptly and with care!

K. GISLER SECURITY

Longtime furry fan and happy to give something back to the fandom.

K.P. BOARD OF DIRECTORS (MASQUERADE, PROGRAMMING)

KP lives in Orlando, Florida. He has been the Programming Director for Anthrocon since 2005 and also chairs and works for other conventions around the U.S. He is a fursuiter and a puppeteer on the Funday Pawpet Show. KP is also the co-host of the Anthrocon Masquerade. As a hobby, KP also does calligraphy and illuminated writing.

KAELYN SECURITY

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

KARL JORGENSEN (XYDEXX SQUEAKYPONY) BOARD OF DIRECTORS (PUBLICATIONS)

Maintaining an ardent interest in Furry fandom since 1993, Karl has attended every Anthrocon since it began in 1997. This is his eighth year as Publications Director. In his free time, he enjoys riding his recumbent bicycle and exploring abandoned buildings. He maintains a webpage about Furry fandom at www.furryfandom.info.

KASI FROST OPERATIONS

Kasi Frost is a freelance IT/web consultant, EMT, and convention organizer/staffer from Bristol, Connecticut. Kasi enjoys costume design, pop-alt culture (rave, goth, sci-fi, fantasy) and small business projects. Her personal interest



in fantasy costuming, photography, emerging culture, and travel make her a community resource for networking and collaboration for newcomers to kigurumi and furry. Kasi has attended Anthrocon since 2000.

KAY JARRELL, D.I. SECURITY

I may be working hard but this is my vacation, damn it. Let's go for a drink at the end of the shift. It is work, but it can be fun too. This is my 5th Anthrocon as one of the Dorsai Irregulars who lead Security Staff. It is my first one without my husband, Dan who has to stay home to help sell robotics to NASA or somebody. Y'all have fun. Party Safely.

KEFKAH REGISTRATION

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

KEN "ANTHRO WOLF" HUCKLE ART SHOW

Here we are, at yet another fun-filled year at Anthrocon. Been working with the convention for a good number of years now and I thoroughly enjoy the great people and wonderful atmosphere it brings. I hope everyone has a great time and if you see me, feel say to say hi.

KHURYNN ART SHOW

Khurynn lives just outside of Binghamton, NY where he works as an electrical engineer. In his spare time he enjoys Egyptology and playing classical piano. This is his fourth year at AC, second year helping out at the Art Show, and first year on staff. Woohoo! This year you might also see him wandering the convention halls dressed as either Anubis or Tiger of the Wind.

KIJANI PUBLICATIONS

Back for his second Anthrocon, Kijani is honored to put his copy-editing skills from his real-life job (or lack thereof) to good use as the AC 2011 Publications Editor. When not enslaved by the local newspaper, this friendly lion, who some may recognize from YouTube, enjoys enriching the lives of others through fursuit performance - bringing smiles & furry cheer to various community/charity events

near his hometown of Seattle, Washington.

KIRIC GAMING

'At last a wolf's whelp will be a wolf, although he may grow up with a man.'

KITT3NS OPERATIONS

White Tiger, Furst State Administrator, and head organizer for the DE Furbowls. Happy to lend a paw to a great convention! Heya Delaware Furrries! www.thefurststate.com for our official website!

KRIN REGISTRATION

A grumpy old code bunny who tries to help out as best he can.

KRITTER DEALERS ROOM

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

KYREETH PHOTOGRAPHY

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

LINCOLN "JBADGER" KLIMAN PROGRAMMING

Just a silly old badger from New York. Ohh you want serious? Okay. I am a old member of this great group of furry fandom. I can not even remember all the details how I walked into an anime club where someone was showing off some furry art at the time. Ohh how these same people said I should go to this con or that con because there was a party. Ohha and it was said it might be fun to help out as staff at a con, come join us. Why are they singing "one of us" over and over again? That was about 20 years ago now. Faces may change, mileage may vary, badgers are always here.

