

# Eternal Sunshine #12

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**Quote Of The Month** – “You could've killed somebody. I don't know, maybe you did kill somebody. Should we turn on the news and see? Should I check the grill to see if there's children or small animals?” (Joel in “Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind”)

Welcome to yet another issue of Eternal Sunshine, the official subzine of the Xmas Witch (visit [www.xmaswitch.com](http://www.xmaswitch.com) for more information, once I get around to putting some stuff up there). I hope you're enjoying the last bit of 2007, and getting ready for 2008. Isn't 2008 the Year of the Yak or something? I've never quite figured out how the Chinese New Year thing works, and it's been a while since I ate at a Chinese restaurant, so I haven't had occasion to look over one of those placemats lately. I know I was born in the Year of the Dung Beetle, but other than that it's all too confusing for me to get straight.

Considering how long the last few issues of Eternal Sunshine have been, this one is more of a relaxed abbreviated version, with not much writing. I've been trying to focus on prison stories again, in an effort to collect enough to approach a literary agent with a completed project, instead of three or four which are only half-finished. And while I am including a couple of wedding photos, we still haven't finished with our full photo selection, so many of the wedding details aren't included here either. Really, I'm not sure the wedding itself makes for much of a story. It was nice, and I was very happy that Heather could have the Halloween wedding she wanted instead of being forced to conform to the typical wedding guidelines of society. But there aren't any really fun anecdotes to tell. Instead, I'll stick a couple of photos in the next few issues, along with any details that come to mind (for example, I'm going to give you the list of the songs we put on our wedding CD's).

Here's a picture of the happy couple (to be specific, in the photo, **I'm** happy that I am lucky enough to be married to the most wonderful woman in the universe, while Heather is happy to have the ceremony **over**).



## Wedding Music

Heather and I wanted to burn our own CDs for the wedding music instead of using what the Carpenter House had on hand. The idea was to combine some of our more romantic favorites (or certain songs that hold special meaning to us, either from our time together or the months we spent apart while I was incarcerated) with songs that carry a Halloween or witchy feel to them. Many of the songs were requested specifically by Heather, and then I added in some surprises of my own, set an order, and finished everything up. I think it came off rather well, and I managed to avoid a few of the most obvious Halloween songs in the process (like Monster Mash). "Thriller" was a special request by Heather's daughter, and while I wasn't 100% pleased with that choice, it was better than her original request, Avril Levine's "I Don't Like Your Girlfriend."

For before the ceremony, we simply had them put on the first disc from the **Amadeus** soundtrack. The ceremony itself was "Secret Marriage" from the **Braveheart** soundtrack, repeated 3 or 4 times, and then no music. Our "introduction" as a married couple was to Etta James' "At Last." The list that follows contains the songs for the party afterward. We did get a couple of compliments so it couldn't have been ALL bad!

Unforgettable – Nat King Cole and Natalie Cole  
Kiss Me – Sixpence None the Richer  
Time in a Bottle – Jim Croce  
It Had to Be You – Harry Connick Jr.  
Black Magic Woman – Santana  
Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds - The Beatles  
People are Strange – The Doors  
Sharing the Night Together – Dr. Hook  
Respect – Aretha Franklin  
Season of the Witch – Donovan  
Bad Moon Rising – Creedence Clearwater Revival  
We Belong – Pat Benetar  
Don't Change – INXS  
Thriller – Michael Jackson  
No More Lonely Nights – Paul McCartney  
Some Kind of Wonderful – Grand Funk Railroad  
Lips Like Sugar – Echo and the Bunnymen  
Miracles – Jefferson Starship  
Everything – Alanis Morissette  
Crystal Ship – The Doors  
You're My Best Friend – Queen  
Your Song – Elton John

