

Sheroes Rag
Issue One
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Articles

We received no article submissions for this issue.

Short Stories

Untitled by Betsy

"Oooooooooooh!" my younger sister Tirani hissed. "Mom's going to kill you."

Unfortunately, she meant that literally. Our mother is a mad dictator.

"Shut up, Tirani," I snapped. "If she doesn't find out, nothing is going to happen. And she is not going to find out. Do you understand me?" I was finding it difficult to talk, as my teeth wanted to start chattering so badly. Why had I done something so stupid? And why had it felt so good at the time, anyway?

"She's going to find out, she's going to find out, she's going to find out and kill you dead," Tirani sang.

I struggled to understand how a voice could sound so sweet and high and yet so evil at the same time, trying to distract myself from the fact that it was well-nigh impossible to keep anything from Mother for long. Then again, maybe I could set a new record. And maybe Tirani would start reading books, instead of burning them in the fireplace and mixing the ashes into the parrot's water bowl, as she was doing at the moment, while simultaneously adding new verses to her song, which got progressively more grotesque. She's good at multi-tasking.

Our mutual bedroom, (yet another symptom of our mother being a despot), really did have a spectacular fireplace, and it was almost impossible for a person to look into the dancing flames without wanting to throw something into it. The fireplace was made of grey rock, speckled with blue and green and red and covered in carvings of the ocean. The carvings swirled and dipped and crashed together into huge waves that were overtaking a small, pitiful-looking boat that had smashed in half. The mast was floating on the other side of the fireplace, cracked into driftwood and about to be pushed out of the carving altogether. The name of the boat was written in the font of the Easterners, my mother's enemies. One of my old tutors, (she had fled the country a few years ago), had told me it read *The Ceveiga*—Ceveiga is my mother's name. So the carver obviously had a sense of humor. Of a suicidal type, but still, anybody who understood the concept of laughing was fine by my standards. In the palace they were few and far between.

"Iranesa!" Tirani trilled. "Can I have your collection of pottery after you're dead?"

"No!" I exclaimed. "I AM NOT GOING TO DIE!"

Tirani stuck her tongue out. "I'm tel-ling."

By this point you're probably ready to stomp on my throat and yell, "What is it you did that was so terrible?" First of all, that would be counter-productive, because it's hard to talk while someone's foot is jumping up and down on your windpipe. But secondly--you'll find out. Eventually.

"I'm telling Mom you tore up her letter about your engagement to that prince and stomped on it and starting cursing at it!" Tirani announced.

You see how honest I am?

"Tirani, SHUT UP!" I erupted, gesticulating angrily and, in the process, bringing my arm down hard on one of the tables nearby, breaking a vase from the Emperor of Rwidea and cutting my arm. This is an example of my brilliance. Because, as we all know, if someone is about to find out something about you that will make them fly into a livid madness and come after you like a bat out of—well, we all know where these extremely fast bats come from—then the best way to gain an advantage is to break a gift from one of their closest allies and make your arm bleed uncontrollably which serves the dual purpose of distracting you considerably for a couple precious minutes and of leaving a trail behind you without any effort at all.

"Great," I hissed. "That's wonderful." I didn't know the first thing about first aid, or the second thing, or anything, for that matter. And the court doctor had refused to treat me ever since he yelled at me for breaking my ankle in a fight with the son of one of the Ziberosjan elders and I told the doctor what I thought he was with some words I'd picked up on a rare excursion to the marketplace. Mother, miraculously, had laughed. That was one of the few times she was proud of me, as she hated Ziberosja.

But, come to think of it, I could ask Tfeagu, who knew a little about wounds and such, since he'd lived in a war zone until he was twelve and ran away to join the palace staff as a stableboy.

A stableboy . . .

Of course.

I grabbed a blanket and tied it around my arm hastily, pushed Tirani out of the way as best I could with one arm, and bolted.

