

Editorial

WOWSERS SUTEKH! *I did not expect this!* There's a bit of everything in this edition of The Zweihander. From TV shows to boardgames, poems to reviews! And through it all, despite our society name, we somehow managed to avoid any direct mention of **Doctor Who**... *wait*...

Jokes aside, I'd be lying if I didn't say I was impressed. The variety and quality of submissions for this often forgotten edition has been excellent. And the fact that the majority of them were submitted before the deadline makes my little icy heart warm up ever so slightly. Honestly, if you run into one of our contributors for this edition, tell them they're awesome. We all know this time of year is a crazy mess of assignments and midsemester exams and those annoying little quizzes that are worth so little that you contemplate just not doing them, and to write an article for The Zweihander *AND* do all that is an awesome feat that deserves to be acknowledged.

Also, try to find the hidden duck in this edition. There's no reward if you do, other than the satisfaction that you know where it is.

-Petra Cranshure-Player, Editor 2017

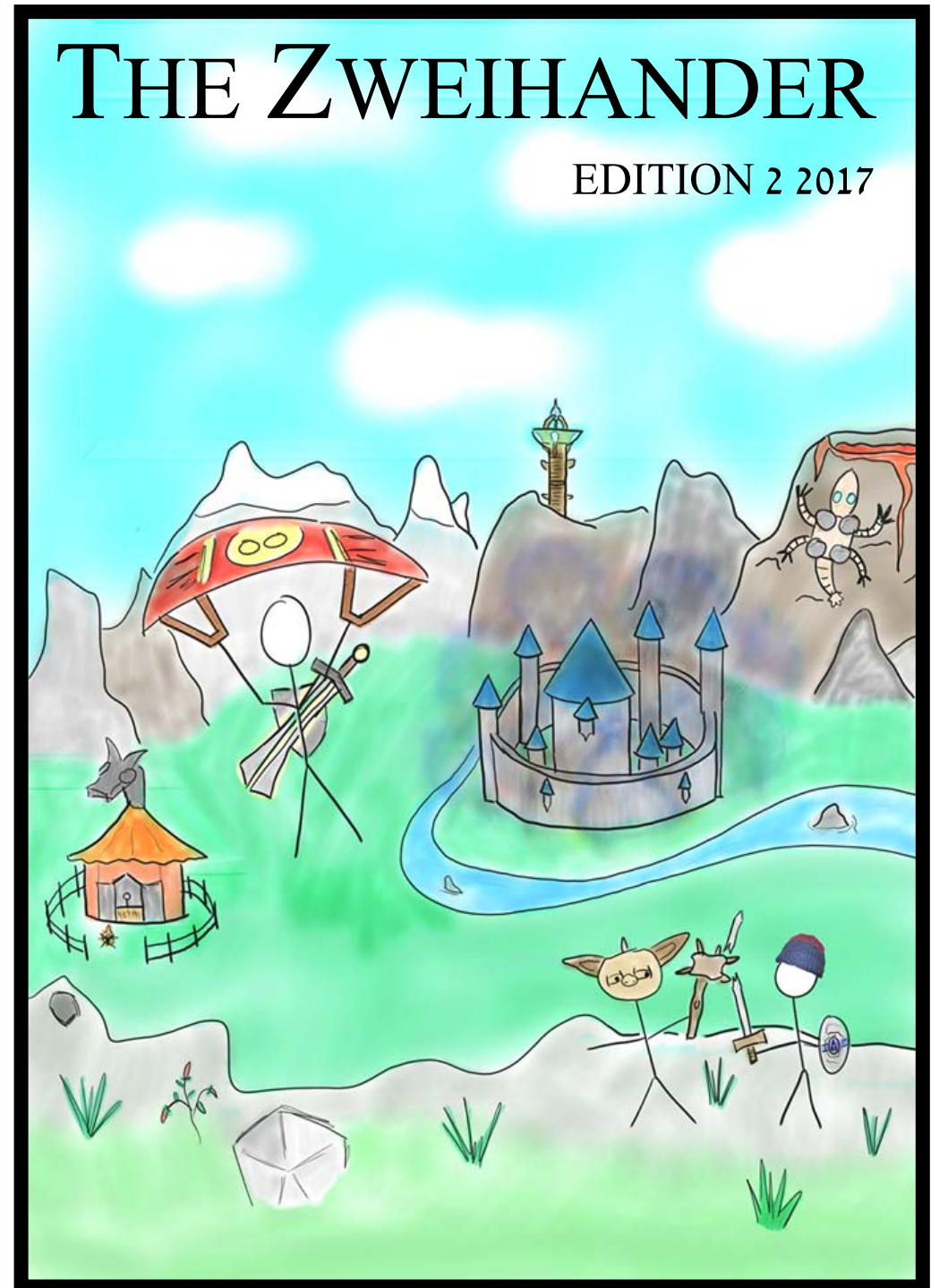
Submissions can be sent to: editor@sutekh.org.au

