

# Eternal Sunshine #14

March 2008

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On the web at <http://www.whiningkentpigs.com> – or go directly to the Diplomacy section at <http://www.whiningkentpigs.com/DW/>. Also be sure to visit the new Diplomacy World website at <http://www.diplomacyworld.net>

All Eternal Sunshine readers are **encouraged** to join the free Eternal Sunshine Yahoo group at [http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/eternal\\_sunshine\\_diplomacy/](http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/eternal_sunshine_diplomacy/) to stay up-to-date on any subzine news or errata.

**Quote Of The Month** – “Can you hear me? I don’t want this any more! I want to call it off!” (Joel in “Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind”)

Welcome to Eternal Sunshine, the only Diplomacy subzine to officially endorse David Lynch for President of the United States. You can visit our election campaign headquarters under the train tracks on Cherry Street in Rahway, New Jersey. Not too far from Rahway State Prison, but don’t let that stop you from lending your support to this enterprise! While other candidates make generic speeches about change and vision and class warfare, Lynch is running on a platform of **damn** good coffee, huckleberry pie, and lots and lots of donuts.

Lots of action around these parts this month. To begin with, we have the first Eternal Sunshine Diplomacy game, “Wouldn’t It Be Nice”, off and running. Let’s hope for sharp knives and a bunch of lively press. Then the 7x7 Gunboat Tournament has started too; I won’t be printing the 7x7 games in the subzine itself because of space considerations (and the fact that we’re probably going to do two turns a month) but feel free to check out the games on the web site (in their own section) at <http://www.whiningkentpigs.com/DW/>). It’s nice to have some true gaming action in this rag at long last!

There’s also the usual columns, book and movie reviews, letters...you know, all the stuff you hate. I’ve included my latest prison article, which isn’t especially emotional, but I needed to write it up so I could move on to other similar topics. A few of you have offered very generous words of encouragement when it comes to these essays. I hope to collect enough of them together so I can approach a publisher or literary agent with hopes of developing the project into a published book. Then I can finally focus attention on the other books I want to write, especially the one about my childhood and the one about my relationship with Mara. As always, any comments or feedback is welcome and appreciated.

Let’s hear it for the New York Football Giants! Quite a game...and a real joy to see Eli Manning drive his team to the winning score. The only thing about the game which I couldn’t figure out was **why** the Pats were throwing deep again and again on their last possession. They had like a minute left plus two time-outs. Shouldn’t they have tried to take a few 10 or 15 yard pass plays to set up a shot at the end zone and/or a field goal? Of course they wouldn’t have needed to do anything if they’d taken the earlier field goal. I suppose that when you feel invulnerable, you make bad decisions.

So now it’s on to baseball season. **Go Rangers!** Yeah, I know, they suck every year. I’m hoping for a lot of progress from our young players. Jon Daniels has made some decent moves in the last year, built up a depleted farm system, and laid the groundwork for a contender. Unfortunately I don’t see us contending until 2009 or 2010. But I can deal with that, as long as the Rangers **stick to the plan!** That is always the problem: they change direction **far** too often. Maybe they’ve finally learned their lesson?

Our wedding pictures are basically finished. We just need to choose the ones we want printed, and then finally we’ll have all of them in digital format. I’ll post some to the web site soon afterward, so watch here or on my blog (<http://blog.whiningkentpigs.com>) for news on that front.

I haven't mentioned it for a while, but some of you may remember that I started taking Zoloft last year to help with a multitude of symptoms. My doctor says I have a little bit of a lot of problems: depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety, racing thoughts, and who knows what else? I've been on a very low dose, but as my anxiety level was beginning to rise again over November and December we decided to up the level. I hadn't had any major negative side effect to the Zoloft, except for feeling generally flat when I first started it.

Whether raising my dosage had anything to do with it or not, about a week later I had an absolutely terrible week. I woke up one Tuesday morning horrendously anxious, and it only got worse during the day. Unlike some occasions, when I find myself worrying about specific things (albeit in an excessive way), this time I had no psychological or emotional trigger to attach my anxiety to. Instead, I simply felt a terrible anxiety all over, approaching panic levels. In fact, during the course of the next twelve hours I found myself experiencing some paranoia as well; looking suspiciously at whoever was driving behind me, blaming a computer problem on government interference...even though, at the same time, I knew those thoughts were utterly irrational, part of my brain still could not let go of them.

Fortunately by that Thursday I began to improve. After talking to my therapist and my psychiatrist, we split my Zoloft dosage from one pill once a day to half a pill twice a day. And we've added a very small dose of Klonopin, which I started taking a few nights ago. I don't know if I even notice a difference yet, but I'm happy to try something. My father suffered from some severe anxiety disorders for which he took Klonopin and Valium. Before they got those under control he would usually wind up hospitalized when he suffered an attack, as they completely screwed up his body chemistry to the point where his diabetes went crazy. Hopefully I won't reach that level, but I definitely **did not** enjoy the massive attack I suffered through. That was bad enough!

So I guess that's the last of my usual ramblings for this issue. Enjoy the rest of the subzine, and I'll see you after March!

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### Mandatory Extended Vacation

My final journey to Federal prison actually began about three days beforehand. I was living in Dallas, but had been assigned to the facility in Allenwood, Pennsylvania. I am told it isn't all that unusual for the Bureau of Prisons to designate you to a location far from home, but in this case I wasn't complaining at all. In fact, it had been my specific request (through my lawyer) that I be placed somewhere in the northeast region, in order to be closer to Staten Island where my father and stepmother lived. The way I figured things, with my 46 month sentence, the odds of my father still being alive by the time I was released seemed remote at best. And it sounded rather selfish (and unworkable) to expect him to travel across the country to Texas every time he hoped to visit me. By serving my time as close to his home as possible, I'd hopefully be able to see him a half-a-dozen times before it was too late to see him at all.