Just So
by Marie, Editor

So. That really was the operative word, wasn't it? So. Hair, face, plates, glasses and the necessary cutlery just so. Such a peculiar word. Such a peculiar expression, too. Such words and expressions helped fill the time.

Hair, face, plates, glasses and the necessary cutlery just so, so the meal could take place. Although that really should be "in order that the meal could

take place" if one was to be perfectly dull about such things. And life would trundle on.

Or should that be "might take place"? No. Of course not. It would be impossible for the meal to take place were everything not just so; therefore, "might" could not possibly be used. Not in this context. It hinted at the possibility of a perfect meal sans perfect preparation and was therefore inexcusable.

Two chairs, two glasses- seven centimetres of wine from the third shelf, the bottle within easy reach, seven centimetres of chilled water, the jug in the kitchen- two plates of food breathing thin tendrils of mouth-watering flavour into the air. A beautiful meal, but not one that would last much longer. In four minutes the steam would be spent, the wine diluted and slippery with condensation and the water lukewarm, although that was of lesser importance.

Three and a half minutes.

The coils of steam folded in on themselves, their tantalising loops and branches giving up their useless entreaties in the stony face of the passing seconds. The stony face, too, of the woman standing three paces behind her own chair, from whom the passing seconds were ripped like tears.

Then the door opened. Even the cooling plates sighed out more steam as if they too were breathing thanks for their deliverance. The droplets of water on the two glasses caught the light charmingly, and the pall disappeared from the face that was still, as ever, just so. Perfect. Unfurrowed brow, bright eyes- but not too bright- creasing in welcome.

They both sit down. It is quiet, now: earlier, the hiss and bubble of cooking food, edible chemistry, had filled her ears until she couldn't hear the yelling but now he is quiet and she is quiet and the only sound in her ears is the clink, clink of cutlery and glass and plate.

All this noise is his, of course, apologetic chimes of the evening meal. She has not yet picked up her knife and fork, not yet put dry lips to cold glass.

But it is wonderful, this peace. He doesn't look up, doesn't take his glowering eyes from the plate as he shovels forkfuls of untasted food into his mouth. She knows that he might still look up, just once, and keeps the smile safely on her face. She knows this smile inside-out: eyes creased, but not so much that she squinted or gave the impression of wincing away; mouth stretched, wide and long to display a glassy triangle of teeth and only the slightest hint of pink flesh, reddened gums behind reddened lips.

He does not look up, not as he eats and not as he leaves. He had looked up, once, during such a meal as this, and ever since then the absence of his eyes on her face had cut worse than any blow from those heavy hands, and yet-

It is so peaceful. She draws the smile back into herself, packs it away for another day and cleans away the dishes. Each spot is rubbed away until all that is left is gleaming white and silver and crystal, is whole and clean and perfect.

Perfect. No, that is not the word at all. It is . . . so. Everything is just so, and so it will remain.

She closes her eyes. So it will remain.

Fan Fiction

We received no fan fiction submissions for this issue.

Reviews

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows by J.K. Rowling

Review by Ashley, Editor

While I enjoyed reading this book, it was sorely disappointing after reading the fist six Harry Potter books. Many things didn't add up, and it seemed as if the book was written in a rush. Was Rowling suffering from writer's block? Too much pressure? We many never know.

Number of Stars: 2 ½

Hairspray (Movie)

Review by Catherine

The movie Hairspray is filled with romance, drama, dancing and some great rhythm. It is tons of fun for the whole family! Our story begins in Baltimore, Maryland, with a high school girl named Tracy Turnblad. Her obsession is the Corny Collins TV show, which stars her rival Amber and her crush Link. Together Tracy and her friends go through twists and turns! From marching through the streets to sneaking into Corny Collins TV show building. But now the question is: Who will be Miss Teenage Hairspray?