Connect with us on Facebook at [SUTEKH-Sydney University Pop Culture & Games Society](#) for upcoming events and your semi regular **Zweihander** spam.

Cover Design: Simon Koch



PROVIDED BY
UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY UNION



Sponsors for 2017



Good Games offers a 5% discount on certain items to Sutekh Members in their Sydney chain of stores (does not extend to online purchases).



Games Paradise offers a 10% discount to Sutekh members members



This year Kinokuniya offers 5\$ membership for university students\from the 23/02/2017 until the 10/03/2017



Sutekh Members who purchase a \$20 membership at Legend Cyber Cafe also receive a bonus \$5 and 2 hours extra for free.



Galaxy Bookshop offers a 10% discount to Sutekh Members this year.



The Nerd Caves offers Sutekh members a 10% discount on certain items



1989 Kitchen & Arcade offers Sutekh members a 12% discount on Food and Drink.

looked like he was struggling with the fight sequences. A better casting choice would be someone with martial arts background who can make the sequences believable, hence no need to ask Jessica Henwick (Colleen) to slow down and display her full skill.

The hand under leadership of Bakuto is portrayed as evil and manipulative people of colour, as mentioned by Madame Gao” I offer you freedom and was willing to let you live whatever life you wanted and you rejected that offer, pursued and kidnapped me and then you ran into slavery as fast you could, you’re an idiot”. Danny responds like an emotional child, to which Gao said “I’m treating you with respect, by being who I am, not everyone around you does the same”.

Thus, Iron Fist casts white actor as hero of the story (yes Danny Rand is caucasian in the comics), however it also portrays the hand as run by evil people of colour, who lure more people of couple in to manipulate into being a warrior. This is in not the only example of not enough representation in movies and TV, but one of the more prominent one yet at the same time difficult to detect. Sometime ago I would’ve not looked at this from this perspective, but such issues are present in many movies and television shows and it may not be obvious as evident by this show!



Credit: Netflix Colleen Wing

Mazesta Mehrabi

ple and how it will affect each person, while portraying Luke as a brawler.

So far the Netflix entries have avoided such controversy, until Iron fist was first announced and released. There has been controversy about Iron Fist regarding the show having business drama were as it was martial arts based in the comics. At first glance those appear to be the only issues with Netflix series Iron Fist, however upon more analysis more issue present itself.

One of the first controversy of this show has been casting of Finn Jones for as Iron Fist and the white washing, which has been covered by a lot. I will focus on other issues that presented itself. For instance, Danny Rand challenges the master of Colleen's dojo to a fight, assuming she wasn't a master. What furthermore can be constituted as bad writing is the fact that Danny is very emotional throughout the series, while having received training to be in control of his emotions during his stay at kun Lun!