Dad had been in poor health for years. At first it was just his diabetes, which alone was bad enough, requiring multiple daily insulin injections. But later he added Parkinson's Disease to his list of ailments, which made walking quite difficult for him. There had also been a stroke or two, and some sort of disorder which caused poor flow of fluid into his spinal column. It had been clear to everyone, including himself, that his physical condition would only worsen as time went on. So to have the chance to see my father before surrendering to authorities, and hopefully a few times while incarcerated, was to me a very lucky break.

When I was sentenced, I had been advised by my lawyer that I would have about two weeks to report to prison, during which time the BOP would designate my initial facility. If I wasn't going to be assigned to Allenwood or to Fort Dix (in New Jersey), my hope was that I would be sent to Seagoville, which is a facility just east of Dallas. At least that way I'd be close enough for regular visits from Heather.

I was uncertain about how wise that would be though. First of all, I didn't have any way of knowing just what kind of conditions I would be living in, or what the visits would be like – except I already knew there were no conjugal visits in Federal prison. So I was worried that if Heather saw a dirty, unsafe, threatening environment, she'd have too much cause to worry about my safety. As long as I was far away, I could try and paint a positive, peaceful picture of prison life, and she'd have to real option but to accept it. Besides, deep down I didn't want to take up any of Heather's personal time while I was locked up. If I was somehow lucky enough for the relationship to survive all the time apart, I was going to be eternally grateful; but I thought it was unfair for me to be so close by where she would feel obligated to visit, which would in a way distract her from potentially starting a new relationship with someone else.

Heather, in her typical strong-willed fashion, was not even remotely concerned that she would break our relationship off. It took quite a bit of effort and explanation on my part to convince her that we shouldn't get

married before I left. The way I looked at it, the marriage wouldn't serve any purpose: if she decided not to wait, we'd have to get a divorce, while if she chose to wait for my return, we could always get married later. I'm not sure how much of her insistence was intended to convince me of the depth of her feelings, but such evidence wasn't necessary. Still, without discussing it with me first, she went ahead and got my name tattooed on her back one afternoon. I laughed and pointed out the tattoo wouldn't prevent her from dumping me. She wouldn't even need to limit her next relationship to a man with the same name, as she could just pretend Douglas was the name of a dog or cat who had passed away! Deep down, I never really doubted we'd still be together...even if I didn't believe I deserved all the love and happiness and pleasure Heather brought into my world.

As two weeks came and went, I hadn't heard from my lawyer and became rather concerned. After all, if they wanted me to report somewhere, it was a little difficult for me to do that without being told where! In the back of my mind I could see myself falling through the cracks, never being notified but meanwhile listed as missing, until a random traffic stop resulted in me being incarcerated as an escapee, with years added to my sentence and my time to be served in a maximum-security facility for troublemakers like me.

Eventually my lawyer returned my nervous phone calls to let me know that he'd spoken to the Federal Marshalls and they'd said it would be another week or two. While on one hand I was happy to enjoy some extra freedom, on the other the situation sucked, because I had already made plans to leave my job. Plus, the sooner I got to prison, the sooner I could be done with my sentence! Still, at least this way I was able to spend my birthday as a free man. Heather made sure it was a VERY memorable experience, and between that night and the night prior to my sentencing I was left with plenty of fantasies to keep me warm at night...for a while, anyway.

So after spending an extra 10 days or so counting the hours, like someone on death row waiting for the inevitable footsteps down the corridor, I got the phone call. I had been assigned to Allenwood, and I was supposed to report there on November 6th. That gave me about a week to get my act together and make travel arrangements.

I despise flying. Not only am I in a constant state of anxiety, waiting for the engines to fail or the inevitable plummet to the earth, but I make everyone around me nervous as a result. I wasn't always this way – I remember a few flights to Boston which I enjoyed – but ever since the first time I landed in Dallas in a thunderstorm, I've sworn off flying unless an emergency is involved. And as far as I was concerned, going to prison was not an emergency!

Instead, I booked a one-way ticket with Amtrak, from Dallas to New York (with a 9-hour layover in Chicago, where I would switch trains). I considered Greyhound instead, but the train ticket was only about \$20 more, and from far too much experience I can tell you the train is a much more enjoyable experience altogether. I'd actually ridden this route once before, round trip, but on that occasion my company was paying for it so I'd secured a private berth and meals. This time I just took a regular seat and no meals. I figured I could eat before I left, and easily grab a bite in Chicago. With some snacks on hand, and a hot meal waiting for me at my parent's house in Staten Island, I couldn't see the point of paying for a meal on board.

The night before I left Dallas was very emotional for me. Here I was, in love with the most wonderful woman in the world, and I was going to have to kiss her and say goodbye for what would probably be nearly three years. As perfect as everything seemed, I had to wonder if anything would ever be the same again. Would she change her feelings for me once my memory had faded? Would she meet someone new? Or would we be different people when I came home, and discover the true love we had shared has dissipated into the distance between us?

One thing was for sure: I wasn't going to let Heather take me to the train station. Saying goodbye like that would simply be too hard on both of us. Instead, she stayed home from work to see me off, and I drove the car I borrowed from my job back to the office, where my boss and friend Patty would drive me the short trip to the nearby commuter station. From there I would catch a local train to downtown Dallas, and switch to the Amtrak that was destined to take me away from my own world, and deposit me one step away from the BOP's.

Heather and I tried not to get too emotional, but watching the sad face as I turned to walk down the apartment stairs, with tears streaming down her cheeks, nearly tore my heart in two. As bad as I felt about the situation I was in, the realization that I had unwittingly unleashed this misery on Heather too was simply another ten tons of guilt on my shoulders. At the time that Heather and I met, it seemed that the justice system had decided not to pursue the case against me. My lawyer hadn't heard any true confirmation of that, but he had expected an indictment of some sort four months earlier, and never heard a word. In typical Kent fashion, four weeks after we met I discovered they were proceeding with an indictment after all. Wonderful! If I'd felt that was still a possibility, I wouldn't have bothered trying to meet women or develop a new relationship. Of course, in the long

run, I'm glad it worked out this way, but back then it just seemed like another of my typical screw-ups and a perfect example of my absolute lack of good timing.