LYCWOLF (ETHAN) DANCE / AV

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

MACH OPERATIONS

Come say hi! I won't bite, though I might seem a bit gruff. Really, just a kitten looking to get into something fun, make some friends, and maybe find the meaning of life along the way. Wood-crafter, programmer, hiker, systems-admin, brewer, runner, skater, gamer, Jack of All Trades, Master of some, better than none, An inch deep and a mile wide. Problem solver. I like free drinks and I love good conversation.

MARC "CAPTROO" WARTENBERG PUBLICATIONS

This roo is new to the fandom and attended my first con last year. I am so glad to have finally found the fandom. AC was such a wonderful experience for me, I am honored to give back by using my talents to help with the AC publications! I am a ChirROOptractor by trade and enjoy taking care of my furry friends as well as humans.

MARK "DIDASKALOS" MINER ART SHOW

Mark "Didaskalos" Miner travels the country doing old-fashioned heroic poetry. In addition to working the Art Show, he'll be reciting Ovid's Centauromachy at Anthrocon this year. Google the Elgin Marbles . . .

MARNIE, DI SECURITY

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

MAX POLLACK DANCE / AV, PROGRAMMING

We're not talkin no normal sway-back, Patrick Swayze nice and easy ballet dancing lemon-squeezy style, yeah? We're talkin' murkin'. We're talkin' pea soup. We're talkin' fog, darkness. Deep like titanic, make the dance panic, that one-a-penny two-a-penny vibe you can't manage, BO - pure nasty habit, sadness I can't have it, make a move bust a style raver dance rapid.

MAXIMUS SECURITY

This is Max's fifth year working AnthroCon security, and he's very excited to be back.

MIDWAY DANCE / AV

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

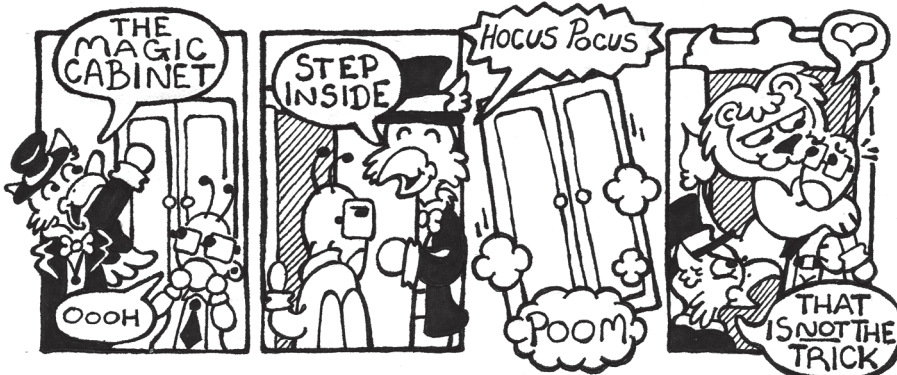
MIKE "GOOCH" GUCCIARD DI SECURITY

*** Classified *** <redacted> #####

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MIKE "LUNOS" F ART SHOW

Lunos the owl hails from the land of Michigan. He's energetic, cheerful, kind, and eccentric and happy to be helpful or meet new people. He'll be fluttering around the artshow; feel



free to say hi to him!

MIKE 'ALIEN' GARRISON SECURITY

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

MRIANTI CHARITY AUCTION

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

MYENIA PUBLICATIONS

Myenia began her artist career in college, after a friend introduced her to Deviantart and the possibilities of digital art. The majority of her works are sci-fi/fantasy or anthropomorphic, and she will be attending as a dealer in 2011. Myenia is from Houston, has a degree in music, is working for an energy consulting company, with art existing as a serious hobby. She loves the incomparable friendliness and generosity most about the furry fandom.

