

Eternal Sunshine #173

October 2023

By Douglas Kent - 911 Irene Drive, Mesquite, TX 75149

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Quote of The Month – “My uncle told me there are only eight trustworthy people in the whole world. There were twelve, but four were assassinated.” – (Steven Lidz in “Unstrung Heroes”)

Welcome to **Eternal Sunshine**, a zine that had its funeral before it ever died. Why wait until the last minute? Then it’s always rush, rush, rush. Nothing much to say, except Go Rangers.

I guess that’s it from me for now. See you in November!

Game Openings

No game openings, as the zine will fold when the currently-running games are completed.

Standby List: *Current standby list who are qualified to standby in More Than Ever: Harold Reynolds.*

The Dining Dead – Eternal Sunshine Movie Reviews

I’m more horror-centric now, with October starting and Halloween coming up. Plus I’ve finished with the documentary film festival entries until next year. (If you’re in the CT area, make sure you think about going to see some of the films we approved.)

Kill List (Shudder) – An odd little British psychological thriller, directed and co-written by Ben Wheatley. Jay (Neil Maskell) is a soldier home for eight months from an assignment in Kiev (this film was made in 2011 so not during the war). Money problems force him to join his partner in a series of three contract killings, and things do not go as planned. A bit of suspense, a bit of folk horror, and some bloody violence all mixed up in a very slow-burn script. Even with a few dragging patches and what seemed like a long time to get things moving I found it generally enjoyable. It’s just hard to categorize.

V/H/S/85 (Shudder) – The latest in the series of films “collecting” found-footage-style vignettes. As with prior entries, it’s very hit-and-miss. I only truly enjoyed the first short, which makes a reappearance later in the film. The rest were either boring, or just plain bad. This is probably the worst, or second worst, in the V/H/S series of films. I’ve seen some very positive reviews, but I don’t know what movie THEY were watching. I love the horror genre, but this is not worthy of your time unless you are EXTREMELY bored. Or trashed.

Dune (Netflix) – I knew I’d have to watch this eventually, so when my rother told me it was on Netflix I tried to minimize my trepidation and dove in. I’ve probably read the book fifty times in my life; I pull it off the shelf at least once a year. The fact is there is simply too much going on in that book, too many subplots, too many conversations, too much lore to put it all on the big screen (even in five hours, which is the approximate length of a combined **Dune** and **Dune Part II** screening).

In general, I feel like this film was made – appropriately – for people who are not huge fans of the book. Maybe the audience has never read it, or only read it once, or only seen the Lynch film. For me, as a major fan, there are just too many things that don't make sense, or that go against the book, for me to fully engage. Almost immediately I found myself irritated. And are some of the same corny theatrics as the Lynch film but without the flavor. More importantly, I didn't feel connected to ANY of the characters. The acting was fine, I don't mean that. But it wasn't better than fine. And there was no transformation. Each actor was the actor, not the character. Chalamet was the guy playing Paul, not Paul. Momoa wasn't even the guy playing Duncan Idaho, he was just Momoa.

I was also very disappointed by some of the things left out of the film. With five hours available, why not include the early banquet scene with fully fleshed out the politics and intrigue involved? Why did they eliminate the entire story arc of trying to figure out who the traitor would be, including the Duke's fake suspicion of Jessica? For that matter, I seemed to disagree entirely with most critics who wrote that the female roles here are elevated from what they were in the book. In the novel, Jessica and the Bene Gesserit (as well as the women of the Fremens) were the true power brokers. They had their own schemes within schemes, plans within plans. Here we have almost nothing of the Reverend Mother, and Jessica is mostly shown in fear (or reciting the litany to suppress her fear) or crying. Shadout is given one scene to overact and nothing more. How is this "elevating" the female characters? I never felt they were diminished to begin with in the novel. The women were **the** source of power and knowledge.

