

Twisted Tongue Magazine

Issue 1

Welcome to the first issue of Twisted Tongue, there should be something in here for everyone... if not, then let us know. Twisted Tongue is a new magazine unlike any other... here you will find works that are twisted and we don't mean ones with a simple twist. This magazine is for those 18 and over. In this issue you will meet a man whose revenge is sweet... you will also witness a child's game gone wrong... and murder... accidental, of course.

You'll meet Robert Llewellyn, better known to some as Kryten from the TV series 'Red Dwarf' talking about his novels. In our articles, you'll learn all about Azam Gill and his first-hand experience of front line fighting, and how he's incorporated this experience into a novel. We have the inside story of how John Grant became a published fantasy author.

Within the centre pages, you'll find an eerie story to thrill you courtesy of Linear Comics. And don't forget to look out for Twisted Tongue's first competition.

Our thanks to all contributors...

Enjoy your twisted read...

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The Return Of Mrs Brown

Andrea Lowne

Dorothy Murdoch ended up inexplicably and inextricably entwined with Maude Brown.

It had all started off as a bit of a joke, really. When Dorothy reached pensionable age, she'd decided to up stakes and move to a small Cornish village, full of enthusiasm at the prospect of a quiet, tranquil retirement in the country.

"It'll be just like *The Good Life*," she told herself happily, "I'll raise chickens, grow lots of prize-winning veggies and enter all those silly flower shows you see on the telly. Felicity Kendal, here I come..." And she set about putting her London flat on the market and searching for a suitable country residence.

The flat was sold with gratifying speed and at an exceptionally good price, thus leaving Dorothy a sizeable nest egg with which she bought the tools deemed necessary to embark on a comfortable and contemplative rural life.

Chickens were duly purchased, as was an Aga and a vast array of spades, hoes, rakes, secateurs and a lawn mower.

Numerous packets of seeds were naturally vital, and promised an abundance of healthy crops such as 'delicious giant pumpkins', 'savoury, succulent leeks' and 'tasty, tender turnips'.

Determined to relegate all the stresses of city life to the past, Dorothy decided to forego the telly and surrounded herself instead with illuminating books. The Prophet, Bhagavad Gita and Teach Yourself Yoga were among the literary masterpieces now gracing her shelves.

She considered getting a pet, but cats were guaranteed to pee on the parsnips and dogs, though more continent, needed far too much attention.

Dorothy threw herself into her project with gusto.

In virtually no time at all, green shoots were sprouting magically in neat rows and the hens were laying double-yolked brown eggs that would have brought a smile of satisfaction and approval to Delia Smith's face.

Dorothy was popular with the locals, too. Soon, her homemade jams and pickles were quite legendary and the village shop even agreed to stock some of her produce, albeit it on a trial basis.

"Got any more of that there delicious strawberry jam, Mrs Murdoch?" Edna the shopkeeper would ask when Dorothy went in to buy her groceries.

"How about a few more jars of yer lovely pickled cucumbers, then?" Ray the butcher grinned, handing over two juicy lamb chops for her tea.

Now this was all well and good, but the more organised Dorothy became, the more bored she was. After a while, things were running so smoothly that there was precious little left to do.

Dorothy needed a distraction to fill those long, cold winter evenings.

She found it one day, when she was idly leafing through a magazine she'd picked up while waiting to be served in Edna's shop.

'WRITE A SLOGAN AND WIN A CRUISE!' cried the caption.

"I could do with a cruise, that's for sure," Dorothy told Edna, showing her the ad.

"Ooh, they're in all the mags these days," said Edna. "My sister does 'em all the time and wins loads of things. I've lost count of the number of toasters she's got!"

So, Dorothy bought a copy of every mag in the shop and trudged home to study them.

They turned out to be full of competitions offering prizes ranging from luxury holidays, to vacuum cleaners, to a year's free supply of loo paper.

Dorothy, after much thought, entered them all. She posted off her coupons the next day and promptly forgot all about it until her first prize, an electric kettle, arrived a few weeks later.

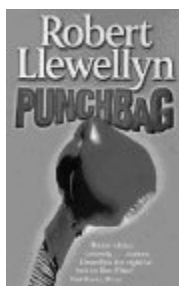
This was rapidly followed by an oven, electric blanket, six months supply of washing powder and a 200 quid cash prize.

