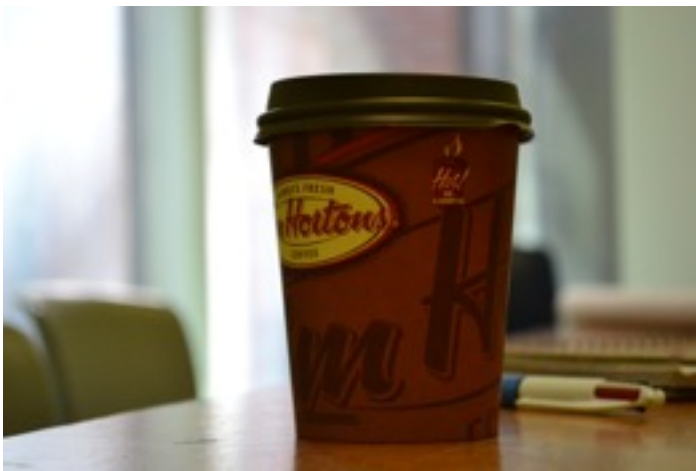


The GENERAL NOISE



Review Of The Dragon Academy November 2011 Vol. 2, Issue 1.

The Trek To Tims: A Dragon Academy Tradition by Dr. Schwarz



I didn't drink coffee until I started working at the Dragon.

I'm still not entirely sure why I drink as much of it as I do. It's kind of a nasty little drink --and while there's something vaguely comforting about the first creamy sip, there's nothing pleasant about how I feel an hour after I'm finished. I'm shaky, overly-stimulated and craving another cup. Coffee is a strange ritual, oddly addictive, a drink that smells better than it tastes. The students often tease me that I only put up with coffee to get to the cream and sugar. They might be right.

The first time I had a cup of coffee at the school was on one of the infamous staff "coffee runs." It was my first day on faculty and someone poked their head into my office and mentioned they were going to Tim Hortons, what did I want? Afraid to stand out from everyone else --how things have changed!-- I answered that I'd take a small double double. I didn't know what a double double was, but it made me sound like a professional coffee addict and there was

something poetic, almost symmetrical, about the phrase.

The next day, I decided to return the favour and offered to head to Tim Hortons to pick up coffee for the staff. A few of my new colleagues said they'd come along. And that was the beginning of the real addiction.

There's something about the journey to Tim Hortons that's almost as addictive as the coffee we buy there. It's a daily occurrence of ritual proportion, although there are no rules to the process. Sometimes it's a stop between the subway and the school, sometimes it's a fast trip in the last five minutes before a class begins. In spring we go at lunch. We go in groups, en masse, alone. Sometimes, students come along or join us in the epic lineups. Once last winter, I arrived at school to find the door locked. When I tried my key, I realized the lock was frozen --so I texted Dr. Fox and headed for Tims. When I arrived I found half the school --students and teachers, at several tables pushed together. It was the logical place to go, our home away from home.

It's strange to think of how much we look forward to the daily --bi-daily-- trips to Tim Hortons. Nobody really minds being at the school, so it's not exactly that we need to get away from it. Instead, I think for many of us, the Tim Hortons is actually an extension of the school. It's part of what we do there --the walk to Tims is where the discussions of Milton and Shakespeare and the quadratic equation happen. It's a moment for teachers to talk about what the

presentations in third period looked like, and a chance for kids to talk about how hard that math test was. In a way, it's also who we are. A year and a half after that first coffee run, I'm still a double-double guy --but now I know that Ms. Bushnick likes a large with milk and sugar, Mrs. Alsop likes a medium in her own mug. Lydia in Form 3 loves hot chocolate and Andrew in Form 1 drinks ice caps. Mr. Enchion prefers tea. We're obviously more than our beverage selections, but knowing what to order for one another is a symptom of the friendships and relationships so vital to life at the Dragon. We've listened, we've heard, we know each other. And no, don't worry about it, put your wallet away. I've got this one.