While I was afraid of what life in prison might be like, I was able to accept my fate without too much resistance. There wasn't anything else I could do; I had to go, and that was that. Once I left Heather it wasn't that hard to avoid crying, because I found myself generally numb to everything that was going on. I drove to work, caught a ride with Patty, boarded the commuter train, and soon found myself climbing aboard the silver Amtrak train, bag and ticket in hand, ready to head off on the adventure known as federal incarceration.

But first, I had to spend two days on a train. To some people, that's almost the same thing!

Train travel has a number of advantages over bus travel. Traffic is a major factor, of course, as is comfort (the seats are generally bigger on trains, with more leg room). But most important is the frequency of stops. Anybody who has ridden Greyhound a long distance will understand what I mean. When you're stopping for fifteen minutes in tiny backwater towns, loading or unloading a single package or passenger while half the bus disappears for a smoking break, it is almost impossible to get any sleep. On the other hand, the train moves at a gradual pace, slowly accelerating or decelerating, and stopping only once an hour at most. In addition, since the passengers are travelling similar distances on a train (with less one-stop travelers) the mood is quieter at night.

The train ride to New York was rather uneventful. After the first night, we pulled into Chicago around 10am for an eight hour layover. This gave me time to make some phone calls from the large payphone banks (mostly to people with 1-800 numbers), eat a sandwich and salad at a local restaurant, and pick up some extra snacks at a drug store (my supply of Chex Mix was already running low). The only real delay was waiting for the train to depart from Chicago. My memory is fuzzy on this point, but I remember standing in line a good three hours before we were allowed to board. This was the only part of my trip where I had to deal with "polite talk" with the other passengers. I was tempted to be honest when they'd ask where I was headed, but simply to keep the conversation to a minimum I was half-truthful and said I was going to visit my parents in Staten Island.

The whole train ride was slow and surreal. In a way, I found myself comparing it to prison: surrounded by people I did not know, away from my comfort zone, unable to freely move around, the schedule determined by those in power. Of course, I was trying not to think too much about imprisonment or my sentence. The whole idea of being locked up for that long was too hard to get my brain around; I was doing my best to psyche myself up to facing it one day at a time. And I had no real mental picture of what the place would look like or what my day-to-day existence would be. The fear of the unknown can be a very powerful and debilitating force, and I was determined not to give in to those thoughts. Instead, even if I was faking my way through, I was trying to act matter-of-factly. Many months later I would hear an expression which inmates in the Residential Drug and Alcohol Program would use to describe the way to get through that program even if you didn't believe the things they were teaching you:

"Fake it 'til you make it."

I hadn't been taught that philosophy yet, but I was already making use of it.

Arriving at long last in New York's Penn Station, I took the subway down to the Staten Island Ferry terminal and, after calling my Dad to let him know I had arrived, I boarded the next ferry and found him waiting for me.

This was the first time I'd seen my Dad in his car – a little Hyundai Accent. Until he'd bought this, his Parkinson's and severe Diabetes had greatly limited his mobility. But with the Hyundai, he had achieved a small degree of freedom. Walking was still a real ordeal for him; he would shuffle along like Tim Conway's "Old Man" character, moving inches at a time. But in the driver's seat, my father was like anybody else on the road. I know this made him feel like less of a burden on his wife Barbara, and we all dreaded the way when he would no longer be able to safely drive around.

While we drove back to their house, Dad lectured me on what a great value the Hyundai had been, and how I should buy myself one. "I don't think I'll be needing a car anytime soon Dad" I replied with a subdued laugh. Things got quiet for a few minutes after that, but I tried my best to appear in a generally good mood. I didn't want to make things any harder on him than absolutely necessary.

We arrived at their house, and after a quick call to Heather to let her know I'd made it in one piece I ran to the shower to clean off. Two long days on the train had left me feeling terribly dirty and greasy. I made it a point to relax in the shower, taking my sweet time, using all the hot water I could. I really had no idea what the showers would be like in prison, and I recognized that this would be my second-to-last shower as a free man (the last one being the one I'd take the next morning). It felt good to get clean, to shave, and to put fresh clothes on.

When planning this little detour on the way to prison, I'd been offered the choice of either going out to dinner on my final night, or eating at home. I'd selected staying in. I wanted to be as comfortable as possible, spend time with a few family members, and drink a little more wine than necessary. Plus, because we would be leaving the next morning, I didn't want my father to get all tired and worn out trying to play the host. By staying home, he was free to pass out in his armchair whenever he felt like it.

Dinner was a bit more upbeat than I expected. Maybe we were trying to force it somewhat, but I did my best to joke and laugh and not to focus too much on what might be coming. Five or six glasses of good wine helped keep my spirits up too. That was the last time I've tasted alcohol; it has been over four years now!

Before going to sleep I called Heather one last time. She sounded very sad and lonely, but she didn't want to let on how much it hurt to say goodbye. When we hung up the phone, I lay in the dark thinking about how amazing it was to have known Heather for less than a year, but to feel so connected to her. But I had to shake my head too; why had I only found this magical feeling a few months before discovering I'd be spending years as an inmate? Still, I was not worried about whether the relationship could survive our time apart. In a logical sense, I knew that if Heather chose not to wait for me after all, there had been no guarantee we would have stayed together if I hadn't gone to prison. On an emotional level, I never doubted for an instant that Heather would stand behind me. Oh, I wasn't sure about how she would react when I first told her, but once she'd told me that she would be there for me, there was no hesitation in my heart. We were meant to be together, and this was simply another obstacle our love would overcome. As I fell asleep for the last time as a free man, I made a mental commitment to spend every available moment reminding Heather (through letters mostly, I assumed) that I cherished her, loved her for who she was, and would never take her for granted.

