

I've fought with myself for ten valuable years whether to publish these or not.

I am not a writer. I know this because I have several ornate pieces of paper declaring that I am an engineer. I worked hard for them. I worked hard for these scripts, too. They're much less ornate, and remarkably that makes them feel so much less real, somehow. I've done what I could to pretty them up with words and events. Engineers can't write. And werewolves are vicious killers and gargoyles are chaotic evil tricksters. And so on. I know. I don't expect I have succeeded, but I've done my best, I think.

The project began in about 2013, when *Gargoyles* had been out of production for nearly 20 years. I hadn't found out about the SLG comic series yet, because I was educated and important, and above reading comics. That's actually not a fair statement, maybe. I hadn't ever had a proper entry to that whole world, and I didn't really have a reason to get interested. So I missed the SLG books, for all the good it would have done, until maybe 2014 or so.

I'd started pencilling out a few story ideas, always studiously avoiding *Gargoyles* and yet somehow constantly coming back to it and then having to chase myself away. I'd seen fanfic, you understand, but mostly very bad fanfic, and didn't want to go down that road. And then Superstorm Sandy came through, and I had a setup at my fingers, and finally I told myself, well, OK then, fanfic it is and I'll go to hell. And then thirteen episodes slipped out with remarkable speed.

And then I got the SLG paperbacks. My first volume came from eBay, and is autographed to Brennan, whom I hope knows it was sold on eBay. I do wonder a bit about that: whether Brennan is still among the living, grew up and got important and left childish things behind, and all, or even whether Brennan's gone home to the clan in the next life. I have no idea. I like it better that way. The SLG books triggered the first of a couple of wholesale rewrites. I had to write a whole bunch of characters in, and I had to write out one of Brooklyn's eyes. (It's probably still bouncing around in one of these scripts. "He opened his eyes" is so idiomatic in the plural that it fights viciously against being made singular.)

And now we have new stories coming out, changing up the past of my stories. That's all right. I may have to come back and update these as a result. I'll curse, and suffer, and it'll be my own fault in the end. This is what happens when you borrow someone else's characters.

Why I'd bother writing at all is a question I have far less trouble answering than I would expect. I have been captivated by these characters since sometime early in the first season of the original series, when it completely flipped one of those tired kidvid tropes I'd grown to hate even then (doesn't matter which, there was more than one in the end), and then went on to continue to be superbly written. That earned my respect, and the temptation to fill the vastness of its universe with stories was irresistible. But the characters...

The best way I had it described came from a dorm-mate of mine, or a biker or someone, who'd expressed marvel at his new girlfriend. He was amazed at her because she "burps, and farts, and cusses, and everything." I won't defend the immaturity of realizing that women are human beings (although I suppose I am glad it happened, anyway), but it did explain in a nutshell why I love the gargoyles so deeply.

It's because they burp, and fart, and get on the wrong train, and cheat at costume contests, and lose their tempers and get shot. They are not human at all, but they are undeniably earthy creatures, and the sense of these being real creatures, the ensoulment of these people, is just remarkably endearing. To some extent, I guess my defense of all I've written is that it was meant to keep those souls alive. I think I have. I hope I have.

If it is good, then I am happy it is good. If bad, I am heartily sorry to have offended you, and can only plead for my defense that I've carried these stories for a decade, mortality calls, and I have to put them down and walk away sometime. These stories are, for better or worse. To take them with me would be to take the manic laughter and the abysmal sadness that they've given me out of the world, and I don't know I could justify that to myself. I'm halfway through life, or a little more. The bargain was struck, and the time for bashfulness is over. Hell is other people, as the man says, and it's time to go to hell.

There's a great line in the introduction to *Slaughterhouse-Five*, where Kurt Vonnegut writes that his book was terrible because it was written by a pillar of salt. I'm suddenly getting that, maybe. I'm doing my best, certainly. Vonnegut gets a bit of a call-out in these pages. Probably more than one, but *Breakfast of Champions* definitely inspired the blacklight scene in the third episode.

This collection is dedicated to my fervent hope that Greg Weisman never gets wind of its existence. He deserves better, too.

Excelsior, y'all.

—ARM