On Film: *One Day* reviewed by Lydia Collinson



Sigh... This movie actually made me feel really sad watching it. No, not because of the ending, or the plot, or anything, but because I felt like the producers had missed a great opportunity. This could have actually been a good movie! Honestly! It just wasn't.

I'll make a concession here – the plot honestly wasn't that bad. Really! Yeah, it's a romance, and romances all seem to have the same plot and everything, but for a romance, it wasn't terrible. Of course, the plot

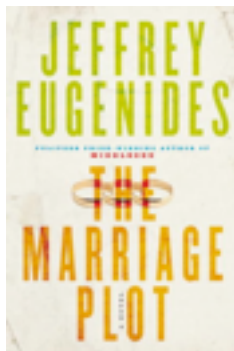
was really predictable, but they always are. Yawn... Romance is really not my favorite genre – I hate being able to tell what's going to happen before it happens... But it was fairly inventive, and the way in which it played out the romantic gushy stuff was actually rather interesting. Though, they could use a bit of advice on how to make a plot twist less predictable – I saw their little twist coming from a mile away...

The script wasn't terrible either, if a bit cheesy – not a big detractor, however. The characters got some nice little quips in there before descending into the world of complete and utter romantic nonsense. Some of the characters – or, at least, their lines – were really sort of interesting. The set design, on the other hand, was actually one of the more interesting things (in my mind, at least) about the film. They made lovely streets, and even the Mexican restaurant they were in was very real looking and interesting.

Now, that's the good part over with. On to the bad – the acting (DUN DUN DUN!!!)... Now, I'm sorry, but the acting in this movie was HORRIBLE!! I've never been a huge Anne Hathaway fan, but this was just painful to watch – her character was just a flat, dead shell. No personality, no nada, no zippo, no zero. Nothing. I can't even remember her name. It was that bad. The male lead was more interesting – he even had some really funny scenes, and I was so happy they didn't make him the stereotypical successful guy, instead opting for the guy-who-can't-seem-to-find-anything-he's-good-at path, and the scenes where he tries to be a talk show host had me cringing and laughing my head off at the same time. It was so bad it was hilarious! But then, of course, as soon as he falls in love with the pretty girl, he has to turn into super dad, and whatever, and loses every little scrap of personality he has. Yech! But what really bothered me about their performances was THEIR ENGLISH ACCENTS!!! Eughh!! The accents were just horrid! Bloody awful, I tell you... I know they were supposed to be English, and everything, but I honestly think they would have been far better off just forgetting the whole English

thing, and having the actors play the characters as Americans – or maybe they just should have got English actors.. Anne Hathaway's accent was particularly horrible, and I could just hear her tripping over words and consonants and stuff. It even seemed as if she just stopped trying about half way through the movie, and retreated to this sort of American-English mish-mash thing. It was annoying to no end.

As you can tell, I wasn't a huge fan of this movie. If you're really interested, I suggest getting the book, rather than watching the movie – I've heard it's quite good, and what really wrecked this movie for me was the acting, not the text. The movie, however, was an exercise in boring. Oh, how I wish I had gone to see Harry Potter instead (I still haven't seen it, by the way. I've heard it's good, except for the final battle between – I need to get around to that..



BOOK REVIEW: *The Marriage Plot* by Jeffrey Eugenides reviewed by Gabriel Chazan

Jeffery Eugenides's *The Marriage Plot* is a coming of age novel about an important part of growing up: reading novels. In the book, we meet three recent college graduates who are trying to find their place in their own stories through various books.

The first person we meet is Madeline Hanna, a student in her final year at Brown University. She is an English major who has been studying romantic literature. She takes a course in Semiotics, the study of deconstructing the literature she so loves and

meets Leonard, a captivating and rebellious fellow student who happens to suffer from extreme depression. On the sidelines, there is Mitchell, a friend of Madeline's, who is sure that some day him and Madeline are going to get married.

The book is, in many ways, a work of true literary criticism. Throughout the story, we see the profound impact that various books have on people's lives. Mitchell becomes interested in Christianity, and Madeline grows obsessed with a book by Derrida about deconstructing the idea of love she is reading for class as a way of understanding her relationship with Leonard.