Feels Like Home – Chantal Kreviazuk  
You Know that there Are – Cat Stevens  
When I'm 64 – The Beatles  
Near You Always - Jewel  
She's Always a Woman- Billy Joel  
Let's Call the Whole Thing Off – Harry Connick Jr  
Black is the Color – Marcy D'Arcy  
Witches' Song – Juliana Hatfield  
Shining Star – The Manhattens  
Witch Queen of New Orleans – Redbone  
Rock and Roll High School – The Ramones  
Fat Bottomed Girls – Queen  
Air That I Breathe – The Hollies  
Imagine – John Lennon  
Lovesong – The Cure  
All You Need is Love – The Beatles  
Female of the Species - Space  
Bizarre Love Triangle – New Order  
How Much I Feel – Ambrosia  
Everything – Alanis Morissette (yes, that's in there twice)

## The Dining Dead -

## The Eternal Sunshine Movie Reviews

**Romance and Cigarettes** – Originally scheduled for release in 2005, writer and director John Turturro had to fight many battles along the way to finally get this bawdy musical-drama in theaters. Produced by the Coen Brothers, the film is a combination of pulp fiction, working-class malaise, over-the-top comedy, and some touching dramatic moments. It isn't for everyone, least of all those who might be easily offended by sexual humor, but Mr. Turturro succeeds in walking the fine line between original entertainment and pointless foolishness.

The film stars "The Sopranos" James Gandolfini as Nick Murder, a 1970's New York bridge worker. Married to Susan Sarandon, and with three teenage daughters, Nick is also conducting an affair with British lingerie saleswoman Kate Winslet. When Sarandon discovers the affair, she calls in assistance from her cousin (Christopher Walken) to punish the mistress. Meanwhile, she stops speaking to her husband altogether and hopes to make his life as miserable as he has made hers.

There are a number of minor subplots, including one daughter (Mandy Moore) wanting to get engaged, and some of the film's funniest moments involve conversations between Gandolfini and coworker Steve Buscemi, who is considered an expert on women and sexual topics. In the end, the plot takes a few dramatic twists, and even manages to churn up a moral or two.

The musical numbers are a combination of the actors singing and dancing (along with unnamed people on the street who appear and disappear at random) over original or remake versions of the sixties and seventies songs, in an effort to express the characters' inner desires and emotions. Songs like "A Man Without Love" or "Piece of My Heart" are given new life, and some of the production numbers (most notably those with Christopher Walken) are wonderful and hilarious at the same time.

Gandolfini and Sarandon both play their roles well, balancing their displeasure in the marriage with the 70's Catholic attitude of sticking it out regardless of what happens. Kate Winslet is at one moment devilishly seductive, dancing in a red latex top with flames surrounding her; and later is seen as insecure and needy as everyone else, as she wonders if she and Gandolfini have a future together despite his wife and children.

Always coming close to going too far, the script and music somehow teeter on the edge without tipping, always returning to the quieter, grounded moments where a couple who never loved each other much to begin with discovered they may have picked up some feelings for each other along the way. Consider the Murders a Tevye and Golde for a new generation. Besides, it's almost worth the price of admission alone to see Ms. Winslet in her fishnets or red dress, or to listen to her manic obscenity-laced dialogue.

**Margot at the Wedding** – Considering personal history, a movie about an intelligent but neurotic, unstable, and likely-alcoholic mother has the potential to cut right to my heart. Add to that a cast including Nicole Kidman, Jennifer Jason Leigh and John Turturro, and it sounds like a guaranteed recipe for success. Sadly, I found this film to be utterly lacking and heavy-handed.

Yes, Kidman does a rather admirable job as a writer who vacillates wildly between a doting mother and a spiteful harpy, as does Jennifer Jason Leigh as her sister, engaged to Jack Black. Black is an unemployed musician who spends his free time painting abstracts and writing letters to music magazines. He, and much of the script, are the weakest links in the chain of this movie.