I hope she knows that I still feel that way today, only more so.

The next morning I took my last shower at home and tried to suppress the building anxiety I was feeling. Fortunately, the same sensation of numbness was also present, which made it easier to move forward, accept my fate, and do what had to be done without panic. My father tried to put a positive spin on this experience, suggesting I do whatever I could to further my education while incarcerated.

"Get yourself a PEL grant, earn a college degree," he told me. "And try to behave yourself. I bet it won't be that different than my time at basic training during Korea. You'll meet a lot of interesting people, that's for sure."

I couldn't bring myself to eat anything, so I just had some coffee before we hit the road. Originally the plan was for Barbara and Dad to drive me together, but as things worked out Barbara had to work that day after all. Instead, it was just the two of us. If the directions were accurate (and I had called the prison switchboard and was told they were) it would take about 3 ½ hours to get there, with most of that time spent on Interstate 80. I wasn't much worried about the trip there; I was more concerned about my father trying to handle the return drive all by himself. Prison was bad enough, but the idea of discovering my father had been killed on the highway would have pushed me completely over the edge.

The trip was generally uneventful. While it was rather chilly, there wasn't any ice or snow on the ground, and traffic was light once we got out of the New York City area. We had to stop once for gas and a bathroom break. At the store, my Dad picked up three chocolate muffins with chocolate chips. One of these he handed to me, while he explained that he'd eat the second in the car, discard any evidence, and bring the third home to eat later with the claim that he'd only bought two. Typical of Dad; he used to try and inject himself with a few drops of extra insulin so he could enjoy some ice cream immediately afterward. You had to laugh at the childish streak he carried...one which I carry as well, even to a larger extent.

Eventually we left I-80 and headed north towards Williamsport. Halfway between the who we found our way to the Federal complex at Allenwood. While the brick buildings along the road had an institutional feel to them, they wouldn't have seemed quite so sinister if I hadn't known what was just around the corner. There were no decipherable signs on the road, but rising to the crest of a hill I could see a large prison building on our right. There was a sizeable parking lot, a brick building to the left, and then a compound surrounded by fences and vicious barbed-wire on the right – complete with guard towers at the corners. The circular driveway up to the main entrance was chained off, a familiar sight in the post 9-11 era, so we had to park out in the main lot. Neither of us were sure of this was where I was supposed to be reporting, but it looked much more foreboding than I had imagined. All I could think to myself was "I've got to do 46 months in this place?"

I offered to go inside to ask if this was the proper reporting location, but Dad was afraid that once I went inside I might not be allowed out again to say goodbye. So instead he shuffled in with me, which took a good five minutes. If he wasn't exhausted from the drive, I knew he had to be after that long walk.

In the sterile entranceway, a guard at the front desk looked up my name on his computer. He shook his head at us. "Nope, you're supposed to report to the camp. Make a left out of the parking lot and take your first right. There's no sign, so watch for the turn." Camp...yes, that sounded much better than the building we were in. I tried to ask if I could pull the car around the driveway so my father wouldn't have to walk all the way back, but the guard just shook his head and told me no. So after another slow journey, we were back in the car, and on our way to my new home.

Pulling up at the right place finally, I got smart and made sure we said our goodbyes before I got out of the car. I walked up a long flight of concrete steps and found what looked like a bank teller's window. An officer inside told me to wait out in the parking lot, and that another officer would appear shortly across the way and tell me what to do.

After about five more minutes of waiting, a short and very rotund officer came out of a door with a manila folder. Shouting from across the parking lot, he had me confirm my name, Social Security number, and some other personal information. Satisfied that I was who I said I was, he told me to approach and enter the building, and yelled to my father that someone would be out within 30 minutes to bring him my clothes and any other personal belongings. With a wave, I left my Dad and walked through the door. I was now a Federal inmate.

## The Dining Dead - The Eternal Sunshine Movie Reviews

**Juno** – By now there is very little chance that you've managed to avoid hearing about this film. Entertainment Weekly just put it on their cover, calling it the "Little Indie That Could." The way the movie (and writer Diablo Cody) have become media darlings had, as usual, made me hesitant to see it. But figuring the theaters would be rather empty while the Super Bowl was on (which we taped to watch later), and considering that there was nothing else out which we were interested in, Heather and I made our way to the local AMC to check it out.

At first, I was very concerned that my fears had been well-founded. The initial scenes are a barrage of one-liners and modern teen-speak, delivered with a very self-aware attitude as if the script is trying far too hard to be quirky and hip. Juno (Ellen Page), a 16-year-old, finds herself unexpectedly pregnant after losing her virginity to a schoolmate (Michael Cera)...or, more correctly, after he loses his virginity to her. But once the movie progresses past the initial plot twists and Juno decides to have the baby and give it up for adoption, the story, acting, and dialogue takes hold and carries you along for the ride.

Despite their obvious unhappiness at their daughter's situation, Juno's parents (J.K. Simmons and the always awesome Allison Janney) support her decision. Through an ad in the Penny-saver, Juno locates her prospective adoptive parents the Latings (Jason Bateman and Jennifer Garner). Vanessa Loring is a bit uptight and stiff, while husband Mark is, in Juno's estimation, cool. She and Mark share musical tastes, and are both horror film buffs. Feeling alienated from the ranks of average High School students, Juno finds reasons to stop by the house and visit with Mark.

Avoiding some potentially predictable plot directions, and keeping the characters are much more than simple one-dimensional cutouts, Juno brings laughter into a difficult situation without forgetting that the delicate story includes characters who will have to move on with their lives after the final credits roll. Juno and her parents supply most of the best lines, as they meet the complications of life with a sarcastic humor I find far too familiar. Jennifer Garner, in particular, brings surprising sensitivity to her character, and director Jason Reitman allows her (and the other cast members) to slowly reveal more of themselves in actions and body language.