Almost everything I read last night from director Denis Villeneuve made me roll my eyes, even beyond the so-called elevation of female characters. He says he wanted the Baron to be less of a caricature than he was...in the novel??? The Baron was mostly a visual caricature in the Lynch film, but in the novel he was devious, intelligent, focused, well-spoken, and given strong primary and secondary motivations for everything he did. Here it's all money. Sometimes I wonder if this guy – and many of the critics – read the same book I did? Or did they just watch the Lynch film, or perhaps read a Wikipedia summary? (At least the "weirding module" crap from the Lynch film is gone).

With all that said, if nothing else I enjoyed watching it because it reminded me of things within the book that I love (even if I was reminded by their absence). And I recognize that if you have never read the book, or only read it once, your perception of the movie and your experience watching it will be entirely different. I'm reminded of a scene in a Columbo episode where Trish Van Devere is ripping pages out of a script to try and get a production back on schedule. "It only hurts for a while, boys, and they won't miss it is they didn't know it was here." If you don't have such a strong attachment to the source material, you'll never know why I have these issues.

Older Movies Watched (that I've seen before, sometimes many times) – Scream and Scream Again, A Serious Man, Compulsion, 23 Paces to Baker Street, The Executioner's Song, The House the Dripped Blood, The Seventh Sign, The House on Pine Street, Tales from the Crypt (1972), Sledge, American Beauty, The Two Faces of Dr. Jekyll, Bloody Bloody Bible Camp, Nocturne, Horror of Dracula, Pretty Dead Things, Dracula Has Risen From the Grave.

Out of the WAY #61

by W. Andrew York
(wandrew88 of gmail.com)

Howdy!

Well, I miswrote last time about the number of 100-degree days here in Austin. We were at a count in the upper 70s, not 80s, and ended up around 80 (can't recall off the top of my head the final count). We're having a stint in the 90 degrees, with another cold front dropping us into the 80 degrees this weekend. From my memory, this is the best two weekend for Austin City Limits Festival on record (usually overly muddy, dry and dusty or in the midst of rainstorms). And, no, I did not go to ACL – I haven't been to any, just not up to a day (or three) out on the grass (or dustbowl or mudflat) catching abbreviated sets by a bunch of folks I don't have a strong interest in seeing.

Yes, there have been some individual acts over the years I would have liked to see (the primary one that jumps to mind is Jake Bugg), as well as a couple headliners, but for the price and the parking hassles, the festival experience isn't something I'd really like to do. The only thing similar that I've actually been to is a day long, multi-stage, event at Retama Park in Selma (TX, not AL) back in the '90s. I was a police officer at that time, and was part of the back-stage security for the Country stage (at that

time I wasn't a country music fan). I had a decent experience, shade/water/etc., but wouldn't have wanted to be out in the crowd under the Texas summer sun.

It's been a quiet month overall. I did have a thoroughly enjoyable event last Tuesday at the Briscoe Center (part of UT). Richard Ben-Veniste was being interviewed in conjunction with the donation of his papers to the Center. He talked mostly about his time on the Watergate commission, but had a few comments about the Whitewater Commission and the 911 Commission he also was a part of. I do need to spend more time at the Briscoe Center doing reading and research (as well as the Ransom Center and the Texas State Archives). So much history and insight are preserved at these institutions!

It's an all Texas ALCS in baseball. Having been at the Express for many years (the AAA team for both Houston and Texas, over time), I've seen many of the players while they've been working up to the majors, as well as those who've had a rehab stint in the minors. It makes watching the games that much more enjoyable when you've personally seen and/or talked with the individual players.

That said, it was touch and go if I'd keep my season tickets to the Express. They raised the price of my seat by 67% (several reasons behind it, not faulting them for the jump as I'd expected something of the type). So, after much discussion, I'm moving up from 2nd row to the left behind home plate to the 12th row. It'll save me about \$350, though my seat won't be padded (I'll rough it!). And, as the Express reps noted, many of the seats near where I sat in previous years are corporate seats (and, thus, are usually not used) so I could easily move up to those vacant seats. Also, friends around my previous seat, have offered to let me sit in their seats when they're not there. So, shouldn't be too much of a changed experience.