In some ways the two sisters would have made a much better story on their own, as their relationship is a wonder of anger and co-dependency and betrayals minor or major. Both spend tremendous energy struggling to gain the approval of the other half the time, and to prove their superiority to the other in typical sibling rivalry fashion in the other. Instead the film suffers from an erratic, irritating, and stale performance from Black. It also suffers from "trailer syndrome," where all the best or funniest lines of dialogue are revealed in the movie trailer. In fact, most of the plot points were at least alluded to in the trailer I saw, so the actual movie provided very few surprises.

Given more to work with, I believe this could have been a tremendous movie. Jack Black aside, the cast is strong (including Zane Pais as Kidman's 12-year-old son Claude, who suffers through his mother's erratic changes of mood and direction). In fact, a closer and more isolated dissection of their relationship would have made for a more rewarding film as well. Instead, after watching it, I am left wondering exactly what I missed in this movie that other reviewers singing its praises saw.

**Sweeney Todd** – I have to admit that Sweeney Todd had let-down written all over it. A gruesome musical story (filled with Stephen Sondheim's offbeat and morbid songs), Johnny Depp, Helena Bonham Carter, the wonderfully wicked Alan Rickman, and Tim Burton directing; it sounds like too many good things. Actually, while I did enjoy it, I didn't quite enjoy this film as much as I hoped I would.

The fault certainly does not lie with the story. A generally faithful adaptation of the Broadway musical, Depp plays Sweeney Todd (a pseudonym), a barber once sentenced on a false charge by an evil judge (Rickman) in order that he might possess Depp's wife and infant daughter. Now Todd has returned to exact his revenge. Along the way he is reunited with an old acquaintance Mrs. Lovett, who runs the meat pie shop below the barber shop. In penny-dreadful fashion, we're soon treated to slit throats, blood spewing like geysers, and bodies devoured in Mrs. Lovett's suddenly-popular pies. A few side stories exist, among them Rickman's sexual fascination with his ward (Todd's daughter) and a young sailor's desire to rescue her and run away.

Burton's London is dark, smoky, depressing, but still alive, which matches the London described in Sondheim's lyrics. The only real flaw in this movie involves the casting of Helena Bonham Carter as Mrs. Lovett. While she looks the part perfectly – pale and gray and both sensual and decrepit at the same time – her singing is too weak to carry her part. Depp does a decent job of maintaining the melody, but Carter is too quiet, too much of a

whisper to balance him, and the role would benefit from casting someone more over-the-top and boisterous, in the manner of the role Angela Lansbury made famous. She is simply too fragile.

It doesn't ruin the movie by any means, but it takes what could have been a magical thrill and instead reduces it into an enjoyable ride. You should still see Sweeney Todd, especially if you are a fan of either Tim Burton or the musical...just don't expect to lose your head over it.

**Seen on DVD** – **Citizen Ruth** (B-, a few good laughs and a goofy plot in this send-up of both sides of the abortion issue), **The Life of David Gale** (C, I simply didn't care about a single person in this entire film), **Crash** (A-, I missed the hype for this movie while I was locked up, so coming into it fresh it was a real pleasure).

## Meet Me In Montauk

# The Eternal Sunshine Letter Column

**Jamie McQuinn:** I quote Doug Kent: "The goal is to pick something that fits the category and will be the "most popular" answer."

So, are we playing "pick the answer that wins" or "pick the answer I believe in, even if my opinions are completely out of whack with the rest of the universe, so I'll never score any points".

Which game are we playing? In one sentence you say the "goal" is this, then in another, lament that we don't do something count-productive to the goal?

Mostly, you just can't handle the fact that Andy and I kick ass!

***Actually, I don't mind at all that Andy is kicking ass...it's just your success which bothers me.***

**Tom Swider:** Glad you had a great time on your honeymoon. I hope that Heather brings you good luck and a happier future. The pictures were really nice. I forgot how nice some parts of Texas are. On occasion, I found myself in New Braunfels and Canyon Lake. Boerne's kind of nice as well. Also enjoyed Barton Springs in Austin (has a nice hot spring).