Dorothy was hooked. She began travelling to the surrounding villages and buying copies of every magazine they had in stock. Prizes kept flooding in and she soon found herself barely able to move for fridges, vacuum cleaners, toasters, hairdryers, towels and every kind of electrical gadget and appliance ever invented.

It got to the point where Dorothy couldn't look at anything without a slogan popping, unbidden, into her head.

'NO PEAS FOR THE WICKED,' she'd think as she purchased her packet of Bird's Eye, and 'HOME IS WHERE THE HARPIC IS,' she sung, on spying the trusty loo cleaner.

Punchbag

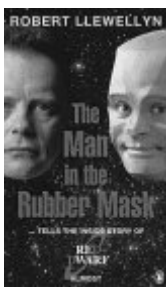


Paperback:
416 pages (July 6, 2000)
Publisher:
Coronet Books
ISBN:
0340707925

Synopsis:

Tara wants Nick to become a padded assailant in a women's self defence class in San Francisco. She wants him to wear a protective suit and assault women for a living. Nick agrees to attend. After all a free trip to the USA is not to be sneered at is it?

The Man in the Rubber Mask

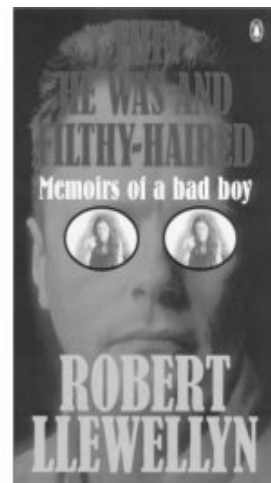


Paperback 224 pages (May 16, 1994)
Publisher:
Penguin Books Ltd
ISBN:
0140235752

Synopsis:

In a recent pole the robotic Kryten was noted by viewers as their favourite of the four main characters in 'Red Dwarf'. In this book actor and alternative comedian Robert Llewellyn, who plays the part in the series, tells the inside story of life as Kryten.

Thin He Was and Filthy-Haired



Mass Market Paperback: 291 pages

ISBN: 0140250824

Synopsis:

Centuries ago, in 1972, when flares were hip, "Layla" was in the charts for the first time and everyone had long hair, a thin, sly youth with an art O level and anarchic dreams went to live in an Oxford commune. Although his career was embryonic, he became known as Rob the cartoonist. Life was a round of parties, illegal substances and world-changing ideas. But before long, Rob's geodesic dome leaked rain, his dog fell pregnant, and his girlfriend fled to New Mexico. Real life began to intervene.

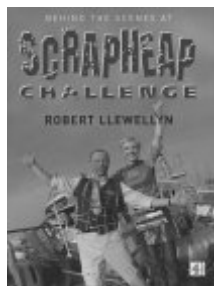
Some time around 1973, the party ended--abruptly and humiliatingly--in a police station in Newbury. Reserving his right to remain silent, young Robert decided to save his excuses for a future generation. Now it's time to come clean. 'Thin He Was and Filthy-Haired' is his remarkable (teenage) life story. And it's funnier than you'd ever believe.

Behind the Scenes at Scrapheap Challenge

Hardcover 159 pages (September 21, 2001)

Publisher: Channel 4 Books

ISBN: 0752219995



Synopsis:

In its third year, 'Scrapheap Challenge' is one of Channel 4's most successful Sunday evening series, with a regular audience of over three million viewers. It's a knockout competition for amateur engineers - each week, two new teams of madcap mechanics have to work against the clock to build a specific machine from whatever junk they can scavenge. 'Behind the Scenes at Scrapheap Challenge' looks at what goes on behind the camera as well as on screen, using six case studies from the series and scores of colour photographs. The teams have just ten hours to come up with the goods and get one step nearer to the season finale. The book follows the would-be engineers and presenters Robert Llewellyn and Cathy Rodgers' progress as the competition hots up. Through the interviews with the cast and crew, we discover what it's really like to take up the 'Scrapheap Challenge'.

Hogarth Digs Up His Old Friend Balthazar

Matthew Ward

It had taken two months for old man Hogarth to calm down from that ghastly temper of his, and after much grumbling and pouting had decided to dig up Balthazar, on the grounds that he'd been down there long enough. Just about.