Please note that I'll be out of town over Thanksgiving through the weekend (going to a Mensa Regional Gathering in Dallas). So, any orders submitted during that time will likely be unacknowledged until the following week as I catch up on things.

Note, as a follow-up to the potential move to twice a month Hangman turns, most players didn't respond positively so that's out for now.

See 'ya next month.

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Letter Column

(always welcome, send them in!)

(if something shouldn't be included here, clearly mark it as a personal comment)

None received, send some in!

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Mini-Book Reviews

(finished since last issue)

Batman: Whatever Happened to the Caped Crusader? By Neil Gaiman, art by Andy Kubert (2010; 130p).

This graphic novel was promoted as part of this year's Batman Day (Sept 16) events. I'd not read it, though I probably should have as I'm a Gaiman fan (yes, there's A LOT out there that he's done and I haven't read/watched half of it). Additionally, the renowned illustrator Andy Kubert is an added bonus for the publication.

It is a two-part story focusing on the memorial service for Batman, with various characters telling their tale/viewpoints from Catwoman to Alfred with the end of the second part recapping Batman's arc and life. After that tale, there are some concept sketches with nods to classic Batman artists over the decades. Finally, there are several other reprinted comics from the Batman and Detective series written by Gaiman, with other artists/pencillers/illustrators providing the layouts.

I enjoyed reading it, but it is a bit pricey at \$30 (US). If you are a Batman fan, or Gaiman fan, it is worth looking for it in a library or in sharing the cost of the volume between several folks. [September 2023]

The Blooming of a Lotus by Thich Nhat Hanh (1993; 139p).

The volume is a series of guided meditation exercises based on the Buddhist tradition. It opens with an introduction to meditation, how to approach and practice it with an emphasis on breathing and mental focus. Also, a bit of the background/history is presented.

Each of the 34 exercises begins with the meditation, including the complete thought for each inbreath and outbreath. A shortened version, using key words, is included to use once you have the complete thought committed to memory. Following that,

commentary with more practical advice and step-by-step instruction, with the earlier ones having more background and meaning than with the later ones.

I did read through all of them, but only fully practiced a few of the earlier ones. I can see how doing this on a regular basis, either as a routine part of your daily schedule or as a way to calm and reorient yourself as needed, can be quite beneficial. And, I plan to keep this handy and may add to my morning routine some of the shorter, calming/focusing, exercises at some point.

It should be noted that some of the later exercises are longer, not just in number of mantras but in the underlying thoughts themselves. So, these will take more time to parse and understand to gain a fuller benefit from doing those meditations.

Recommended only for those interested in gaining some knowledge of eastern meditation exercises or some insight into these Buddhist practices. Anyone, likely, can benefit from the calming/focusing effect of the early meditations; but the latter ones will take some dedicated time and effort to fully appreciate. [October 2023]

A Canticle for Leibowitz by Walter M. Miller, Jr (1959; 313p).

In going through my book collection, this jumped out and waved its hand saying “read me”. So, I quickly put it at the top of my stack to read. I’d last read this, probably, in the early ‘80s and it has always stuck in the back of my mind, though the particulars and specifics faded over time.

In picking it up again, I was immediately drawn into the world Miller created. It is a haunting tale that, though with some dated references (written in the ‘50s), still resonates today. One can easily see, especially with the events of the past couple of years, where our world could end up in a similar situation.

The story actually consists of three vignettes, separated by centuries of time. The first looks into a monastic outpost struggling to exist in a world ravished by nuclear war. Their long dead patron, Leibowitz, is not yet a saint but their focus is on preserving what knowledge survived the war and the “Simplification” that happened afterwards (a movement to destroy all knowledge, and anyone learned, as the cause of the war – in an effort to prevent future cataclysms). The story revolves around one Brother, his discovery of Memorabilia (writing/knowledge from pre-war) and the effort for Leibowitz’s sainthood.