***Even the drive west towards El Paso can be beautiful in parts. But the wind on those roads is terrible. Granted, my view on various parts of Texas is clouded by my experience driving for AmeriFleet in 2002 and 2003. Once you've spent some time on the road moving fleet vehicles, your first memory of any city is the bus station or the expense of local cabs, and your opinion of a place is greatly influenced by how often Greyhound runs through it.***

Brokeback Mountain wasn't boring but then again it's not an action flick. I think it worked as a film adaptation of a rather minimalist short story. The short story is a difficult medium because there isn't time for a lot of character development, though good writers fit that in. Brokeback did suffer from overhype.

***Still haven't seen it, and that sort of overhype kills most of my desire to see many films.***

In "By Popular Opinion", I think I'm proving myself to be one who doesn't court popularity. I'm toying with the idea of using it at work as something fun to break up the work week (send out the questions on Monday, deadline on Thursday, and publish on Friday).

***You know who to include in that if you do!***

**Andy York:** Glad to hear the wedding went off well, as did the honeymoon. I've not been to Jefferson, but it sounds like a good place to go to get away from the hustle and bustle - get a little downtime. I do hope you can find the time to return and see everything you missed the first time while revisiting those places you enjoyed the most - such as the clothing selection in the candle/curio store.

Heather wrote a neat thank you note. As she mentioned, one of these I hope we get to meet! Did you find any good books/videos yet?

*Oh we do some serious damage when we visit Half Price Books, believe me.*

You're right, an odd pairing of stories. It's good you're finding it within yourself to relive these events and I hope that this allows you to put them in their proper place in your life and your mind.

Turning to movies, I skipped "My Kid Could Paint That". The previews didn't interest me. On the other hand, I'm waiting on the arrival of "The Rape of Europa" in Austin. The book was an amazing and eye opening read - from your review, the movie does it justice. The last one doesn't ring a bell. Just saw "No Country for Old Men" - violent, but very good themes and reflective commentary.

*Without question we want to see "No Country For Old Men" but it didn't make it to a theater we like to go to, so either we'll see it during a wider rerelease after Oscar season, or else we'll put it on our Netflix list.*

Wow, I'm winning [By Popular Opinion]? OK, pinch me and wake me up. To answer your question, as you know, I'm choosing the "popular" choice, not necessarily my favorite which I put into my commentary.

*It isn't that I think people should pick their true favorites – I just like to learn what they are, so via commentary is the perfect solution.*

So, are the next BPO categories going to be political – best Republican and best Democratic Presidential and Vice-Presidential Candidates, Who would you like to see run that isn't in the race? Might open a BIG can of worms and lots of letters/commentary that you wouldn't want!

*Yeah, you know me, I hate controversies!*

## Game Openings

**Diplomacy (Black Press):** Graham Wilson, Brad Wilson, Chris Babcock, Melinda Holley, Alexander Levinson, needs just two more. Getting close, who wants to join in the fun?

**Balkan Wars VI (Black Press):** Signed up: Jack McHugh, Graham Wilson, Brad Wilson, Brendan Whyte, needs two more. Rules and map on request, or you can find them online within Paul Bolduc's **Boris the Spider** site at: <http://members.aol.com/prbolduc/boris/hrules/BW6.html>

**7X7 Gunboat Tournament (No Press):** Three signed up, needs four more. I would publish the results without maps most likely, although I might email maps to the players. Anybody interested?

## Eternal Sunshine Game Section

### By Popular Demand

Credit goes to Ryk Downes, I believe, for inventing this game (although his original version had the GM supply the starting letter as well). The goal is to pick something that fits the category and will be the "most popular" answer. You score points based on the number of entries that match yours. For example, if the category is "Cats" and the responses were 7 for Persian, 3 for Calico and 1 for Siamese, everyone who said Persian would get 7 points, Calico 3 and the lone Siamese would score 1 point. The cumulative total over 10 rounds will determine the overall winner. Anyone may enter at any point, starting with an equivalent point total of the lowest cumulative score from the previous round. If a person misses a round, they'll receive the minimum score from

the round added to their cumulative total. And, if you want to submit some commentary with your answers, feel free to. The game will consist of 10 rounds. A prize will be awarded to the winner.