He hunched over a bowl at his table and poured some cereal, taking a spoon in one hand and scooping up the dry flakes. That hideous day, the argument, the pork chop - every bit lay fresh in his mind from the weeks he had recalled them. There had even been a brief fight, but Hogarth was loathe to think of it much more, and he was by his nature a forgiving man; provided Balthazar made a full apology, he would be more than happy to let the issue fall. He abandoned his cereal, wiped a grubby hand across his beard and got up to fetch the shovel.

If he were honest, Hogarth would admit that after such a time alone he was more than ready to see his friend again, and had actually been looking forward to the moment of reunion. Would there be tears? Hugs? A warm smile and firm handshake, all grim past events cast away like they had never existed? He had no idea.

The shovel lay propped against the pale concrete wall around the back where he had left it, traces of dry earth still clinging to the metal rim. It was cold to the touch, but Hogarth seized the thing, a brave start, he thought. Oh, Balthazar's face upon his arrival! The delight! He broke open the back door and stumbled out into the early morning sun, thinking, not a regular morning.

The trek across the garden never took long, comprising only one straight path that lead to the bottom amongst the fern, a quietly shattering greenhouse on the far left through long, long grass and an evil weed with pretty flowers.

Hogarth felt a brief pang of remorse as he imagined the night time temperature so far from the house, but a sudden, grim thought of that haunting pork chop quickly shunted onto dark thoughts of memories he wished blanked, and he struggled to think of something lighter and happier. The good days they had had together! He was close now and the brown patch of ground could just be seen behind the fern.

Hogarth was overjoyed at the sight of that dark little patch, fell upon it, and gripped the garden

tool, tightly. Was he ready, really and truly, to see Balthazar again?

He put down the shovel, and screamed at the ground until his voice failed.

He paused, shouted a few seconds more, swore, spat, and smacked his face into the earth, weeping.

"Oh Balthazar, how I hate you!"

That done, he dried his eyes in the soil, coughed a little, and shovelled a little mound of the stony earth to one side, carefully.

Soon, a large mound had risen beside the growing hole. There was nothing particularly tough about the task - it had been disturbed, after all, only weeks before, but Hogarth sweated beneath his creases, slicing a dull rhythm to his aching heart.

Slice, heave.

Slice, heave.

Slice... Crack!

And to his surprise and joy, Hogarth found his companion in much shallower ground than he'd remembered.

It was incredible how much deeper a hole felt the first time you dig it, he thought to himself. Abandoning the shovel, old Hogarth bared his hands to the dry earth, bit by bit unearthing the remainder of his friend - a piece of softened head was already visible, even a few wisps of hair, which he took time to stroke.

"Coming, my dear friend!"

How wonderful to see and feel so much of that hair again! The elderly gentleman would not, could not have denied that in these past weeks he had shed an occasional longing gaze from the murky back window towards this quiet spot, reflecting whether, perhaps, it hadn't been such a good idea after all.

After two minutes the whole head could be seen.

"My good friend!" he cried, stubbing soil out of Balthazar's sockets with a clumsy thumb.

"How are you, sir?"

And though he heard no reply, he worked undaunted at burrowing the remainder of the man from underneath.

The silence of the little figure in the soil brought a sudden change of mood, and Hogarth stopped digging to sit erect in the hole, eyes cast sullenly at his chapped hands, frowning. The silence worried him.

Playtime

Aliya Whiteley

“You killed him.”
“Didn’t,” Wendy said.

“He’s dead, isn’t he?”

“And it was an accident.”

“You threw him against the wall!”

“It bit me,” Wendy defended.

“That’s because you were poking him.” Sal crouched down next to the peeling skirting board and plucked the furry ginger body from the carpet. “He’s gone all floppy.”

“Is it like a rag doll?” Wendy asked, chewing her gum faster. “Give it here.”

“No.”

“Listen, I’ve got this brilliant idea of what we could play next. Let’s play vets.”

“No.” Sal held the dead hamster in her hands, torn between her desire to cradle it and her revulsion at its emptiness. Something fundamental had disappeared from it. She felt the small bag of fur deserved a new respect. “I want to bury Fudgie properly. We should put him in a box with some flowers and say a prayer over him.”