NICONA SHADOWWOLF REGISTRATION

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

NIGHTCLAW DANCE / AV

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

NORTH PROGRAMMING

Officially a furry fan since 1996, unofficially since childhood, North has been on senior staff at Rainfurrest since its inception and was the Rainfurrest Chair in 2009 and 2010. Padding around in suit as either North Puppy or Skagit the Raccoon, North has visited many cons, but his favorite furry moments are with his puppets Roger Fox and Kyte the Fox guesting on the Funday Pawpet Show and co-hosting the Variety Show at RF.

ODDY DANCE / AV

Sound engineer and DJ for various conventions across the Midwest. Usually seen behind a mixing console, making everything sound good.

OSEE DeSANTIS PROGRAMMING

This spotty dog has been in the fandom since 2007. He currently lives in Hampton, VA where he helps moderate and work as Public Relations for his local group, the 757-Furries of Virginia. This will be his third year at Anthrocon and his first year on staff -- God help his furry soul. (He just hopes some of the "magic" will rub off on his Jeep so he can get home.)

PANZIER INTERNET ROOM

Another year of awesome conventions made possible by the selfless contributions of

hundreds of folks and the passions of all the attending fans. Looking forward to AC and the end of an incredible winter. Stop by the internet room and say hi, bring snacks!

PATRICK CASEY DEALERS ROOM

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

PATRICK DABEAR TABB SECURITY

Mix a gym rat, a gamer and a massage therapist together, add a camo hat, mix well with scotch, whiskey and cigars - that's me.

PAUL FREDERICK PROGRAMMING

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

PETER VOGELBERGER SECURITY

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

PETERCAT BOARD OF DIRECTORS (ART SHOW)

Intrigued by the late-80s CBS-TV series "Beauty and the Beast," PeterCat discovered SF conventions and began helping out at art shows. He's Anthrocon's representative to the Anthropomorphic Literature and Arts Association, which administers the Ursa Major Awards (ursamajorawards.org). He also runs the Furry InfoPage web site (tigerden.com/infopage/furry) and, using the professional name Peter Katt, is a freelance voice artist (peterkattvoice.com). He can often be heard on Will Sanborn's "Anthro Dreams" podcast.

PHAEDRA 'WYLDEKYTTIN' MEYER BOARD OF DIRECTORS (DEALERS ROOM)

No day but today.

RB PROGRAMMING

Back for yet another year of staffing. This bear from Kansas will once again be found roaming the halls of the convention center. If you wish to catch his attention, fish works best, though hugs are also good.

ROBERT "CHIAROSCURO" ARMSTRONG BOARD OF DIRECTORS (REGISTRATION)

In his tenth year on staff, in his fourth year as Director, in-sane as mongooses often are. He continues to dwell in Norwich, Connecticut, still plying his culinary trades at Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville. He can be found on FurryMUCK and SecondLife, and somehow Meefer the 1999 Ford Escort keeps rolling with 180,000+ miles. ♪ Baby check me out, I've got something to say / Man it's so loud in here ♪

ROOTH ARTISTS ALLEY / CON STORE

Rooth, AKA Rooth'ragon or Rooth'roo, has been a member of the community since 1990. He has attended many conventions, and volunteered at a few, including his first visit to AC in 2006 and every one since. He loves deserts, artwork, and costumes, particularly of the dragon or kangaroo variety. He lives in beautiful Colorado, where he works as a senior IT professional. Find him working Artist's Alley wearing his signature white dragon tail with the blue feathers.