As clever as all of this sounds, the book manages to explore the effect of literature on an even deeper and more universal level. All of the characters in the book are in some way searching to find where they fit into the story of their own lives. The characters wonder whether life is actually defined by the same things as an old romantic novel. Mitchell tries to sort out whether his love for Madeline is just an illusion and if he believes in God, while Madeline tries to figure out if she is able to be with Leonard through his depression.

I would highly recommend this book to anyone who is trying to find out who they are – which is, of course, basically everybody. The book tells a good story, even without deconstructing the idea of story, as all the best novels should.





Comic Book Review: Omega The Unknown reviewed by Nathan Chazan

In the last fifteen years or so, comic books have undergone a bit of a renaissance. We've seen Art Spiegelman get the Pulitzer, book stores sell manga, and an explosion of talented artists working and finding success in a variety of genres. However, the once prominent super hero genre is slowly dying a painful death. Sure, movie adaptations are box office juggernauts, but how many can say they bothered to give any Iron Man comics even a try after seeing the movie? Nobody, that's who. See, current cape comics are not written for normal people. These comics are made exclusively for the man-children who grew up with only these heroes for friends, and now continue to follow their lives, just in a kind of creepy way. For every great comic like Runaways, we get 10 things like the recent Redhood and the Outlaws, which has become controversial for its portrayal of female-empowering Teen Titans character Starfire as a bikini-clad nymphomaniac. And indeed, like other modern cape capers, Omega the Unknown is mainly for teens and adults who grew up on capes, and inappropriate for young children. But unlike comics like Outlaws, Omega is

a genuine super hero story, a charming, thoughtful tribute to the comics we all grew up with.

Loosely based on an obscure '70s Marvel comic of the same name, Omega the Unknown is novelist Jonathan Lethem's first and only foray into the medium, with art by indie cartoonist Farel Dalrymple. The story centers on Titus Alexander Island, a neurotic fifteen-year-old prodigy who lives with his parents in isolation from the rest of the world. When his family decides to pack up and move to New York, a fatal car crash kills Alexander's parents and changes everything. Before blacking out, Alex sees something very strange. Impossible even. He wakes up in a hospital in New York a few days later with bizarre Ω -shaped burn marks on his hands. He is then attacked by a group of robots, but is protected by a mysterious caped figure, the titular Omega. While Alexander is trying to adjust to the city and understand the strange events surrounding him, a super hero named The Mink® commercializes his name at the expense of whatever morals he once had. Meanwhile, Omega continues to pursue the robots that attacked Alexander while working at a street vendor in front of Alexander's school.

As you can tell from the above paragraph, the Omega the Unknown is a very complicated comic. In fact, the above paragraph barely even touches on the 2nd issue of this 10 issue series. In the hands of a less competent writer, Omega would be a confusing, pretentious mess. However, Lethem (and his collaborator on the book, Karl Rusnak) is far from incompetent, and handles the convoluted story with charm and grace. The author smartly takes cues from the book's title, and leaves much of the plot in Omega the Unknown unexplained. This can sometimes be infuriating to read, but it's never actually confusing. Unlike many mysterious sci-fi or cape stories, we aren't being tricked into a poorly planned Swiss cheese of plot holes, as Omega is a story that knows exactly what is happening and why. But rather than explain how everything works to us in boring chunks of text, we are shown what

happens, with small hints and visual nods to the reasons for what we see. I imagine that were I to read Steve Gerber's original, I would discover that many moments in that story are the basis for much of the action in the new Omega, but nonetheless I am certain the surreal vision in this story would remain wildly original. For the first time in ages, I have a superhero comic that doesn't make me roll my eyes or fall asleep, but allows me to revel in the magic and fantastical nature of the genre.