If you haven't seen Juno yet, either make the trip to your local movie house or wait for DVD release. It's worth watching, and overall is quite enjoyable. Just don't let the first few minutes trip you up.

**Seen on DVD – The Number 23** (C-, a moderately-interesting premise taken absolutely nowhere. Jim Carrey brings no authenticity to the role, which I found surprising as he is perfectly capable of doing much better. Maybe he just took the check. The payoff was cluttered and disappointing as well). **Eastern Promises** (B-, I expected a lot more after the accolades this film received. The plot twists seemed a bit obvious to me, and the story was far too slow to develop).

# **Books in Boxers**

## **Eternal Sunshine Book Reviews**

**Extreme Encounters** – Greg Emmanuel – Heather listed this book in her section last issue. The cover describes itself as “How it feels to be drowned in quicksand, shredded by piranhas, swept up in a tornado, and dozens of other unpleasant experiences.” That’s a fairly accurate description. Each chapter gives you the background story of how you got into the situation, and then explains in minute detail what happens when you (as an example) stay awake for 100 hours straight. The genius of the book is that it doesn’t just tell you how you feel, but it also provides medical and scientific specifics of what is physically happening to you. Some of the sales are creepy, but most have a fun, dark sense of humor about them. This book gets a B+.

**The Executioner Always Chops Twice** – Geoffrey Abbott – Another book full of short tales, this one deals with countless execution miscues. Most are from the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century, where hangings or beheadings were frequent, and there was plenty of room for error. About half of the stories are quite interesting, but after a while some of them seem to be the same thing over and over: a petty criminal, sentenced to death for theft, who isn’t hanged properly and suffers for fifteen or twenty minutes...that’s a common tale. I still enjoyed the book overall, and a few of the more famous tales I had read about previously, which leads me to believe most of the book is at least semi-accurate. I’ll give it a weak B.

**Post Office** – Charles Bukowski – I’d heard of this novel before, but never read it. The late Bukowski is regarded as one of the great modern writers. I don’t know about all that, but Post Office was terrific, a hilarious and perceptive look at the life of the low-skill postal worker in the 1970’s. Writing from this era carries an attitude all its own, and I find it very easy to lose myself in it. I definitely plan on checking out some of his other work next. An A-.



## **Heather's Tricks and Treats**

**Dance With a Vampire** by Ellen Schreiber – The fourth book in the Vampire Kisses series. Great fun, typical exciting teenage vampire stuff. I have really enjoyed this series, and I can’t wait for the next one. Plus I like the outfit on the cover. Nothing to take seriously, but when you’re in the mood for a book to lose yourself in this is a good choice! 3 ½ pumpkins. 

**The Society of S** by Susan Hubbard – This book was decent, but a little slow. More of an intellectual look at vampirism. It made me cry for more personal reasons, reading about a child growing up without a mother. Not bad, but didn’t grab me much of the way. 3 ½ pumpkins. 

**Succubus on Top** by Richelle Mead – Even better than the first book. Wicked, dark, and full of awesome, graphic s-e-x. Yowza! Part 3 of the Georgia Kinkaid series should be out in October 2008 – I can’t wait to read it. 4 ½ pumpkins. 

**Betrayed** by P.C. Cast and Kristin Cast – Very good. Better than the first in the series. Even more plot twists and mysteries, and some interesting romantic prospects for the main character. I’m looking forward to the third, due out shortly. 4 ½ pumpkins. 

**Every Rescued Dog Has a Tale** by Deborah Eades – Heartwarming stories of dogs being transported from one place to another to avoid being put down. Great subject, and it educated me more about an aspect of animal

rescue which I was not very familiar with. But the writing style leaves a lot to be desired. 3 pumpkins.



**Scarlett Saves Her Family** by Jane Martin and J.C. Suares – Had me crying from the very first page. Most people remember the basic story of the cat who saved her kittens. I never knew something so small could carry such courage. It was very humbling, and I was amazed at all the extraordinary efforts of the people around her to rescue her and bring her back to health. 4 pumpkins.



**Disposable Dogs** by Steve Swanbeck – Made me wonder more than ever why people can be so terribly cruel, and reminded me why I generally prefer animals to people. We've domesticated these animals and made them depend on us, so why do so many people choose to throw them away like garbage? 4 pumpkins.



# Cinematic Catacombs

I didn't get a single response to little piece on Children Shouldn't Play With Dead Things. Maybe nobody remembers that movie except myself and my siblings. So how about you write in and tell us about a "lost" movie from YOUR childhood?

I have a few more films lined up to talk about, but this month I wanted to describe two movies which I vaguely remember, but which I do not know the names of. Maybe one of you readers can provide more information on them?

The first was a movie about two police officers, which I saw a number of times on cable television in 1981 or 1982. I think it was a European film, but I could be wrong. One of the cops was a taller in guy, the other a fat bearded fellow. Whenever they came into a problem (such as one scene where two women try to get them drunk so they'll be out of action for a while) the big one is able to handle the situation because of his size and stamina, while the smaller just says "It's in my blood" and is also unaffected. I thought the movie might have been called Super Fuzz, but the descriptions I've read on places like IMDB haven't convinced me...although the advertisement they show depicts an actor who looks similar to the one I remember. I'm sure this was a really stupid movie anyway, but I'd like to see it again for nostalgia sake. Maybe somebody else remembers it?

The second movie may have been feature length, or perhaps it was only 45 minutes long. I imagine it was produced in the late 60's or early 70's. The basic premise was there was a restaurant, or hotel, or inn of some sort which was going out of business if things didn't turn around. But suddenly everybody started coming to eat there, because of the pancakes: they made you happy, and see colored dots or something. I don't recall whether it was some special additive they put in the pancakes, or if it was a magic spell of some kind. I just remember we used to call it the "happy pancake movie." Any ideas?

Next issue I'll give you details on another one of my "lost" favorites which I recently got to see again.