The second takes place much later, with city/states arising and a drive by them for dominance. While that is happening, a scholar visits the Monastery to glean what he can from the Memorabilia. While there, war breaks out, and there is a discussion on whether the information from the Memorabilia should be shared with governments or saved for a more enlightened time.

Finally, after another large time jump, the civilizations of the world are now spanning the planet again, and they have colonies on worlds around distant stars. However, there are tensions between the various nations and nuclear weapons have been redeveloped. How the Monastery is affected by the world changing events, and their reaction to it (as well as by the Catholic church in New Rome), is the core of story’s ending.

Highly recommended, this is one of the seminal books of Science-Fiction. [October 2023]

Casca: The Damned by Barry Sadler (1982; 204p).

After leaving the Persian empire, a time recounted in the previous book, Casca wanders through a declining Roman Empire. He eventually ends up at the abandoned Norse Hold he once ruled, prior to sailing to Mezo-America. Taking a break, so to speak, he lives a hand-to-mouth existence in the Hold.

Eventually an injured youth begs for sanctuary in the Hold, and Casca takes him in. Returning with the youth to his tribe, he discovers that the Huns are moving westward. Eventually Casca joins up with the Roman, and allied, forces that are trying to fend off the invasion. Also, as a complicating factor, Attila has a Chinese advisor who is well versed in Sun Tzu’s writings helping him plan his campaign. Needless to say, Casca works to thwart the Huns and keep the Roman Empire around for a few while longer.

Recommendations, and caveats, remain from previous books in this series. Only for someone that is interested in this tale, and that has read the previous volumes should dive into this one. [September 2023]

The Clock Work Image by Donald M. Mackay (1974; 112p).

What to say about this book, it delves into the Clockwork Model of the universe (having some background on the theory would be a BIG help in following this book). Mackay presents a method to merge, or at least reconcile, the contradictions between Christianity and the scientific method towards a world/universal view. The gist is that they aren’t contradictory, but complimentary because they are different viewpoints/aspects of the same thing. Therefore, taking one side or the other isn’t material as there is actually no true conflicts between them.

Only recommended to those seriously interested in this question and that have some basic understanding of the situation. [September 2023]

Hogfather by Terry Pratchett (1996; 402p).

Wow, Pratchett takes off with this one! It's Hogwatchnight (basically a renamed secular Christmas) and the beloved Hogfather is hors de combat. No one knows why, but who will drive the sleigh drawn by the fabled flying hogs? Of course, it's Death stepping up to fill the void which, inevitably, draws his granddaughter into the situation.

Meanwhile the Assassin's Guild has a rogue member that decides to wage a campaign against the Tooth Fairy (read the book to understand this one). So, will everyone get their presents on Hogwatchnight, will the Tooth Fairy be saved and what the heck will Susan end up doing.

Highly recommended, though I'd read the previous volumes to be familiar with the many returning characters. Funny and light with twists and turns that delight. [September 2023]

The Prophet by Kahlil Gibran (1951; 114p).

Gibran's highly acclaimed work that hardly needs any introduction. Basically, this is a series of short vignettes with The Prophet, who is shortly to leave the City, asked for his viewpoint on many topics. They include Pleasure, Laws, Beauty, Good and Evil, etc. Very insightful, best read and contemplated over a series of days (reading each vignette, and savoring after, to fully experience the book).

Highly recommended for anyone. [October 2023]

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Babylon 5 Quote

In "The River of Souls" – Lochley: "The mind sees what it needs to see. The soul sees...what the soul sees."

Source: But In Purple...I'm Stunning! by J. Michael Straczynski, edited by Sara "Samm" Barnes, copyright 2008.