### Round 9 Categories

1. A bank.
2. An Abba song.
3. A non-primary color.
4. A John Wayne movie.
5. A salad dressing type or flavor.

<u>Player</u>	<u>Bank</u>	<u>Abba</u>	<u>Color</u>	<u>Wayne</u>	<u>Dressing</u>	<u>Turn Score</u>	<u>Total</u>
Cal White	Chase Manhattan	Waterloo	Green	True Grit	Ranch	21	297
Jamie McQuinn	Bank of America	Dancing Queen	Purple	True Grit	Thousand Island	24	282
David Burgess	Bank of America	Dancing Queen	Black	True Grit	Blue Cheese	23	269
Chris Babcock	Citibank	Dancing Queen	Green	True Grit	Ranch	20	262
W. Andrew York	Bank of America	Waterloo	Orange	Green Berets	Ranch	22	253
Dane Maslen	Citibank	Waterloo	Orange	True Grit	Thousand Island	18	251
Allison Kent	Bank of America	Dancing Queen	Green	Three Musketeers	Vinagrette	20	239
David Partridge	Bank of America	Winner Takes it All	Purple	Stagecoach	Blue Cheese	15	236
Brad Martin	Chase Manhattan	Money	Pink	Green Berets	French	9	217
Brad Wilson	Wachovia	Waterloo	Purple	The Searchers	Caeser	13	214
Melinda Holley	Bank of America	Dancing Queen	Green	The Shootist	Ranch	22	210
Martin Burgdorf	Bank of America	Waterloo	Brown	Liberty Valance	French	19	204
Joakim Spangberg	NMR	NMR	NMR	NMR	NMR	9	201
Brendan Whyte	Bank of America	Waterloo	Black	The Searchers	Thousand Island	22	183
Kevin Wilson	NMR	NMR	NMR	NMR	NMR	9	167
Jeremie Lefrancois	Bank of Scotland	Money	Black	Liberty Valance	Vinagrette	10	162

Selected Comments By Category: **Bank** - Andy York "Other large ones could be Chase, Wells Fargo, etc. but since this flows out of "bank" I hope it'll trigger folk's memories for Bank of America. Personally, I use a local credit union - Randolph-Brooks Federal Credit Union - that was the financial choice on the military base I was first station at. They've three branches here in Austin. I'm VERY pleased with them. The only other bank I've used (that I specifically recall) was a regional one in Michigan - Dart National Bank." **Abba** - Melinda Holley "Did anybody ever actually LISTEN to Abba?" **Color** - Allison Kent "I want to say Pink but I think there are too many males playing." **John Wayne** - Melinda Holley "My all time favorite is Ed Dorado." **Dressing** - Cal White "I'd have said "French:, but you guys are probably still using the term "Freedom Fries"...".

### Round 10 Categories – Deadline is January 29th, 2008

1. A flavor of potato chip (other than plain).
2. A wattage of light bulb.
3. Something besides maple syrup you put on a waffle.
4. A color of stained glass.
5. A type of cheese.

### **By Popular Opinion**

In this By Popular Demand variant invented by Allan Stagg, the questions are subjective, e.g. "Who is or was the best rock guitarist of all time?" The goal is to pick something that fits the category and will be the "most popular" answer. You score points based on the number of entries that match yours. For example, if the category is "What breed of cats are the friendliest?" and the responses were 7 for Persian, 3 for Calico and 1 for Siamese, everyone who said Persian would get 7 points, Calico 3 and the lone Siamese would score 1 point. The cumulative total over 10 rounds will determine the overall winner. Anyone may enter at any point, starting with an equivalent point total of the lowest cumulative score from the previous round. If a person misses a round, they'll receive the minimum score from the round added to their cumulative total. And, if you want to submit some commentary with your answers, feel free to; players are encouraged to submit press justifying their choices. The game will consist of 10 rounds. A prize will be awarded to the winner.