## Meet Me In Montauk The Eternal Sunshine Letter Column

**John Colledge:** I was a tad surprised by the answers given for the favourite holiday [last issue]. I would have thought that most answers given were a 'holiday period' rather than a holiday as such. The old 'two nations divided by one language' problem again! ☺

*Anything I can do to make life more difficult for you!*

**Robert Lesco:** Regarding By Popular Demand, I am reminded of an early Mothers of Invention (i.e. Frank Zappa) LP where the question, "What's The Ugliest Part of Your Body?" was posed in song. The conclusion: "your mind", which I don't think fully meets the definition but I thought I would mention it.

Your question is a good way of drawing out Zappa fans. I would be interested to hear how many people take the bait.

*I am a big Zappa fan (along with the drumming of Terry Bozzio). My oldest brother is also a big fan. I think my first real exposure to him (having been too young to remember the Mothers) was "The Man From Utopia." "Zoot Allures" remains my favorite album of his, even though I don't know many people who agree with me. "Thing Fish" was big fun too. YouTube has plenty of awesome live Zappa performances hidden in dark places.*

**Jack McHugh:** First of all...how come I wasn't given proper credit for predicting the Giants would beat the Packers?? Did I not tell you the week before I thought the Packards would lose to the Giants?

***I have no memory of that...but that's probably because I don't listen when you tell me things.***

As a fellow Cowgirls hater I can certainly agree with your loathing for your local miserable team and I really, really, REALLY, REALLY hate "America's Team" moniker that the media has bestowed on the Cowgirls. I especially liked watching cry-baby Owens have a nothing game--hahahah...loser! I dont know what the big shock is if you hire a failed head coach who can't win playoff games, you really shouldn't be too shocked you can't win playoff games. Wake up and smell the coffee Jerry--you drove a great coach, if a miserable human being out of town, to get a rotten coach, if a much nicer human being.

***1310 The Ticket radio does hilarious interviews with "fake Jerry" and now "fake Wade" after each Cowboy game. Wade is depicted as a bumpkin who only cares about small-game hunting and hamburgers. I don't think Wade's post-game interviews helped that perception any. "We made it into the Final 8"? Buy a clue.***

Secondly, I expect you to help me help you by browbeating your subscribers into giving me articles on variants for upcoming issues of *Diplomacy World*. Now that you've bugged me into being your Variant bitch I expect to see you helping me out by doing the same to others. That goes for you too Jim-Bob. I know Brad Wilson is just dying to write me an article on *Balkan Wars* whatever roman numeral we're up to now (or at least the one you designed Brad.) How about an article from Paul Kenny on Northern Ireland? Its not in the variant bank online--you need to get me an article, Paul, so we can save it for posterity (and no that's not your ass, Doug, you SACK..)

***Now that you are Diplomacy World variant editor maybe you should actually READ Diplomacy World...Brad already wrote an article on Balkan Wars for us. Getting Paul Kenny to write something on his Ireland variant might be an idea though...***

**Robert Lesco:** [in response to my Valentine's Day e-card, which references my Halloween wedding] You may recall that my son was born on Halloween. He's a teen now which is part of the reason I have so little time to put out a 'zine in timely fashion. Not to mention, my last set of orders arrived a month and a half after the deadline.

We're in the midst of our third or fourth monster snowstorm of the season with bone-chilling temperatures and I am quite enjoying it. Clearly, I was meant to be Canadian.

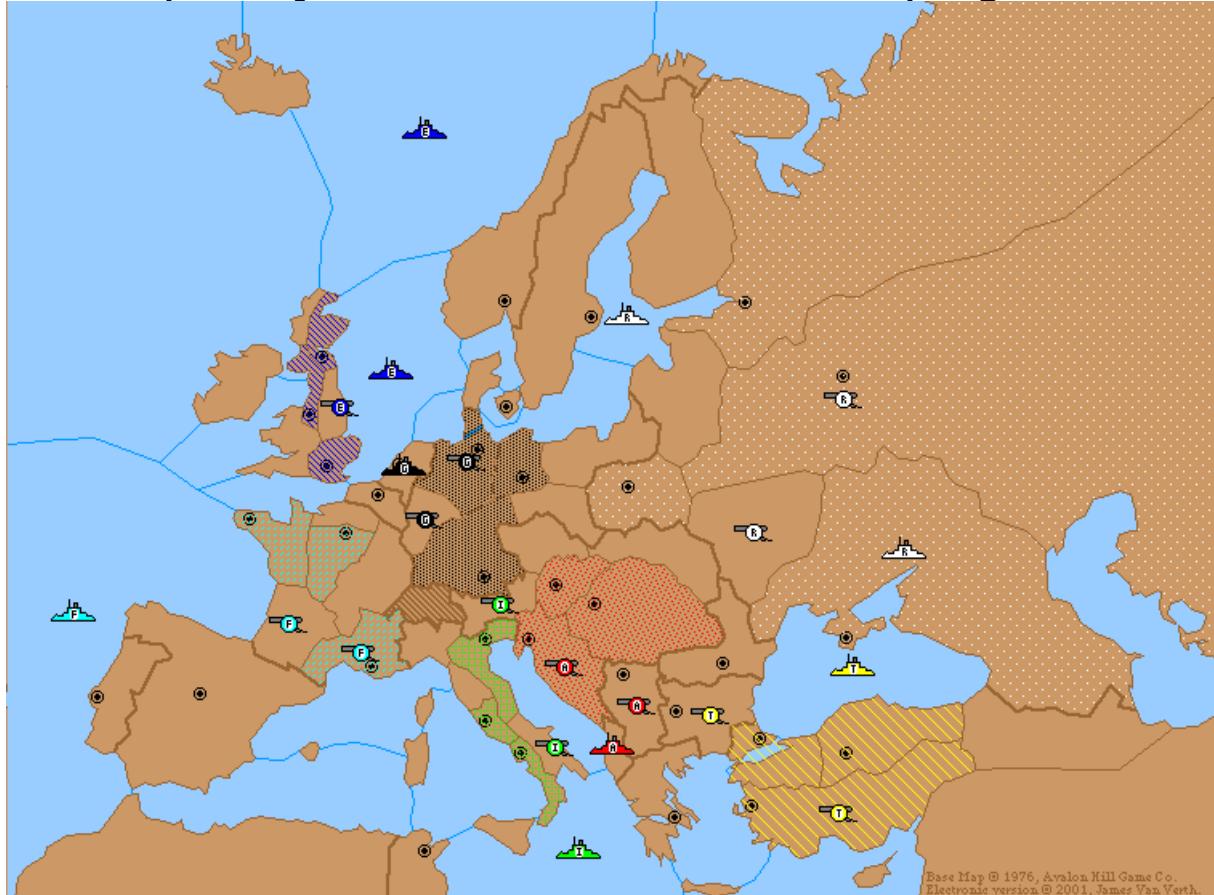
***Or maybe you're really the Cold Miser from "The Year Without a Santa Claus"?***