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Game Section

Everyone Plays Games: Hangman, By Definition

Game Openings: None currently

Standbys: Gunboat Diplomacy (x0)

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"Round Rock Express"

(No-Press Gunboat, Game #1)

MN: 2021Crb32

Both Proposals Fail

ReProposed - DIAS (NVR = Yes)

New Proposals – AFI Draw (NVR = No); R/I Draw (NVR = No)

NOTE – A typo last time on the number of Italian centers owned, it was 9 instead of 8.

However, the adjustment listed (+1 unit) was correct.

Autumn 1909

France: A spa-GAS

Winter 1909

Austria unable to build
England removes f por
France removes a mar
Germany builds A BER
Italy builds F NAP

Spring 1910

Austria: F ALB s a tri, A TRI s ita a ven-tyl, A SER-bud, A BUD-vie, A RUM s ita a sev-ukr (nso)
England (CD): F BRE holds, F ENG holds, F EDI holds, F LON holds, A LPL holds
France: A GAS s a bur-par, A bur-PAR
Germany: F NTH c a bel-yor, A HOL s a kie-ruh, A tyl-tri (r-boh/otb), A UKR-rum, F nwy-NWG, A MOS-sev, A GAL-bud,
A VIE-bud, A bel-YOR, A kie-RUH, A MUN s a kie-ruh, A ber-SIL
Italy: F BLA s aus a rum, A SEV s aus a rum, A ven-TYL, F ARM s a sev, F gol-SPA(SC), A PIE s a ven-tyl, F wme-MAO,
A spa-POR, F nap-TYN

Supply Center Count

Austria: Tri, Ser, Gre, Bul, Rum, Bud
England: Edi, Lpl, Lon, Por, Bre
France: Mar, Par
Germany: Ber, Mun, Den, Hol, Swe, War, Mos, Stp, Vie, Nwy, Bel, Kie
Italy: Nap, Rom, Ven, Tun, Smy, Con, Ank, Sev, Spa
Neutral: none

Next Due Proposals; Summer and Fall 1910

Note – Split seasons are granted when 2 or more requests are received if 4+ players; 3 or less requires only 1.

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Hangman, By Definition

This is a five-round game, with each round consisting of a variable number of turns. The winner will be the person who wins the most rounds, with a tie breaker being fewest total number of turns in those winning rounds. Second tie breaker will be the greatest number of letters guessed (by total count revealed, not by individual letter).

Each round will consist of identifying a word of at least six letters. Along with each word will be the first definition given. All words and definitions will be identified by blank spaces. Words and definitions are verified in a dictionary that was my high school graduation gift (slight hint to those who might want to find the edition).

The goal is to guess the word in as few turns as possible. Each turn, all players will submit up to three different letters to be revealed. The letter submitted by the most players will be the letter revealed in the next turn. Ties will be broken by a randomized method. Additionally, each player should submit a guess for the word. Once the word is correctly identified (spelling is important), that round will end and a new round will begin. All players who guess the word in the same turn will share in the win for the round. If the word is not guessed by the end of six turns with no letter being revealed, no one will win the round.

Along with revealing letters in the word, letters will be revealed in the definition. There are no bonus points for guessing any part of the definition, it is only there to help players figure out the word. No guesses about parts of the definition will be confirmed or displayed except by the letter revealed in that round. The letters “E” and “S” can never be chosen as the letter to be revealed.