As we progress through the series we're introduced to the fighters that are students of Colleen Wing and they are training to have a place to stay instead of being on the street. This tries to apply the formula from Luke Cage's pop barber shop and it does work to a degree. That is until we're introduced to Bakuto (Colleen's sensei) played by Ramon Rodriguez, right off the start you get the feeling that he isn't what he appears to be! Bakuto and Colleen are revealed as part of the hand and rivals to Madame Gao, who are taking in young people of colour and manipulating them into becoming warriors for the hand. It is here that Colleen first begins to question Bakuto and it is revealed that she herself was manipulated.

The show set up Colleen as a role model, empowering female character, then turns around and has her as someone who was manipulated. Based on early episodes and opinions of others, some preferred Colleen Wing as the lead and bearer of the title Iron Fist. This is further backed up with her ability to fight and making the scenes fluid and effortless, sadly the same can't be stated for Danny Rand as he

A quick word from SUTEKH's president...

We survived watching the gruesome but exciting Logan, sharpened our weapons and imaginations in D&D, laughed with Rick and Morty, raged at Battlestar Galactica, drowned ourselves in Raspberry Lemonade, played some funny moves in MTG Commander, built unusual dungeons in Minecraft and ate a heck of a lot of pizza.

So I'd say the semester is going ok so far.

-Helen Munro, President 2017

Special Events Update

During the mid-semester break, there are currently no events planned, however it's highly advised that members keep a watch on the Facebook page: [SUTEKH-University of Sydney's Pop Culture and Games Society](#) for any events that may arise during this time.

Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2-At the Movies with DisneySoc (Thursday Week 8-TBC)

What's better than going to the movies with SUTEKH? Going to the movies with SUTEKH *and* DisneySoc! Join us as we join our favourite unwilling galactic heroes on their latest adventure! The Galactic Guardians are back, this time with *KURT RUSSELL!* Yes, the man himself joins the Galactic Guardians in what is sure to be another Marvel knockout. So chuck on your dancing shoes, grab the nearest twig, and join us for another awesome evening *at the movies.*

Mid-Semester Zweihander, what a wonderful phrase.

If you're reading this, it means you're either a reader of the mid-semester Zweihander (Or you're the editor). Mid semester Zweihander fall at an inconvenient time. Right in the middle of semester, which means that on top of assignments and everything else that goes on in the life of a Sutekh Executive, the Editor has the bonus task of herding cats and contemplating the importance of article chronology. I consider myself an Expert on mid-semester Zweihander, having spent much time in research on the subject last year. In fact, I believe I know more about mid-semester Zweihander than any man, woman or child attending Sydney University this year, with the possible exception of the current Editor.

Mid semester Zweihander suffer from many ailments, but I believe that assignments are one of the hardest hitters, shortly after the unforgivable lack of enthusiasm for the Zweihander displayed by many students, and the stress of being half-way through semester and not being sure if you've actually learnt anything so far. Assignments are set by misguided course coordinators who believe that mid semester break, a sacred time in the hearts of many a student, provides room for a student to perform more work than they would be able to do otherwise. The time and work constraints on students often lead to articles being written at the very last minute, leading to a degradation in quality, and pulling the Zweihander down. To provide an example, this article was begun just over half an hour before the midnight deadline for submissions, and the reader can see for themselves the quality.

Truly, Mid-Semester Zweihander are a challenge for all.

The writing is hard, the printing is hard, the distribution is hard, and the result is less widely read.

Why you heff to do this #1

Racism has always been an issue in our everyday lives, with lots of influence from world of fiction. Movies, television shows, streaming services and video games have always been a source of entertainment for many years. As with all forms of entertainment some projects are well received while others not so much, however one aspect overlooked aspect is unintentional racism and sexism that is present in many of these projects.

Admittedly tremendous progress has been made since the days when people of other nationalities were portrayed as specific character and the way women were represented. The issues were most prominent in 80s action movies where the protagonist was an unstoppable one man army that went up against an army made up of people of colour who were stereotyped to the core. An example of this are the movies True Lies and Commando, with the portrayal of Middle Eastern and Hispanic actors as the villains and henchmen who can't aim and male hero who never runs out of bullets and has an aim bot.