### Round 3 Categories

1. What country has the best flag design?
2. What is the best airline?
3. Who is the greatest painter ever?
4. What is the worst topping for a pizza?
5. What is the best department store?

<u>Player</u>	<u>Flag</u>	<u>Airline</u>	<u>Painter</u>	<u>Pizza</u>	<u>Store</u>	<u>Turn Score</u>	<u>Total</u>
W. Andrew York	Texas	Jet Blue	DaVinci	Pineapple	Macy's	18	65
Jamie McQuinn	UK	Southwest	Michaelangelo	Anchovy	Macy's	19	62
David Burgess	USA	Qantas	DaVinci	Anchovy	Wal-Mart	18	53
Chris Babcock	Papau, New Guinea	Southwest	DaVinci	Anchovy	Macy's	22	46
Melinda Holley	USA	Delta	DaVinci	Pineapple	Macy's	22	46
Martin Burgdorf	USA	Delta	Picasso	Chicken	Macy's	16	45
Tom Swider	USA	Southwest	Jasper Johns	Anchovy	Macy's	21	45
Brendan Whyte	Libya	Air Astana	Lawrence Alma-Tameda	Kiwi	Macy's	12	40
Brad Wilson	Canada	Lufthansa	Matisse	Pineapple	Macy's	14	40
Joakim Spangberg	NMR	NMR	NMR	NMR	NMR	8	36
John Colledge	Brazil	British Airways	Joesph Mallord	Pepperoni	Harrod's	6	34
Gine Teh.	Finland	Singapore	DaVinci	Olives	Wal-Mart	11	31
Brad Martin	Scotland	Qantas	Van Gogh	Anchovy	Woolworth's	10	30
Jeremie Lefrancois	Brazil	Singapore	Michaelangelo	Four Cheese	Virgin Megastore	8	28

Selected Comments By Category: **Flag** – Andy York “What other choice is there?? For a national flag, Lebanon and Mexico have strong statements about their nation while Japan's is strikingly effective in its simplicity.” **Airline** – Andy York “Tough category, I'm trying to go with a "well known" one - years ago I'd have said Delta, currently I choose Southwest when I have the chance. If not Jet Blue, I might have taken United as Pan Am and TWA aren't around anymore. For international, as a flip of the coin, Luftansa **Best Painter** – Tom Swider “Jasper Johns: because he drank a lot of beer and painted the best flag ever designed.” Andy York “Gads, so many famous ones and I have to decide on one, so the Mona Lisa creater gets the nod. I'm not a big art fan and "modern" art is all but lost on me (Picasso - yech). Now, ones I like include Rockwell and the style of the Hudson River School - the four views of civilization (Cole?) is the only art I've specifically tried to find prints of to no avail.” **Pizza Topping** – Tom Swider “Anchovies smell almost as bad as turtle soup.” Andy York “Pizzas are supposed to be savory, not sweet. Dessert pizzas are horrible.” **Department Store** – Tom Swider “- Macy's, only because they bought Marshall Fields. If you open it to furniture stores (my personal fetish), it would be a toss-up between The Terence Conran Shop (great mix of modern pieces and accents for the impulse buyer) and Armani Casa (it's in the high-mid to expensive range and some of the most comfortable chairs I've ever sat in).”

### Round 4 Categories – Deadline is January 29th, 2008

1. Who was the least talented Marx Brother?
2. What is the best pet to have?
3. What is the worst country to live in?
4. What is the best way to have eggs prepared?
5. What is the best holiday?

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**Deadline For The Next Issue of Eternal Sunshine:  
January 29th, 2008 – See You Then!**