Game 2, Round Four, Turn 2:

Letter Votes: A – 3; C – 1; G – 2; I – 3; L – 2; N – 1; P – 1; T – 2; U – 2; X – 1
Revealed: I (dice roll decision with d6)

Words Guessed: (Firth) Riptide; (Howell) Refract; (Kent) Rifling; (Lischett) Radiant; (Maslen) Revenue;

(Wilson) Ruffian

Solution:

Word: R _ _ _ _ I _ (7)

Definition: _ _ _ (3) _ _ _ _ _ _ _ (7) _ _ _ (3) _ _ _ _ O _ _ _ (7)

O _ (2) RO _ _ _ _ _ (7), _ _ (2) _ _ _ (3)

_ RO _ _ (5) _ _ _ (3) _ _ _ _ _ R (7)

Never Revealed: E, S

Already Revealed: I, O, R

Words Previously Guessed in this Game: Coaster, Hangman, Laurels, Raceway, Ragtime, Rainbow, Raisins, Ravioli, Rotunda, ZYZZYVA

Game Words Correctly Guessed: Metamorphosis (Firth, Maslen, Smith, Wilson); Chromatic (Firth, Maslen, Smith); Petroglyph (Maslen)

Player Comments:

[Tom Howell] – Is it too late to join in? [WAY] – Absolutely not! It’s an “everybody plays” game so all folks are welcome to send in orders for the current turn at any point.

[Dane Maslen] – Still no idea.

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Deadline for the Next Issue of Out of the WAY:
November 8, 2023 at noon Central US Time Zone
See You Then!

Game entries, letters of comment and other material can be sent to:

wandrew88 at gmail.com; or by post to: W. Andrew York; POB 201117; Austin TX 78720-1117

Eternal Sunshine Game Section

Diplomacy, “More Than Ever”, 2021A, F 10

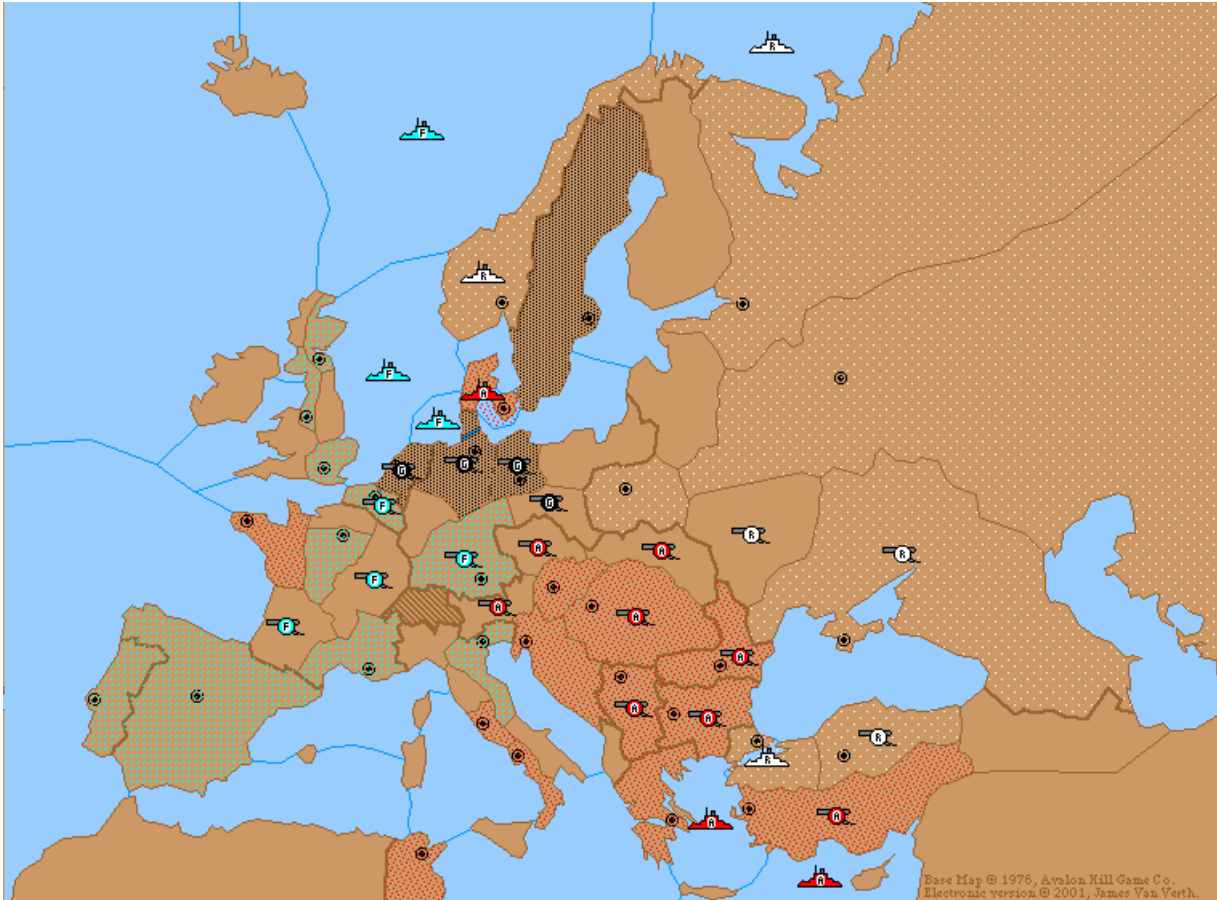
Austria: Andy Lischett – andy@lischett.com – F Aegean Sea Convoys A Greece – Smyrna, A Bohemia - Silesia (*Fails*), A Budapest Supports A Rumania, A Bulgaria - Constantinople (*Fails*), F Eastern Mediterranean Supports A Greece – Smyrna, A Greece – Smyrna, F North Sea – Denmark, A Rumania Supports A Vienna – Galicia, A Serbia Supports A Rumania, A Tyrolia Supports A Munich, A Vienna - Galicia.