Over the recent years there have been steps taken to have more diversity with introduction of characters such as Black Panther, Natasha Romanoff, James Rhodes, Sam Wilson and more street level heroes such as Jessica Jones and Luke Cage. Shows such as Jessica did give us a more of character focused project with a great villain in David Tennant's Kilgrave. Luke Cage showcased struggles of everyday peo-

So when one of the people I'm playing with or writing for is at the opposite end of the scale - treating it like an MMO, viewing D&D as being about 'winning', demanding that people fulfil certain roles because hey they gotta play DPS - the game suffers. Though it's purely a matter of opinion, I do feel that approaching tabletop roleplaying with a 'skip the cutscenes, be as powerful as possible, exploit loopholes in the rules*' mentality is a waste of the medium's potential. You have so much potential to be free & creative with your character & their actions; why disregard that as chaff?

Conflicts of personality like the one I had in my past games could lead to a constant undercurrent of enmity between affected players, and/or one of them 'giving in' and ceasing to have (their) fun. There's a middle ground, of course, and you can definitely have dungeon crawling, tense negotiations & character development in the same story, but make sure you're all at least thinking in the same direction when you get together to play.

*There are no "mechanics exploits" in Tabletop RPGs. None. The Game Master is there to adjudicate, and if they're doing their job they'll stop any attempts to do that.

Closing

Don't go overboard, don't assume your complex geography and mechanical ideas will be easy to implement, make sure your group can get together reliably regularly, and play with like-minded people. Instead of a broad adventure-chronicle, consider starting with a simpler one- or two-session tale to build rapport and get players used to the mechanics (and work on your GM style).

There's no better time than your Uni years to start if you haven't already. Go forth and go nuts.

-James Baguley

The Mid-Semester Zweihander suffers the fate of being mostly forgettable amidst the grandeur of the O-Week Zweihander, and the significantly larger prep time for the Mid-Year Zweihander, but despite all these barriers, Mid-Semester Zweihander still stand strong.

You see, Mid-Semester Zweihander are far more dependent on the contributors, the larger editions have room to pick and choose, but at the Mid-Semester, the Editor is held ransom to the whimsy of contributors, which is how meta nonsense like this gets through. But as much as this is a weakness, and it certainly can make for strange reading, the Zweihander remains the Zweihander, and the weirder and more eccentric it gets, the more Zweihander it remains.

You see, the Zweihander is the publication of Sutekh, an unabashedly eccentric society, and the Zweihander is where we say "Hello World", or rather, "This is me". The Zweihander, perhaps akin to a Hydra, or more accurately a Harry Potter style goblin weapon, takes in that which hurts it and just becomes something more. It gets stronger.

The Zweihander is a strange beast, and the Mid-Semester Zweihander doubly so, but I encourage you, the reader, to enjoy this little bundle of Sutekh and if it inspires you maybe next time you can be a part of the anomalous material.

Old habits die hard.

#writefortheZwei

-Tristan Anlezark

Reader: Reflect.

It's almost been a full year since **Homestuck** ended, and eight years after it started on April 13, 2009.

Many of you will have never, ever heard of **Homestuck** before. Some of you will have heard the name and nothing else.

A few of the latter will have no direct exposure to **Homestuck**, save for rumours of it as a bogeyman of a webcomic with a simplistic art style and a fandom of frenzied maniacs. Or, if you have past or present acquaintances who were regular readers, you'll have drawn those conclusions naturally.

Occasionally, you end up being someone who heard strange words on the wind, got curious, started asking questions, had too much free time at the wrong moment, and lost themselves forever. I'm one of these someones.

I started reading **Homestuck** sometime in the first half of 2012. I got a little ways through, paused for a couple of weeks, and ultimately dove all the way in.