# Game Openings

**Balkan Wars VI (Black Press):** Signed up: Jack McHugh, Graham Wilson, Brad Wilson, Brendan Whyte, needs two more. Rules and map on request.

# Eternal Sunshine Game Section

Diplomacy "Wouldn't It Be Nice?" 2008A, Spring 1901



Austria (Kevin Wilson): A Budapest – Serbia, F Trieste – Albania, A Vienna - Trieste.

England (Jeremie Lefrancois): F Edinburgh - Norwegian Sea, A Liverpool – Yorkshire, F London - North Sea.

France (Alexander Levinson): F Brest - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Marseilles Hold, A Paris - Gascony.

Germany (Graham Wilson): A Berlin – Kiel, F Kiel – Holland, A Munich - Ruhr.

Italy (Don Williams): F Naples - Ionian Sea, A Rome – Apulia, A Venice - Tyrolia.

Russia (Melinda Holley): A Moscow - Sevastopol (\*Fails\*), F Sevastopol - Armenia (\*Bounce\*),  
F St Petersburg(sc) - Gulf of Bothnia, A Warsaw - Ukraine.

Turkey (Brad Wilson): F Ankara - Black Sea, A Constantinople – Bulgaria, A Smyrna - Armenia (\*Bounce\*).

## Unit locations:

Austria: F Albania, A Serbia, A Trieste.

England: F North Sea, F Norwegian Sea, A Yorkshire.

France: A Gascony, A Marseilles, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean.

Germany: F Holland, A Kiel, A Ruhr.

Italy: A Apulia, F Ionian Sea, A Tyrolia.

Russia: F Gulf of Bothnia, A Moscow, F Sevastopol, A Ukraine.

Turkey: F Black Sea, A Bulgaria, A Smyrna.

## PRESS

Williams - Wilson: I wish you all could be California girls ... That way there'd be good vibrations ...

Unknown Dateline: **The public panicked. People ran helter-skelter, knocking each other to the ground in their near-hysterical desire to get as far away as possible.**

**Then the lights appeared in the windows of the long-darkened building. People stopped in fear and awe, their heads slowly turning towards the building.**

**Suddenly the doors flew open and they heard the cackling laughter of the woman within.**

**People hung their heads in dread and shame.**

**The Heart of Darkness Saloon was open again.**

Williams - Wilson: I'd really really like to ally with you.

Don - Doug: That's quite a timesaver there, Kent -- thanks!

**Fall 1901 Deadline is March 26<sup>th</sup> 2008 at 7:00am**

## 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 1 Categories

1. A fish other than a goldfish you might find in a fish tank.
2. A Greek God or Goddess.
3. Something you borrow from a neighbor.
4. A type of knot.
5. A television show for children.

<u>Player</u>	<u>Fish</u>	<u>God</u>	<u>Borrow</u>	<u>Knot</u>	<u>Kids Show</u>	<u>Turn</u>
Jamie McQuinn	Angel	Zeus	Sugar	Square	Sesame Street	44
Kevin Wilson	Angel	Zeus	Sugar	Square	Sesame Street	44
Brendan Whyte	Guppy	Zeus	Sugar	Reef	Sesame Street	44
David Partridge	Guppy	Zeus	Tools	Square	Sesame Street	42
Berend Renken	Guppy	Zeus	Sugar	Noose	Sesame Street	42
Dane Maslen	Guppy	Zeus	Lawnmower	Reef	Sesame Street	40
Tom Swider	Angel	Zeus	Sugar	Bow	Sesame Street	39
Brad Martin	Guppy	Zeus	Salt	Granny	Sesame Street	38
Brad Wilson	Guppy	Zeus	Hammer	Square	SpongeBob	33
Bill Brown	Guppy	Hercules	Sugar	Granny	Sesame Street	31
Gina Teh	Guppy	Zeus	Lawnmower	Overhand	Barney	30
David Burgess	Angel	Zeus	Egg	Square	Scooby Doo	29
John Colledge	Angel	Zeus	Hedge Trimmers	Reef	Muppets	25
Joakim Spangberg	Beta	Zeus	Lawnmower	Granny	Teletubbies	23
W. Andrew York	Angel	Athena	Sugar	Slip	Barney	21
Allison Kent	Beta	Venus	Egg	Slip	Sesame Street	20
Melinda Holley	Guppy	Aphrodite	Hammer	Square	SpongeBob	20
Martin Burgdorf	Anchovy	Eros	Money	Slip	Sesame Street	18
Jeremie Lefrancois	Babelfish	Zeus	His Wife	Marriage Knot	Speeches of GW Bush	18
Jack McHugh	Tropical	Apollo	Tools	Slip	Barney	11

Congrats to all three who scored 44 points! Way to get off to a running start!