RUKARIO PROGRAMMING

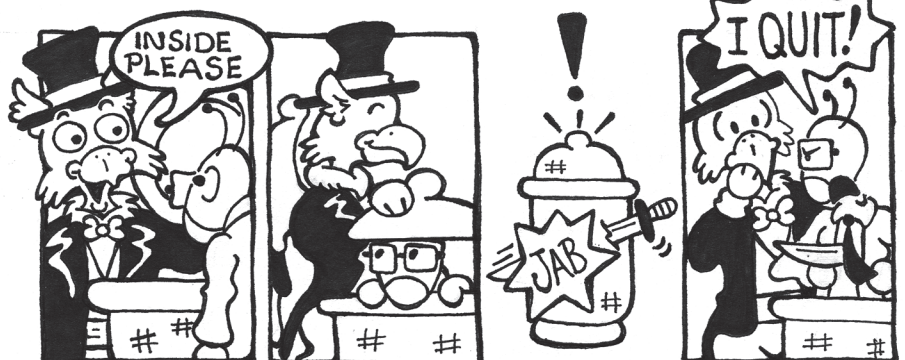
Rukario has been an active participant in the Furry Community for 4 years. As an active panelist, fursuiter and contributor to all conventions he attends, Rukario believes in giving back to the Community that has had a profound impact on his life. Currently, he is working on his BS in Information Technology from the University of Phoenix.

RUKIS PUBLICATIONS

Rukis is a fantasy illustrator who is relatively new to the anthropomorphic world. She is a naturalist who enjoys gardening, raising livestock and walking barefoot on the small farm she lives on. She prefers honesty and despises censorship in all aspects of life, including art. Her passions are raising animals, old-school tabletop RPGs, drinking gobs of Dr. Pepper, and making comics.

SAGE FIREFOX PUBLICATIONS

An avid artist and gamer, Sage is super excited to be coming back to AC for a fourth year and to be working with the Publications staff for the first time. She is also starting her bid for world domination, backed by the Red Panda



SANDY SCHREIBER SECURITY

Sandy Schreiber (Bratzel) has been drawing con art and fan art for over 20 years, but is relatively new to furry fandom. Recently, she has been making the rounds of the furry cons full-time, and has been posting new art regularly on FurAffinity. Sandy has her hands full being a full-time dealer at Anthrocon, as well as helping out with Security!

SAZUME REGISTRATION

I'm just a Michigan-born dragon. AnthroCon would be the first out of state con I've been to, and I plan on coming back every year to make it traditional. I like cooking food for people who enjoy flavorful things. It's a wonderful hobby, cooking. I also am an artist. You can check my art out on FA under Ritsuka. I wouldn't mind drawing for people. I enjoy making the masses happy.

SCOTT STAUFFER OPERATIONS

Fluffy tiger from Indiana, who happens to be the con Chairman of iFC in Indianapolis. He spends his spare time driving a semi, to make a living. He enjoys tinkering with electronics, and loving his awesome mate.. Eleete Frostpaw <3

SCRUFFY ART SHOW

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

SEVEN SECURITY

I must be a masochist to keep coming back and working security at this Convention. It sure is addicting and great for storytime though.

SGT. STEVE SIMMONS SECURITY

Sgt. Steve is one of the triumvirate of Duty Officers running the security staff at Anthrocon. He's referred to as "the nice one," which often mystifies folks who've not worked with the other two. During non-convention periods he pushed bits through wires and plays with his granddaughter. She refers to him as "the nice one" too.

SHARKY PROGRAMMING

I attended my first Anthrocon in 2001 at the Adams Mark Hotel in Philadelphia. I picked up an interest in fur suiting and constructed Sharky for the 2002 con. I have also hosted three panels on basic fursuit construction as well as co-hosted the fursuit games. I also enjoy performing in the masquerade skits with my son and close friends.

SHIROTORA AKA JAMES EDEN ART SHOW

ShiroTora is a proud member of the "I've been to every AnthroCon" club. He's an unusually tall anthro white tiger cleverly disguised as an unusually tall human. He dabbles in photomanipulation, sculpture, button-making, writing and voice acting and is available for all these at james.m.eden@gmail.com. He wrote this bio in the third person and for the first time has several words left in his bio limit wordcount.