It starts off as a bizarre comedy reflecting a game-mechanics universe where kids are given named on their thirteenth birthdays, everyone talks in drop-down chat-boxes, and individuals can only wield very specific things as weapons.

Being about a game, it's crammed with programming references – for instance, kids grapple with finicky personal inventory systems based on data structures (stack, tree, hash map, and so on) which force them to drop things they need. You don't need to understand such references to enjoy the comic; they're interesting in hindsight and funny on their own.



ly: worldbuilding is like the plumbing of an adventure, and no house is all about the plumbing.

So yeah. Too much worldbuilding.

Schedules & Convenience

Those ten sessions I ran? They were meant to be fortnightly at first. They ended up spread out over about a year. The most obvious reason for this, to my mind, was that we were high school friends, and about half of us each attended USyd and UNSW.

If you want to run games with a group, make it a group where you all have regular incidental face-to-face contact. Or, at least, where you're all free enough to commit to a specific, regular time. Make it an agreed part of The Routine for everyone involved. Attendance won't be perfect - one-off things spring up, sometimes for one person and sometimes for everyone - but you don't want to face a session where the majority of players are unexpectedly absent.

And if you want to run/play a story with character arcs, then absence throws a spanner in the works. A spanner which gets bigger the more consecutive absences occur, until it outgrows the works itself. And ruins the plumbing. Avoid large spanners. And while we're talking about what kind of game you want...

Common goals

As a Game Master/Storyteller, I naturally tend to write adventures or chronicles that I can see appealing to the kind of player I am. I enjoy adversity. I'm cool with missing out on combat if it took careful planning or social manoeuvring to do so. If my character dies, I don't mind as long as the manner of death doesn't seem unfair or contrived (e.g. a mandatory scripted fight with a dragon whose breath attack can one-shot my wizard if he succeeds on the save). Hell, if he dies because of a ruinous in-character decision, I might tell the DM that I'm ready, and that they don't need to give me an escape hatch. My character deserves an ending.

The Deep End: What I (think I) learned from the death of a TRPG campaign

If you're interested in playing or running a Tabletop Role-Playing Game, like Dungeons & Dragons, World of Darkness, Pathfinder, or Paranoia, you need enthusiasm and people. To play, you need someone to organise your adventures; to run, you need players to organise adventures for.

Sometime during the second semester of my first year, I started to DM for some old high school friends. There were seven of us in total; four relative novices (including myself) with a résumé of around a dozen game sessions and three totally new to it. It lasted about ten sessions before quietly dying off. Having had plenty of time to think about it, I've identified a few things to make sure to do (or not do) when considering tabletop.

Details, details

I'll admit this readily: I like worldbuilding. After I got my first exposure to D&D (around Year 9, with people I knew outside of school) I came up with a few ideas that sounded nifty. I wasn't in any position to enact them (not enough friends/limited interest/too busy at various times) until I finished high school; I looked at my old stuff, refined it, began getting new ideas. What I had by the time we started was a vast, complicated story about cosmic linchpins. I got such a grand sense of vision for my story that, when the time came to run it, I couldn't keep sight of the fact that my players had to live that story.

So, too much worldbuilding? I don't think there's such a thing as 'too much worldbuilding' when it's an individual hobby; it's like fanfiction or simple creative writing, after all, and often isn't made to see daylight. If you're looking for publishable creative writing, that's another thing. Creative writing that will gel with TRPG players is yet another. On his (helpful!) blog, The Angry GM sums up this issue nice-

Much of the story was written on the fly and eventually snowballed to become much, much bigger than the author intended. At various points in time it incorporates biology, astrology, myth, clowns and 1950s menswear into its essential plot.

I've heard other fans call **Homestuck's** beginning a patience game, primarily due to the expectations people set when they hear about it. You could never really look into the fandom without spoiling the existence of things that debut in the early-to-mid chapters, let alone the late-game. I went in mostly blind, and it proved worthwhile for me, but it's not a big deal. Those early-mid elements are indeed something to get excited about, and thus, something to look forward to. Just so long as you don't skip anything.