But as fantastical as it may be, the world presented in Omega is one firmly rooted in reality. Even as spandex-wearing vigilantes are fighting evil alien robots, the real focus of the book is the people, people who live in a real world and sometimes see the worst of it. The adolescent characters in this comic aren't a whitewashed group of nice-guys a la Archie, and the New York we see is no shining metropolis like the ones seen in most contemporary cape comics. Alexander and his friends are some of the most realistic young adults to appear in a superhero story since Peter Parker first learned of power and responsibility. They're a diverse, slightly awkward group of individuals who don't try to fit any heroic objectivist expectations, and sometimes make mistakes. A particularly memorable example

of the comic's realism is a subplot involving a chubby kid with glasses named Hugh who is routinely roughed up by a group of bullies led by a punk calling himself Roofie. One day, Alex tries to intervene, and Roofie gives Hugh a gun, leading to a moment neither can ever turn back from. Later, in a moment of unreality called the Nowh-area®, Alex sees Hugh again, and they have a conversation that moved this reviewer to tears. What makes this part of the story such an emotional read is that Hugh and Roofie are not shown as good or evil. Sure, what Roofie did was awful, but there are strong implications that he was a victim of peer pressure. Hugh easily could have been portrayed like many other geeks in popular culture, saints who are simply bullied because they are smart and unique, but he isn't. He has a tragic flaw. He made the unfortunate choice to accept his unpleasant surroundings, and suffered as a result. It's a human tragedy within a super-powered adventure that the main characters, and the people reading about them, can learn from.

The story and characters of Omega the Unknown may have stuck with me long after reading, but in any story told in comics, words only tell half the story. The comic also serves as a great showcase for Farel Dalrymple's incredible artwork. While far from a household name, Dalrymple has proven his awesome talent for visual storytelling in this work. Using a sketchy, almost grimy, but overall mundane style, he captures the feeling of being in New York for the first time, that combination of bewilderment and exhaustion as you try to understand how people accept the place as normal, placing the colorfully dressed supermen on the same level as loudmouthed Brooklynites. Dalrymple is fully aware of how strange and surreal the story being told is, but chooses to ignore it in the telling, letting the reader discover exactly how messed up and bizarre everything really is on his or her own, thus allowing us to savour the oddness longer. Dalrymple also shows great skill at conveying the characters emotion on the page. In one scene, Omega is trapped alone in a giant maze. As he wanders through the maze, the panels get smaller and smaller, while the

gutter space (gutters = the empty space between one panel and the next) increases. Through this panelling technique, we are forced to empathize with Omega's growing desperation and isolation. Dalrymple's name may never become a household one, but work like this makes his name one that will be fondly remembered by those who can appreciate the craft of cartooning.

Also notable is the work of colorist Paul Hornschemeier. I don't normally notice color in comics all that much, but Omega has a great color scheme. See, many colorists today rely heavily on computer effects, adding energy blasts, heavy shading, and dark, almost monochrome colors not suggested by the original artwork. This style of coloring renders an artist's unique traits unrecognizable and standard, turns dynamic sequences into muddy, static ones, and encourages new artists to turn in lazier work. Luckily, Paul Hornschemeier is not your average colorist. Using a palette of bright, eye-popping colors, Hornschemeier actually enhances Dalrymple's artwork, adding a dynamic, exciting element to an otherwise slow-moving story. One could even say that despite the comic's less traditional style, Omega the Unknown is one of the most traditional-looking cape comics to come out in years. There is little pretension or grayscale here. The comic simply does what it does and hopes you can appreciate it.

As much as I have enjoyed Omega the Unknown, I can understand that it's not for everyone. While the mainstream loses its subtlety more and more each day, Omega is a story that dares to refrain from hitting readers over the head with a two-ton plot twist, and maybe even let us figure out some of the nuances on our own time. The unfortunate side effect of this is that readers weaned on Dragon Ball and Crossover Events will may find the comic confusing, or worse, pretentious. However, before condemning Omega into the cursed realm of Not My Thing, I would like you to consider this: is being smart really the same as being pretentious? Does entertainment really need to be disposable? If you answered yes to

both these questions, feel free to return to the episode of Glee you paused to read this, because you have every right to stay in your comfort zone. However, there is a whole world of stories that can (to paraphrase a better critic) excite both your mind and imagination, and if you're looking for a place to start, I cannot begin to recommend Omega the Unknown enough.