SHY MATSI ARTISTS ALLEY / CON STORE

Shy Matsi has been in the furry community for over 15 years and is happy to work for Anthrocon's Artist Alley. When not helping out at conventions, he's usually working on Furry4Life.org or helping to organize a local furry gathering in New Jersey.

SILARIA PROGRAMMING

2011 is Silaria's third year on Anthrocon staff. Silaria worked in the Operations department before moving to Programming as the Assistant Track Head for the Puppetry Track. She has been an active puppeteer for six years and has earned several awards for puppeteering within the fandom.

SNOWQUEEN TIGERCLAW REGISTRATION

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

SPOTWELD ART SHOW

Most of the time SpotWeld is an engineer but he's been a huge fan of science fiction for pretty much all his life so being active in fandom wasn't a surprise. If that wasn't enough he's also the Director of Gaming at FurFright.

STAHI CHARITY AUCTION, MASQUERADE

YAAAAAAAAAAAAAY HURRR DERP

STEVEN "TORA" SEARS SECURITY

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

STEVEN T SECURITY

Just finished working Furry Connection North in MI and am excited to be working at AnthroCon.

TALYN (SCOTT WILLIAMS) LOGISTICS, OPERATIONS

Tirelessly locating belongings and packages, transporting them great distances, light years from source to destination, trekking through the very cosmos themselves in a feeble attempt to deliver in the most efficient and productive manner possible! ...actually, your box is over there in the corner. Yes, the upside-down one with the word 'fragile' on it.

T'CHALL OPERATIONS

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

TEEJ SECURITY

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

THE FOXISH DEALERS ROOM

Another year, another convention, and behind the ever-familiar table in Hall B resides The Foxish, the man of a thousand quips and a walking encyclopaedia of the room around him. He shall eat hot dogs, drink cola, and enjoy the welcoming smiles and gracious compliments of those who revel in the mercantile bliss that is The Dealers Room! Also he likes caffeine and Slim Jims. Just sayin'.

THOMAS MUTH ARTISTS ALLEY / CON STORE

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

THORFAX GOLDWINGS REGISTRATION

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

TIGERWOLF BOARD OF DIRECTORS (INTERNET ROOM)

Tigerwolf is a retired USAF Major, rated senior navigator, flight test program manager and engineer. A lifelong furry inside, he established Tigerden Internet Services in 1993 as a way to contribute back to the fandom. Since then, Tigerden has provided Internet Den facilities for numerous furry conventions, and has worked with the Red Cross to provide Internet communication facilities for disaster relief shelters.



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TINA KLEIN-LEBBINK SECURITY

This is lucky number 7 Anthrocon for me. I look forward to this con every year the energy and fans are so much fun!

TOMA SECURITY

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

TONY RINGTAIL REGISTRATION

Tony is a huge but friendly Raccoon who can be found running around the con making friends or saving lives. If you see him, and he's not covered in blood, feel free to give him a hug.

TREVOR BOYD CHARITY AUCTION

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

TRIANINE SECURITY

Been attending Anthrocon for over a decade now. Been in the furry community much longer, but I play it low-key.

TROUBLE SECURITY

I didn't do it, I wasn't there, and besides he hit me first.

TURTYL GAMING

Here is a young man... He is the youngest son of the noble Beoulve... pillars of knighthood. There is no record of his playing an active part in history, but... According to the "Durai Report" released last year (concealed for many years by the church), this unknown man is the true hero. The church claims he was a blasphemer... But is this the "truth?" Won't you join me on a journey for the "truth?"

TYLER DEALERS ROOM

He's not a furry. We really don't know what he's doing here.

TYRRLIN REGISTRATION

Tyrrlin is one of the several dedicated staffers who help keep Registration running smoothly. She also (usually) has art in the Art Show,

specializing in musical instrument art, and takes part in the fursuit parade as one of the few gryphons.