The author, Andrew Hussie, performs an INCREDIBLY INDULGENT SELF-INSERT into his own webcomic. It's complicated.

The fandom self-deprecates. A lot. It got on my nerves sometimes, as it felt like people were going overboard with fake-shame. The HS fandom is a zany place, a little weirder than average (by dint of being a weirder-than-average story and full of in-jokes) but otherwise as capable of being friendly, open and creative as the next fandom.

If it sounds interesting to you, by all means check it out; if the beginning seems slow, give it a chance to get PROPER weird before you decide whether to continue.

It was a wild ride while it was still being written, and I imagine it's still a hell of a read for newcomers with the will to follow it through. That it ended, though, is good. Not all authors today are capable of wrapping their franchises up.

On April 13, it'll be the main character's twenty-first birthday. And it wasn't until doing the simple arithmetic to type that fact that I realised he's actually a few months older than me. God damn.

-by James Baguley



THE SUTEKH CONSPIRACY EXPOSED!!! Pt.2

To The Zweihander,

*Who is Sue Tekh? Was the page hijacked?! **What does this mean for SUTEKH and the groups Members?!?!***

In the early hours of the Monday in week 6, an *unidentified source* intercepted a conversation (more like an argument) taking place between the account **Sue Tekh** and an unnamed executive of the society. The source directed me to the post, and I instantly jumped on the case.

Who is Sue Tekh? For the longest time, the account Sue Tekh has been in charge of befriending all members of the society and spamming their Facebook notification

A bottle of bubbly wrapped in paper.
I drink to feel the bubbles,
I drink to avoid the sky,
Empty blackness stretched to eternity.

Artificial city lights
Hide from our sight
A million bright stars.

That's not how it feels.

Standing at the end of the universe,
Standing against the dying starlights.
Is this heat death?
I shake my head,
That's not it.

We used to look at that sky,
Star after star after star
Plentiful as beach sand.
Glimpses of colour
(Was that Mars?)
Wander through the void.

The lights in the sky are gone,
Leaving only the words heat death,
A screenshot of the end.

-Brendan O'Shea

The one big let down of the movie is the cinematography. Whoever did the editing and set the camera angles did a passable job most of the time, but a terrible job in some scenes. The ballroom scene, which in the original had that beautiful swooping shot of them dancing is not replicated here and the magic is really ruined somewhat by all the cuts and awkward angles. During the Beast's song about Belle leaving, we see him climbing towers to watch her go. But since the shot isn't framed properly, it looks like she's just running around the grounds aimlessly. Moments like these really lessen the immersion, but luckily there aren't more than two or three of truly badly cut scenes in the whole movie.

All in all it's a mixed bag, but there were certainly more things done well than things done poorly. If you can excuse the cinematography, this film really and sincerely cares about its characters and gives them all a chance to sing, dance, talk, laugh and cry, expanding the people we got to know and love in the original animated movie.

-Bernie Telalovic

Star Death

Black sky,
Like a matte painting in an 80's film
Bleeds into the ocean.

Froth of waves
Like little breaths,
Suggest depth.

Look into flatness,
A lonely universe.

with invites to events during the week. As such, it was a long held belief that the account was held by either the *Publicity Officer* or another executive member.

Was the account Hijacked? As can be seen in the conversation, there is some major confusion as to who is running the Sue Tekh profile. Is it possible that Sue Tekh, and even deeper SUTEKH itself has been hijacked by someone who has devious intentions for SUTEKH to take over the world?!

Most importantly, ***What does this mean for SUTEKH and the groups members?*** Will we now be spammed

with events and fandoms from this hijacker who's taken over Sue Tekh? Will the pland world domination now proceed at a faster pace?!?

I will not let this rest. I will do what ever I can to expose this lunacy and stop SUTEKH from taking over the world.