Short Story: Interview With A Twipire by Elle See

Annabelle Thomas looked around the room in terror. She had always known the Cullens, the newest family to move to St. Jacobs, Ontario, were crazy, and now she had proof. They were bonkers! Nutbars! Out of their minds! Insane! They thought they were vampires!

Just a couple of hours ago, Annabelle had hit the jackpot when she had been walking home from school in the middle of a thunderstorm – her parents were both reporters with the local paper, and were usually busy in the afternoons – and she had caught the whole crazy family playing baseball! She had thought they were crazy from the moment they moved in, building that enormous mansion, having a baseball field put in that they never used, and the kids just thought they were so cool, walking into the school cafeteria and grabbing a table. For seven people. Most tables sat at least ten! And then if you tried to sit with them, they GROWLED at you. They were INSANE!

So, of course, it just figured that when Annabelle had hidden in the bushes with her video camera to finally capture proof that they were crazy, so she could get them kicked out of town and never

ever have to see them again, she got caught. Great. Now she was stuck here, in their enormous sitting room, and they were all staring at her with those creepy golden eyes. The kids were spread out on all the sofas and loveseats, two to a chair, cuddling or some such disgusting thing. The two closest to Annabelle – a boy with coppery red hair and a dark brunette – were just disgusting, and were kissing and cuddling as if there was nobody else in the room. Annabelle was vaguely disgusted. The seventh kid, however, had, for some unfathomable reason, plunked himself down on the couch next to Annabelle, and was currently sitting far too close to her while attempting to card his fingers through her hair. It was the most obnoxious, disgusting thing anybody had done to her. Ever. She thought she was going to puke.

But none of the weirdness of the room could even start to compare to what they were telling her. They thought they were vampires. They really, honestly thought they were vampires. It was impossible. It was insane. It was crazy. They were bonkers. This was the twilight zone, or something. She was dreaming. Either that, or these wackos should be in an insane asylum.

“She doesn't believe us. She still thinks we're crazy.” Annabelle jumped. Did the red-headed guy with the girlfriend just read her mind? Yup, this was definitely a dream. She'd been reading too many science fiction novels, or something. Annabelle considered herself to be a fairly rational, scientific person, and she knew that vampires didn't exist, and neither did mind reading! Right?

“No, wrong.” AAAHHHH!!! What the –

“Sweetie --” Ok, ewww... The guy sitting next to her was a real wacko. “We're not trying to trick you, or anything. We're completely serious. We are vampires. In fact, we'll prove it, won't we?” He looked at his parents with a rather puppy dog like, pleading expression on his face. The whole group was suddenly standing – except Annabelle. Weird...

Synchronization – not helping them at all in Annabelle's mind.



The entire group was outside in a matter of minutes. Annabelle could see that the sky was clear, and sunny. It looked like a beautiful day – which was weird, considering that there had been a storm only a few hours ago. As the group walked into the sunlight, Annabelle thought of something. Didn't vampires BURN in the sun?! WHAT ON EARTH were they doing?

As Annabelle watched, wondering what kind of delusions the Cullen family could be suffering from, the “vampires” walked directly into the sunlight. Annabelle stared, waiting for nothing to happen, waiting for them to be proved wrong. But then, something did happen. The entire family started to sparkle. SPARKLE. It was the weirdest thing Annabelle had ever seen. So Annabelle did what any reasonable, rational human being faced with sparkling vampires would do. She laughed. Hard.

“T-t-that is the most RIDICULOUS thing I have EVER seen! Y-you sparkle! You're vampires, and you SPARKLE!!” She somehow managed to squeeze out the words through bouts of laughter. When she finally calmed down, she looked at the frowning faces of the Cullen family in amusement. “Vampires don't sparkle! That's STUPID!! fairies sparkle, or pixies, or-or –” She collapsed into another bout of insane, wild laughter. The Cullens just looked at her.