Selected Comments By Category:

**God/Goddess** - Andy York "Apollo would have been a close second"

**Borrow** – Berend Renken "Difficult, this one... Eggs? A ladder, lawnmower or electric drill? Would you accept the general submission "Tool" and throw that in with any specific tools mentioned by others?" John Colledge – "I suspect this will be garden orientated rather than household orientated. Over here the expression, 'can I borrow a cup of sugar' is a well used expression, probably dating back to the war. I doubt if it happens much these days." Andy York "Lots of choices here, but this is a **classic**" Brendan Whyte "I'm tempted to say 'wife', but that's for overnight loans only."

**Knot** - John Colledge – "My favourite is the Sheepshank, though there is something vaguely rude about the name!"

**TV Show** - John Colledge – "I once embarrassed the hell out of Denny and a friend by bursting into song when I heard 'Muffin the Mule' as we strolled round a children's television exhibit during the Book Festival a few years ago. Again, rather suspicious sexual overtones there! ☺" Dave Partridge "I'm out of touch, my children are actually too old for this, and they don't watch any mainstream television, just PBS, so I'm going to hope the old name recognition is still strong)" Andy York – "Wide-open, especially as "children" covers 0-17 years of age - there's quite a bit of difference between those shows pre-schoolers would like and those the 'tweens enjoy"

### **Round 2 Categories – Deadline is March 26<sup>th</sup> 2008 at 7:00am**

1. An English monarch.
  2. A candy bar other than Hershey's
  3. Something you generally only eat at a restaurant.
  4. A long, boring book.
  5. A "one-hit-wonder" band.
- 

### ***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 5 Categories**

1. Worst Christmas-related movie ever.
2. Best flavor of jelly or jam.
3. Worst television show which lasted more than one season ever.
4. Worst airline.
5. Ugliest part of the human body.

15 was the maximum score, but Gina came closest with 14. Nice job!

Selected Comments By Category:

**Xmas Movie** – Tom Swider "It's a Wonderful Life" - Just plain stupid and boring. Can't bring myself to watch more than 5 minutes of it. Of course, the best move was "Silent Night, Deadly Night." Brendan Whyte "Santa doing it doggy style? That's just ruined it for me. I can never sit on his lap anymore without shuddering when he asks 'what do you wan for Christmas?'"

**Jam** – Andy York “Grape would have been #2” Brendan Whyte “They have an ad they play on the instroe “radio” at Tesco here... the only words in English are brackbelly, stlawbelly, clanbelly, laspbelly”, but besides the usual Asian I-and-r problems, they pronounce them to rhyme with celery and salary!”

**TV Show** - Brendan Whyte “Gilligan's Island is rated for those with subnormal IQs. The inability of the cast to develop a primitive form of radio to communicate with the US coast guard astounds me. Perhaps Gilligan purposely foiled all the escape plans just so he could continue to get it on with Ginger and Maryanne. Let's face it, he'd never ever score if they did manage to return to civilization.”

**Airline** – Joakim Spangberg “KLM, Granted only based on one flight and one stewardess in particular. Anyone remember the airplane scene in 'Anger management'? My flight to Amsterdam came pretty close ☺” Tom Swider “Worst airport hands-down is Atlanta, with very confusing signing and the “up and down” escalators to get to shuttles between terminals. Dallas-Fort-Worth is close with all its delays.”

**Body Part** – Brendan Whyte “Belly button. Omphalos. Navel. It collects blue fluff, and looks like a sink drain. Often smells like one too. advice to the newly married: never, ever, lick one without swabbing it down with alcohol first. Preferably a cranberry-flavoured vodka. Using a match or cigarette lighter to burn off the excess alcohol also helps, as it removes the hair from the area too. ”

<u>Player</u>	<u>Xmas Movie</u>	<u>Jelly</u>	<u>TV Show</u>	<u>Airline</u>	<u>Body Part</u>	<u>Turn</u>	<u>Total</u>
W. Andrew York	Christmas Vacation	Strawberry	American Idol	Jet Blue	Derriere	9	103
Jamie McQuinn	S/C Conquers the Martians	Grape	Jerry Springer	America West	Penis	9	103
David Burgess	Santa Claus III	Grape	Golden Girls	Delta	Armpit	12	97
Martin Burgdorf	Grinch	Strawberry	Battlestar Galactica	Southwest	Foot	12	89
Tom Swider	It's a Wonderful Life	Grape	Jerry Springer	United	Armpit	10	85
Gina Teh.	Grinch	Grape	Barney & Friends	Delta	Armpit	14	80
Brad Wilson	S/C Conquers the Martians	Strawberry	Married W/Children	US Airways	Elbow	10	75
Chris Babcock	NMR	NMR	NMR	NMR	NMR	5	74
Brad Martin	White Christmas	Strawberry	Dallas	Delta	Knees	11	73
John Colledge	Deck the Halls	Cherry	Big Brother	Cubana	Toes	6	65
Melinda Holley	The Little Match Girl	Peach	Charmed	American	Feet	6	64
Brendan Whyte	Bad Santa	Strawberry	Gilligan's Island	Aeroflop	Belly Button	9	61
Joakim Spangberg	Grinch	Gooseberry	Friends	KLM	Toes	8	55
Jeremie Lefrancois	None	Orange	Speeches of Bush	Soc. Generale	Own White Hair	5	52

#### Round 6 Categories – Deadline is March 26, 2008 at 7:00am

1. Sexiest piece of lingerie.
2. Worst Jim Carrey movie.
3. Best song of the last year.
4. Smartest U.S. President.
5. Most forgettable African nation.

These categories from last turn resulted in VERY low scores. Maybe this time we can get a bit more common ground. Or maybe not, doesn't bother me either way! At least David and Martin (among others) gained some ground on the Andy/Jamie Axis!

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**Deadline For The Next Issue of Eternal Sunshine:  
March 26th, 2008 at 7:00am – See You Then!**