-Detective Sue



**Editors Note: If Detective Sue ever wants to have anything published in the Zwei again, please do not contact me a day before the release of the current publication. Get your story in before the due date next time (I don't care that this took place after the due date, hold it for the next one!) I've published your article, so you can stop spamming my inbox with images of carrots now!*

FINAL FANTASY IX

Why is Final Fantasy IX my favourite game in the series?

Perhaps it's my favourite because of its themes – a questioning of life's meaning, and how we should appreciate it. From early in the game the character of Vivi, based on the franchise's recurring Black Mage character, struggles with the uncertainty of who he is. Other characters in the main cast, such as Garnet/Dagger and Kuja, also explore deep questions of identity, mortality and value.

Returning to Vivi, as the game's story unfolds he discovers that there are other mages very similar to him. There is one major, heartbreaking difference – their pure lack of emotions. Upon finally finding others like him, Vivi finds that they are incapable of responding and connecting with him. Upon finding out who he is, and resolving his crisis of identity, Vivi is left as alone as he has ever been.

Yet, this barely scratches at sadness of Vivi's story.

In a moment of danger, as Vivi finds himself opposing one of the game's bosses, the previously emotionless mages suddenly shield and protect him from death. Even 2000-era CGI cut-scenes of their deaths evokes the tragedy of Vivi's loss.

Vivi later finds a village of more black mages – all of whom are capable of emotions. It comes as a shock to both Vivi and the player when it is revealed that some of



Caption: Final Fantasy IX's Vivi is a black mage. That black mages have an "expiry date" is a major part of the game's exploration of mortality

how they interact and learn from each other. It's not just Belle fixing him anymore.

The second most important thing in any Beauty and the Beast movie is the villain. NOOO ONNEEE'S buff like Gaston, talks as tough like Gaston, almost kills the Beast with shots from his gun like Gaston! In the movie this song was quite underwhelming. *incomprehensible mumbling* ... GASTOOON! The actor playing him did an absolutely brilliant job, in all seriousness. His swagger, his confidence, his underlying cruelty as all there and perfectly acted in every scene. His singing voice was spot on as well. The interactions between him and Le Fou are more fleshed out as well. We find out they were in a war together and Gaston has pleasant memories of battle, which Le Fou uses to calm him down. Le Fou himself is allowed a lot more scope with his character now that he has an actual crush on Gaston instead of being a wannabe. This leads to some great comedic moments. However, the actor playing him could not sing the Gaston song properly and that was a real let down, since it's the most fun musical number in the film. It was choreographed well, but sometimes the words weren't very comprehensible, which is a shame because the song relies on word play for its humour.

The supporting cast was good for the most part. Some of the furniture was a little bit too far into the uncanny valley. Luckily that does not apply to Lumière, who was absolutely brilliant and stole the show. Belle's father is also given a far better role than in the original. He's an artist this time, not a failed inventor. He's also far less of the clumsy Disney dad stereotype (see also the Sultan from Aladdin). We discover his story and how Belle's mother died which gives him greater depth and a stronger bond to Belle. The Beast is also given more of a backstory which explains a few plot holes like how none of the villagers remember a giant castle or why the people in his court were affected by the curse. Honestly I wish they expanded on it a little more, but as it is it's still a lot better than what we had in the original.

Tale as Old as 1740, Song as Old as the Disney Renaissance, Hermione Granger and a Snarky Prince.

A note to the people who haven't seen it, but who still want to: this is not a spoiler free review. You have been warned.