“Well, I guess we'll just have to try something else...” The rather weird boy who had been touching Annabelle's hair earlier said, rather mournfully. So the family packed up, the weird boy grabbed Annabelle, and they went back inside.

Ten minutes later, Annabelle found herself standing out in the middle of that same field, but this time in a more shaded, tree-filled area, out of the direct sun. One of the Cullens – Alice, she thought – was standing a little bit in front of her, and looked like she was about to run a big race, or something.

“Alright, Annabelle, Alice is going to show you how fast a vampire can run. Are you ready, Alice?” the mom (Yzma? -- no... Something like that...) shouted.

Alice didn't move. Not one inch.

“Wow Alice! That was fast!” One of the guys – a huge, blond mountain of muscle – shouted. Annabelle just stared.

“Umm, she didn't move?...” Annabelle

“Well, of course she did. It was just too fast for human eyes to see.” Annabelle just stared.

“You're – you're kidding, right?” The Cullens were looking at her, their expressions completely serious. Annabelle, of course, promptly collapsed on the grass, laughing her head off.

“NEXT!”

“So, wait, you're telling me that all of you being abnormally attractive somehow proves that you're vampires?”

“Well, yes. It's meant to help us entice our prey.” The abnormally attractive brunette smiled as she leaned into her abnormally attractive boyfriend.

“Therefore, sweetie, any attraction you feel for me is completely normal.” The odd one was just

too funny! Annabelle, of course, promptly fell down, laughing her head off.

And so it went. All afternoon, the Cullen family attempted to prove to Annabelle that they were vampires. They tried everything, from stabbing themselves with stakes to prove they were invulnerable (again, how exactly does that prove that one is a vampire?), getting the copper haired guy to push over a tree (just stupid), and even drinking blood (Annabelle had gone and thrown up after that particular incident). Annabelle was just getting sick and tired of it. As the day wore on, she became more and more convinced that this was some insane dream – some weird imagining cooked up by her extreme wariness of the Cullens. Except for one little tiny problem – she couldn't wake up.



So maybe they were real vampires. Annabelle was rather saddened by that thought. Vampires were supposed to be cool – bloodthirsty, ruthless killers, not sparkly, romantic wimps. It was disgusting, an embarrassment to vampires everywhere. She almost found herself wishing that Dracula, or Blade, or Van Helsing were alive, just so they could come and kill these sparkly wimps. And they just kept getting weirder!

They were back in the big sitting room now, and they were squished on the sofas, but this time Annabelle had squished herself onto the sofa with copper-head and the brunette. Even though watching them make out was disgusting, it was better than sitting next to the creepy one, whose eyes were following Annabelle in a rather unpleasant manor.

“So, Annabelle, wanna see us kill some little animals now?” Annabelle was rather disturbed by that suggestion – she liked small, cute animals. That creepy stalker one just got creepier by the second.

“NO, William!” Oh, so that was the creep's name. “NOBODY is killing ANYTHING!” The mother (Esme, or so Annabelle had been told) yelled at the creepy one rather loudly. Annabelle was happy about that, at least. But then, she started to wonder...

“Um, why is it, exactly, that you guys are so desperate for me to believe you? I mean, this is a little ridiculous, really, and you seem to be going to an incredible amount of effort for just one person...” Esme smiled brightly, and launched into a rather lengthy monologue.

“Oh yes, of course! Well, you see, dear, William here has been telling us for weeks about you. He's convinced, you see, that you must be his mate – we were worried, after we turned him a few years ago, when we found him lying on the street after some horrible gang war – we thought he'd never quite grow out of it. But obviously, he's making progress, and having a mate is a blessing!

“Maybe I'm being a little unclear. You see, we plan on turning you, so you can be part of the family for good, and you can be William's wife! Doesn't that sound lovely, dear?”