The music in this movie is full of fun! From "Good Morning Baltimore" to "You Can't Stop the Beat" this music will surely get you pumping. The characters who star in this movie sure do a good job! Nikki Blonsky as Tracy, Amanda Bynes as Tracy's best friend Penny, and Zac Efron as the adorable Link Larkin. Whatever the character these people sure know how to act. As a conclusion I would highly recommend Hairspray!

Poetry

Night City

by Caliana

She walks the city streets
Glistening full of wonder in silver blue moonlight
Glowing neon signs and twinkling Italian lights
Contributing to the dazzle of the paved wonderland

She passes the high-end store filled with mannequins
Dressed in cashmere suits that equally fake people will soon be wearing
On their way to black glass offices
She pauses to look in the windows of thrift stores

She eyes the vintage silk dresses and crocheted shawls
Wishing that she could feel the textures against her skin
And know the stories of the worn garments previous lives

She stops at a Chinese restaurant and gets a single fortune cookie
Which she cracks opens
“Joy is in the journey, not the destination”
She reads as she savors the sticky sweet cookie

She closes her eyes and listens to an old man playing his saxophone on the
corner
His tired old fingers caressing the metal
While his lips give the instrument the breath of song
Somewhere Over the Rainbow fills the night

Outside a nightclub she dances to the echo of the pulsating rhythm
Pounding in the streets
Swinging her hips and waving her hands
Not caring about the way people stare at her
With a mixture of humor, fear and admiration

She breezes through a party
Getting buzzed not on beer and drugs but on diet coke and a lollypop
She buys a coffee for a homeless woman and sits to listen to her story
About her long ago life as a great actress
On the illuminated stage, how she was pushed
Aside for a size two blonde movie star

She stands to watch a young artist paint the activity of
The sleeping city
She kisses his cheek delighted by the soft brush
Of his pitch black hair on her face
His canvas shimmers with light

When the sky is tinged with orange day
She returns to her home
Up twisted stairs to an apartment she shares with her twin sister
Sister is just waking up bleary eyed
In the pale sun

The magic of the night city slips away
With the moon

Books

by C.E. Lambert

Worlds within worlds within
These pages on my shelf
Secret places I can go
To drift within myself.
Like unlocked doorways
They line the shelves
Waiting for the covers to lift
And the knob to tighten,
Portals to an unknown realm
Or doors to well known lands.
The greatest books, for me, I think,
Are ones I've read before
An old time friend
Long known by heart,
But picked up again and again.
Dog-eared pages,
A bent-back spine,
Are tell-tale signs of love,
Like a path treaded smooth,
By countless feet,
Or a patched and worn
Stuffed teddy-bear,
Still loved by its small child.
A good book takes you,

Grabs you, flies you away
Strains imagination,
Holds you in its sway.
But the best books stay with you,
Throughout a long life
To return to whenever you wish
Each time as fresh as the first.

I Am a Rubber Duck
by Erin, Editor, and Alyssa

I am a yellow rubber duckling
I like bath time more than anything
Kids love my cuteness
I like cleanliness
But I have no brain
I'm barely sane
And I'm rubber
All I do is sit next to the scrubber

Chorus

I...WANT...FEATHERS!!
I want to be a ducky!
A real, real, real, real birdie!

I want to swim, not float
I want to be more than a toy in the tub
'Cuz I'm no submarine
If I hear that boy go "toot toot" one more time
I'm gonna hit the road
But my feet are defective
My beak won't eat
My wings aren't good for nothing

Chorus

SO GIVE ME WINGS TO FLY!!!!

[Author's Note: This is a song we wrote for a currently unnamed musical. We are planning to put it on Broadway and then have an animated movie musical which we will sell the Disney Channel and/or PBS Kids. Maybe even a TV show is in the future... :D :D :D]

Not Living But Breathing
by Marie, Editor

Not living but breathing
I use up their oxygen
The bright people
Standing in shadows and stealing it away
Eyes on the prize
I watch them at play
Shadow of their shadow
 I dance their dances and sing their songs
I feel their warmth
And stay away
Not living but breathing