France: Brad Wilson - fullfathomfive675@gmail.com - A Burgundy Supports A Munich, F Edinburgh - North Sea, A Gascony Hold, F Helgoland Bight Supports F North Sea – Denmark, A Holland – Kiel (*Disbanded*), A Munich Supports A Holland - Kiel (*Cut*), F Norwegian Sea - Norway (*Fails*), A Picardy - Belgium.

Germany: Andy York – wandrew88@gmail.com - A Berlin - Munich (*Fails*), F Denmark – Helgoland Bight (*Dislodged*, retreat to Skagerrak or Baltic Sea or Sweden or OTB), A Kiel Supports A Ruhr – Holland, A Ruhr – Holland, A Silesia Supports A Berlin - Munich (*Cut*).

Russia: Graham Wilson - grahamaw@rogers.com – A Ankara Supports F Constantinople,

F Barents Sea Supports F Norway, F Constantinople Supports A Smyrna (*Cut*),
~~A Galicia—Rumania~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Warsaw or OTB), F Norway Hold,
 A Sevastopol Supports A Galicia – Rumania,
~~A Smyrna Supports F Constantinople~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Armenia or Syria or OTB),
 A Ukraine Supports A Galicia - Rumania.



All Draw Proposals Fail
Now Proposed – A/R, A/F, G/R, A/F/G/R. Please Vote. NVR=No

Supply Center Chart

Austria:	Brest, Budapest, Bulgaria, Denmark, Greece, Naples, Rome, Rumania, Serbia, Smyrna, Trieste, Tunis, Vienna=13	Build 2
France:	Belgium, Edinburgh, Liverpool, London, Marseilles, Munich, Paris, Portugal, Spain, Venice=10	Build 3 (Only Room for 2) Even/Remove 1
Germany:	Berlin, Holland, Kiel, Sweden=4	
Russia:	Ankara, Constantinople, Moscow, Norway, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Warsaw=7	Remove 1/Even/Build 1

PRESS

Austria to Anatolia: Eenee, meenee, mynee, moe. Catch... Smyrna!

Russia -> Austria: We really should have been allies ...

Deadline for W 10/S 11 is November 11th at 7am My Time

**Deadline for the next issue of Eternal Sunshine is: November 11, 2023 at 7am
My Time (U.S. central time) –subzine deadline is earlier**