The brunette in the background mumbled something, and the copper-head muttered something back about being sorry for something involving some “Renesme” thing, and being turned, but Annabelle's mind had stopped working at the word “mate”.

Annabelle couldn't breathe. It was too horrible. They were nuts. Insane. Crazy. But she already knew that. They were vampires after all. But this whole nonsense about being a mate – it was too much. She had an idea though – one that would kick the crazies out of town once and for all.

As the insane family rambled on about her, and William, and destiny, and some such lark,

Annabelle looked around the room before her eyes landed on a rather expensive looking vase, sitting on a small table right beside her chair. Annabelle snuck a hand up behind it, before sending it crashing to the floor.

The family all seemed to jump – simultaneously, of course – and as everyone was looking dazedly around, Annabelle got up, and started running for the door. All she had to do was get them out into the sunlight on the street, and everyone would know that she, Annabelle Thomas, had been right all along! After all, even though sparkling wasn't quite what vampires were supposed to do, it still definitely was weird, and everyone would know that they weren't human, and they'd be kicked out of town, or burned at the stake – not that that really happened anymore – and people would worship her, and bow to her logic, and –

Just as Annabelle reached the doorknob, she felt a rather large, cold, strong hand wrap around her arm. She reached for the door, but it was no use – she was stuck, and the vampire with a hold on her arm didn't seem like it was moving any time soon. Then she started to feel herself being pulled back into the house. She tried grabbing the doorknob, but had to let go because her arm felt like it was being ripped out of its socket. As she let go, she felt herself being hoisted up on to a rather large, muscular shoulder.

“PUT ME DOWN!” she screamed, beating on his back ineffectually with her fists. But it was no use. She was being dragged into the house, to live out the rest of her life as a Twipire. Life as she knew it was over...



PG-13 News Digest by Sam Dupuis



Mostly Local

Occupy Toronto got started Saturday with its entry into the world movement, “claiming St. James Park” (Toronto Star, 16th). Comparisons to the Tea Party, as far as I know, are fewer than expected, but the movement of the 99% includes members angry enough to don Guy Fawkes masks in criticism of the establishment.

It is, of course, difficult to discuss a (formally) leaderless movement that accepts a wide variety of personal takes on demands and whose only universal tenet is economic justice for the masses. Nonetheless, the movement still seems like a politically left, vague, difficult to define, leaderless sea of humanity and ideals, with a similarly prevalent side of personal freedom.

A movement has recently been made in city council to officially endorse the Occupation of Toronto (Toronto Sun, October 19th). The movement, of course, has been met with some resistance and some support; the former appears more prevalent on the side of the mayor, and as the council was primarily elected by the same people who elected the highest municipal office, the passing of support by a two thirds majority may be unlikely.

As for the politics of the movement itself, the main page of the organization has posted that, in a survey of its online supporters, around 70% do not consider themselves to be affiliated with any major political party in the States. Only about 2% described themselves as Republican, while the remainder went to the Democrats; a liberal movement. Most of them

would probably feel completely at home at the Dragon

(Toronto Star, 16th; <http://www.torontosun.com/2011/10/19/councillors-call-to-reward-occupy-toronto-protesters>, 19th, <http://occupywallst.org/>, 19th)

European Debt Crisis Dance Party!

Still happening. Maybe France and Germany are about to implement positive reform again? God knows.

Very Local

The couch covered in the red fabric on the third floor has been moved by none other than a Dragon student, who shall remain anonymous. Public outcry has been minimal, at least as far as this reporter has observed. This, sadly, is probably lacking, this reporter not having been to assembly in some time.

The small but persistent crash-on-the-f***ing-couch culture at the Dragon appears, as of the beginning of the year, to have been completely obliterated. This is probably for the best, although it will be missed by a gang of at least one. That secluded locale on the third floor, nonetheless, remains an excellent region to study with minimal (extended) distraction and read about forms of the artistic rendering of faces.