So. Disney does another re make of a classic, thought a younger and stupider me. I bet it will be horrible. I can't wait to spite-watch it and point out every little thing wrong with it. The current me would really have preferred a little less salt with those words. They taste awful. Now that's not to say the film was perfect. Audiences expecting something drastically different from the original will be left sorely disappointed. It re-visits every single original scene and only adds supplementary scenes to develop the characters more. But that is exactly what makes it so good. A tighter focus and more screen time allows it to really flesh out the characters we all know and love. So here is a quick synopsis of everything that both missed the mark and hit it perfectly:

First the most important part of any Disney Princess movie – the main character. Animated Belle is famous for wanting adventure, independence and knowledge. She is kind, but not to the point of being naive. Over time her character has earned a reputation of being slightly pretentious, especially in the opening song where she berates her boring provincial town. Emma Watson's Belle is more assertive and has a certain Hermione-ishness that makes the pretentious part of her character kind of endearing. She doesn't only want things, she works to achieve them, like in the scene where she invents a method for doing her laundry by donkey. She is also not as well read in this version, as the town library has only about five books. This makes the scene where the Beast shows her his library all the more powerful and allows us to appreciate a lot more how much the Beast opened her horizons as well as how much she helped him. The chemistry between them is all the more real because of

them are dying due to inbuilt expiration dates. It's a poignant reminder to the player both of their own and Vivi's mortality. You can die without warning.

Other characters, such as Garnet/Dagger, are also put through mature arcs regarding identity. She is a princess, scared of the corruption of the royal family. The mantra that "someday I will be queen, but I will always be myself," comes across almost like a sort of prayer, a plea at once to herself and seemingly to something beyond her. In revealing to the player that she is the last line of family - both adoptive and biological – the story pivots to highlight how identity is inexorably tied to legacy, that even when we are gone, we live on through our children and actions

This brings me to Kuja.

As Final Fantasy IX's main villain, he does a lot of damage to gain Ultimate Power. As part of his story, however, he learns that he too is a creation like the "black mages he despises" and that despite his new power he similarly has an expiration date and, like the black mages, will die.

This is another example of the game's focus on mortality. No matter how strong we get, we will all eventually pass away.

Faced with this realisation Kuja loses control and tries to destroy the world, but in the end saves the protagonists. He admits that "after you guys [the player's team of characters] beat me, I had nothing left.. nothing more to lose". In the game's final moments, it's main villain "finally realised what it means to live".



Caption: Kuja Death scene

It's this focus on "what it means to live" which continuously drives the plot of Final Fantasy XI, and is covered in the game's theme song Melodies of Life. A recurring leitmotif sung by Garnet, it covers the game's plot and themes perfectly.

On the one hand, these references can be rather specific. The lyric "to the sky beyond the flying birds – forever and beyond", refers to an image of CGI birds which opens the game, however it's in the final verse where the themes of the game come together.

If I should leave this lonely world behind,

Your voice will still remember out melody.

Now I know we'll carry on,

Melodies of Life,

Comes circle round and grow deep in our hearts, as long as we remember.

Their lyrics with deep importance for the characters. For Garnet, it is her parents who live (in her voice) through her as this is a song passed down from mother to daughter. For Zidane, even though he could die any day, it is a reminder to live his life as best he can with friends, love and family. When he does die, what Zidane has done in life will continue to live on through that voice. It shows what happens when you have something to live for – something to fight for, and that you can achieve anything.

Zidane, the game's main character and brother to antagonist Kuja, is an example of the nature/nurture question. Raised differently to Kuja, he has become a much better person. He tries to save Kuja because he owes his current lifestyle to Kuja – who dumped him for different reasons. Despite appearing to die, Zidane survives to be with Garnet.

She asks him "how did you survive?", a question to which he responds that "[he]

didn't have a choice, [he] had to live... to go home and be with [Garnet]. So [he] sang [Melodies of Life]", a song that he calls "our song".



Caption: Zidane and Garnet reunion.

Having explored mortality and the legacy which it's characters will leave, Final Fantasy IX determines that our mortality means that we as people should value life no matter what happens. Every life matters.

That's why Final Fantasy IX is my favourite in the series. It has influenced me to live my life better, to appreciate my friends and family more.

To keep fighting the darkness inside.

-Jimmy Nguyen