UNCLE KAGE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (CHAIRMAN)

Dr. Samuel Conway ("Uncle Kage") has been active in Furry Fandom since 1991 and has been the Chairman and CEO of Anthrocon, Inc. since 1998. By now you would think that he has gotten it all figured out, but he still relies heavily on his hard-working staff for just about everything. Please accept his apologies in advance if he does not have time to stop and talk; running around in a mad, screaming panic is his job.

UNCLE VLAD DEALERS ROOM

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

VALREJN DANCE / AV

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

VICTORIA EARL ART SHOW, SECURITY

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.

WAG! (THE "I" IS NOT PRONOUNCED "S") ARTISTS ALLEY / CON STORE

Wag doesn't think anyone reads these staff bios, so if you find him at the fish market bar Saturday night and mention the secret phrase "I wonder if kids in ancient Rome tricked each other into joining the Pen XV club", he (might) buy you a drink! (One per person, must be legally able to drink, offer ends when Wag declares he

is too poor for this crap. No whining!) Follow @wagtehdog on Twitter for info!

WALTER FADDOUL ART SHOW

Woof! It's a Walty Wuff! Been attending AC since 2006; each year keeps getting better and better! *wag!*

WHITE_WER LOGISTICS

I am not made from bacon, despite reports from the FDA.

WHITEFANG ART SHOW

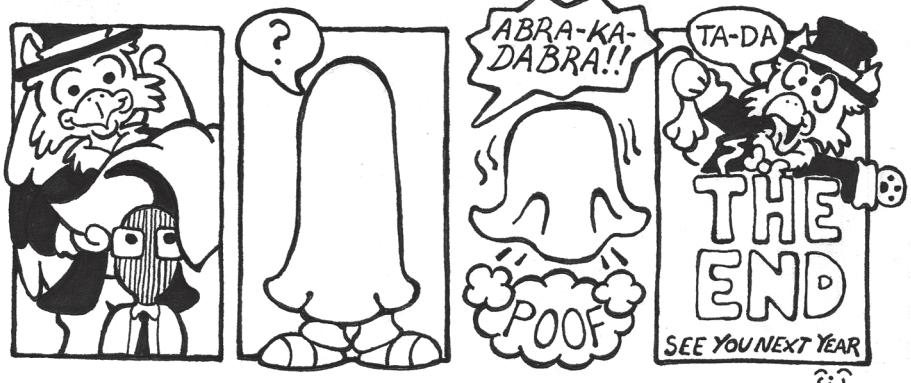
Soaring in from New Jersey is Anthrocon's very own winged white wolf. Returning to the con for her fourth summer in a row and second as staff, WhiteFang is certain this year's Art Show will be particularly magical.

WILLIAM "MILES" CONDE ART SHOW

Despite years of education telling him that science and reason are the way, the furry generally known as "Terra" refuses to abandon this wonderful freak-filled subculture with its art and insanity. In the future, he may execute research in the footsteps of that of Dr. Gerbasi, analyzing furrries for the world to ponder. Maybe they'll even give him a degree for it. But he's not holding his breath. Even furrries need oxygen.

YAPPY FOX PROGRAMMING

A hard-working Anthrocon staff member who was too busy studying magic to write up a bio.



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WWW.CALIFUR.COM

A black and white promotional graphic for Camp Feral. The central element is a large, bold, sans-serif font spelling "CAMP FERAL" diagonally across the frame. In the top right corner, a rectangular box contains the text "THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE AIR". In the bottom right corner, another rectangular box contains the text "AUGUST 31ST TO SEPTEMBER 4TH, 2011" and "ALGONQUIN PARK, ONTARIO, CANADA". In the bottom left corner, there is a stylized logo that reads "IT CAME FROM CAMP FERAL". To the right of the main text, the website "WWW.CAMPFERAL.ORG" is written in a slanted, bold font. The background features a close-up of a hand holding a pen, poised to sign a document.

THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE AIR

CAMP FERAL

WWW.CAMPFERAL.ORG

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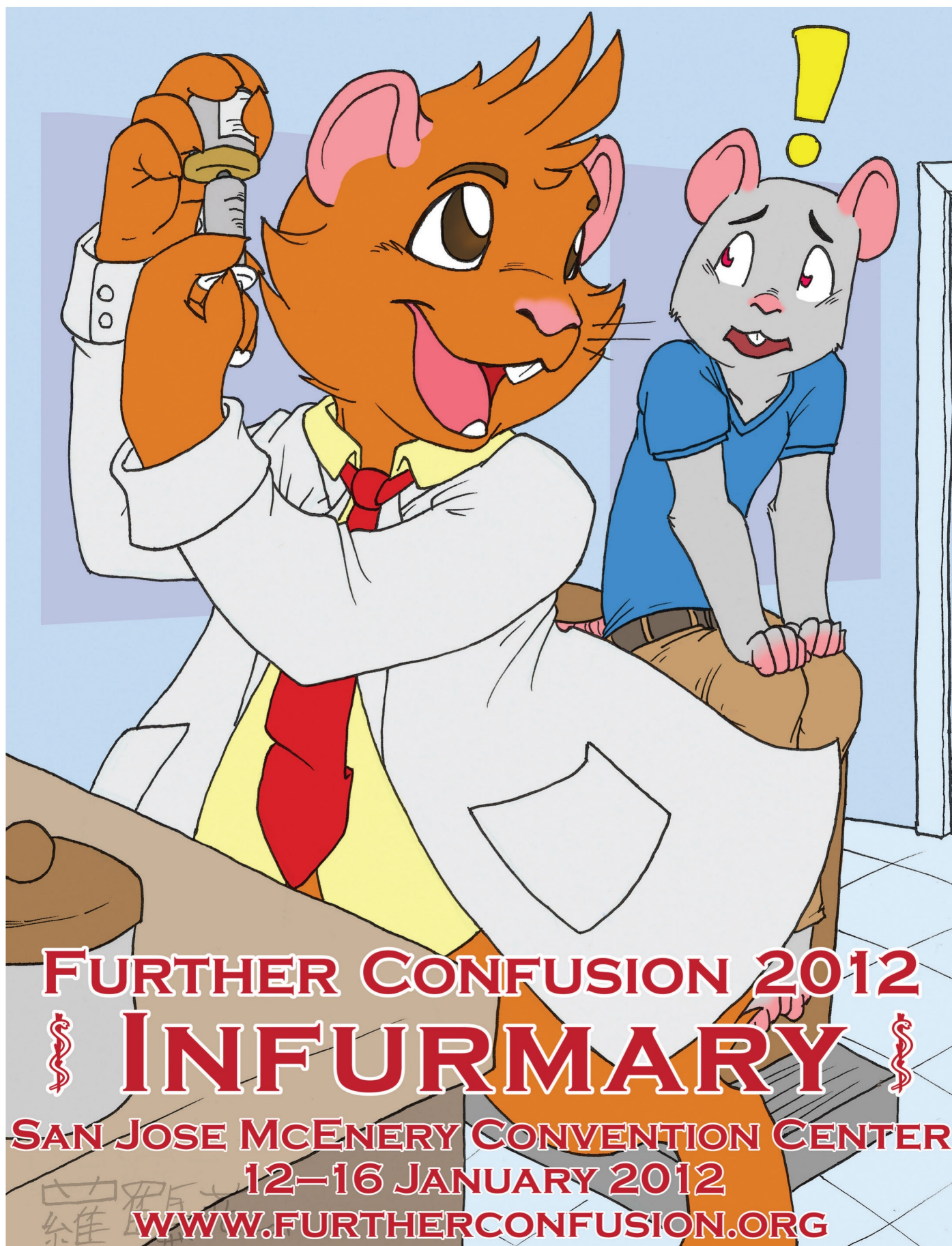
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