The Vixen Advises



Dear Vixen

When do I have to know what I want to major in when I get to university? How can I be sure to take the right subjects while I'm at the Dragon? From: thinking ahead

Dear Thinking Ahead,

There is such a thing as second-guessing, you know, where you attempt to evaluate or criticize an outcome before it's happened. For most of us, it's hard to be sure of a specialty before we've explored a broad range of subject fields. Remember when you wanted to be a fireman? What if you'd based all your decisions on a vague idea not only of a particular career but of yourself? High school, and undergraduate university for that matter, should be times for stretching and challenging yourself, finding out what you can do, and what you really like, some of which will surprise you. And don't worry. Only a few university specializations require very specific high school credits--I wouldn't try to get into engineering despite dropping math and sciences. But if you follow a balanced programme, you should be eligible for a range of undergraduate options.

Education, at its heart, is not about the accumulation of credits nor is it job-training. Even a medical degree is less about training you "to be a doctor" than about training you how to think. So, even at a post-secondary level, many schools are now recognizing that they should recruit certain kinds of thinkers more than people with particular degrees. Majoring in English will not keep you out of medical school, and doing a Bachelor of Fine Arts actually makes you a desirable candidate for the Rotman School of Business MBA

programme. View this as a time to find out who you are.

Dear Vixen,

I have a favorite course and I love the teacher. However, I don't feel the teacher likes me very much. When I raise my hand, it seems as though I'm hardly ever the first choice to be picked. My marks are ok but I never feel satisfied that I've done enough to impress the teacher or show how important the class work is to me. What can I do? From: wannabe teacher's pet

Dear Wannabe,

I'd love to come into class and watch what's going on between you and this teacher, because there are a lot of reasons you could be feeling this way. It is entirely possible that you are being hypercritical, that your favourite teacher thinks you're amazing and everybody but you can tell so. You may not always be picked because it's a class where everyone has a lot to say and the teacher is just trying to be fair. You may be one of those students that makes everyone else roll her eyes--I was certainly one--saying oo-oo and waving my hand frantically with the answer for every question. The real way to a teacher's heart, or at least to this teacher's heart, is to demonstrate that you care a lot about two things: the subject matter and the well-being of everyone in the class. To demonstrate your interest in the subject matter, don't try to dominate class time, but talk to the teacher after class, ask for suggestions for extra reading or further practice, ways to deepen your understanding. Find times to talk with the teacher (office hours? In the hall?) about the extra things you're learning. To demonstrate your concern for your classmates (and the teacher, and the class itself), listen respectfully, try to pose questions, sum up your understanding of what has just been said, make your enthusiastic agreement known, and be funny and charming when you disagree. Try to help draw the others out. What really impresses a great teacher is character, not flash.

The Wail by Noah Lister-Stevens



They all warned me not to go,
I should have listened to their cries,
But in my foolishness I went anyway,
To that old churchyard at dusk.
They said the guard won't let me pass,
They cried out "just stay here!",
But I didn't listen to their cries of terror,
And sought out the knight of the grave.
I reached the church by nine,
And with a quick prayer I went,
With my camera and my notepad in my hand,
To catch that shot of the guard.
I walked and I walked, for about ten minutes,
Before I heard that wail,
I turned around, my camera in my hand,
To find the source of that laugh.
I turned and I saw, a ghostly rider,
Clad in armor of black,

His mount, a black mare, had eyes of red,
While a sword was clasped in his hand.
But most shocking of all, that which filled me with
fright,
Was that he seemed to be short a head,
Where his helm should be, there was nought but a jack
o' lantern,
Grinning at me like a fool.
I took the shot, and that was what stirred him,
And again I heard that wail,
But a cry of pain, It didn't seem to be,
Rather a chuckle of joy.
And so I ran, towards the woods,
Away from that ghostly guard,
And soon he ran after my fleeing form,
Laughing that terrible laugh.
All I remember, is my heavy breathing,
Before it all went black,
I felt the steel of the dark knight's sword,
Against the back of my neck.
And so the story ends,
As it was then I died,
So now you know to not go to that churchyard,
For the horseman will ride again.



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