Wendy sat down on Sal’s bed and gave a few experimental bounces in time to her audible chewing. “I want to play vets or doctors. You can choose which one.”

She had played doctors with Wendy before, and if it was a choice between herself or Fudgie being subjected to the poking and prodding of her friend, then Fudgie was It. He was dead anyway. It was strange how quickly that had become a hard fact. The object she was holding so tentatively was already becoming a cold, light thing, like a discarded sweet wrapper. “Vets.”

“Okay!” Wendy bounced upwards to land on her feet. She swept the bottles and brushes from Sal’s white dressing table and threw them on to the bed. “You’re the assistant. Put it there and we’ll examine it.”

Her commitment to every game was total. Whenever they played together Wendy seemed to immerse herself so far into the fantasy that Sal always

felt a little afraid. It wouldn’t have surprised her if, one day, Wendy produced a real scalpel or a syringe for her experiments instead of an imaginary one.

But with the fear came curiosity. She lay the hamster on the dressing table, on top of the hand crocheted doily, and stood back as Wendy bent over it in silent awe.

There was the tiniest of hesitations, and then Wendy’s thumb and forefinger closed over a front paw, manipulating it with professionalism. “Mmm... it’s broken. We’ll have to set it. Get some tape and a hairgrip.”

Sal retrieved the grip from her hairband tin on the bed and passed it over. Wendy positioned it parallel to Fudgie’s leg, stretching out the muscles so that a small hairless patch appeared at the juncture of its thigh. “Tape.”

“Haven’t got any.”

Wendy clicked her tongue between her teeth until she reached a decision. “Put your finger here.” She pointed at the thickest part of the leg and Sal obeyed with a mixture of fascination and disgust. With her free hand, Wendy took a plug of chewing gum from her mouth and stretched it from her teeth to her thumb. It elongated and eventually snapped, leaving her with a long pink string, which she wrapped around the hairgrip and the hamster with quick movements, as if reeling in a fishing rod. “Right.”

“Can I take out my finger now?” Sal asked. The warmth of the gum against the fur of the hamster was making her queasy.

“No. You have to wait for it to set in place,” Wendy said knowledgeably. “Hold still until I complete the examination.”

Sal dared not move in case the corpse twitched in response. She could feel the gum drying and hardening against her finger. Wendy was busy poking the stomach with tentative jabs, rubbing the fur the wrong way to expose the button-like nipples. Then she turned her attention to its head.

“We should check its teeth,” she said, fingering the tight black line of its closed mouth.

Something about peering down into the darkness that now inhabited the hamster body was too much for Sal. She shook her head.

“How old are you?” Wendy asked scornfully, and then prised the mouth open. It came slowly apart, the curved yellow teeth and the blue-veined tongue becoming exposed to the sharp spring light from the open window. Sal deliberately looked at the wall instead, at her framed picture of the happy little girl

TWISTED TONGUE FLASH FICTION COMPETITION

DEADLINE DATE 1st APRIL

1. Each entry must be the original, unpublished work of the author.
2. Entries must be no longer than 500 words.
3. Entry fee £1.50.
4. Entry fee can be paid via Paypal and entries emailed to twistedtongue@blueyonder.co.uk please insert the words 'COMP' in the subject bar. Please email about postal order/cheque payments.
5. Multiple submissions allowed.
6. Entry via email only.
7. The winner will receive £20 awarded in pounds sterling via Paypal.
8. The winner and runners up will be published in Twisted Tongue.
9. The competition runs quarterly with a deadline date of the first of these months: April, July, October, and January.
10. The winner will be notified 30 days from the closing date.
11. An anonymous team, whose decision is final, will judge entries and no correspondence will be entered into.

Open to all countries

Twisted Tongue Magazine is open to submissions for issue 2

Submission deadline for issue 2 - 31st March

All other submissions received after this date will be considered for issue 3

New and up-and-coming writers are just as welcome as established writers

Fiction: 5,000 words

Flash Fiction: 500 words

Poetry: 50 lines

Articles: 5,000 words

Longer lengths may be accepted, please email first to query

We are also open for, Novellas, book reviews, book excerpts from published authors, and artwork

Email submissions: twistedtongue@blueyonder.co.uk

Please view the website for further details: www.twistedtongue.co.uk