

FILM | TV | GAMING | BOOKS

# METEOR

ISSUE 2 | AUGUST 2020

**PLUS**

The Future  
of One  
Piece  
&  
Being a  
Twilight  
fangirl

## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

**Philophobia**  
Creators find  
success:  
“I’m excited  
to quit my  
day job.”

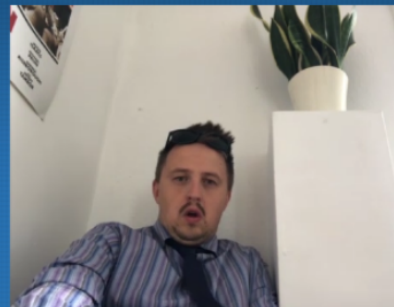
## SCOTT PILGRIM TURNS 10

We take a  
special  
in-depth  
look at  
this cult  
classic

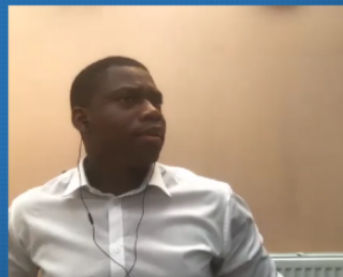
# The Othercide

“You discover the truth is more complicated”





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**BAMELESS**  
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**"A CONVERSATION STARTER"**

**"TOSH... BY DIVERSITY  
 MYOPIC MARXIST PEOPLE"**

**"FUNNIEST THING TO COME  
 OUT OF LOCKDOWN"**

**"CRINGE INDUCING"**

BAMEless focuses on the panic within one uninspired boardroom as they fear they are going to be on the wrong side of history.

Inspired by the real experiences of Black and Asian workers, and starring This Is England actor Kieran Hardcastle, writer Derry Shillitto and producer Leon Hady have created a short comedy WEB SERIES that will spark conversation around the true meaning of diversity of thought.

You can watch every episode online at [www.derryshillitto.com/bameless](http://www.derryshillitto.com/bameless).



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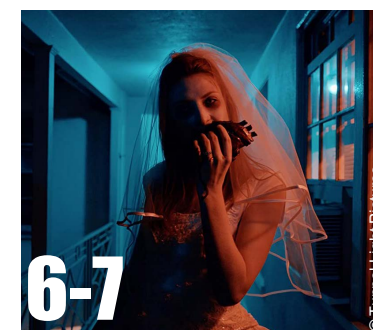
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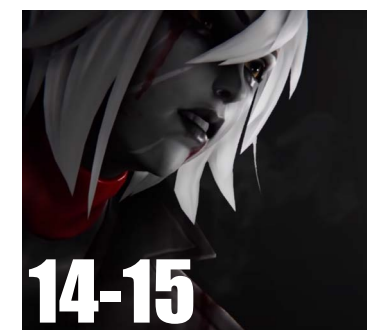
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## A WORD FROM one of our editors

This is it, our second ever issue of Meteor Magazine. Last time, George introduced what has been his passion project, now I get to tell you a little bit about our lovely magazine - which he so happily let's me design.

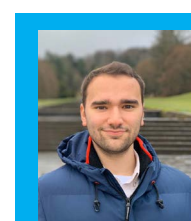
Somehow this is issue has been more fun to make than the last, we've tweaked a few pages and got more contributors in (big thank you to everyone). It's been great from start to finish and we're looking to expand soon. Stay tuned!

We have some amazing interviews for you this month. Charlie Vogelsang talks to the crew who made Othercide (page 14), which is incredibly revealing about their inspirations. In the world of TV James Mason gives Fringe some much needed TLC (page 10), and we're also celebrating Scott Pilgrim vs The World's 10th birthday with two pieces. I hope you enjoy!



Chris King, Gaming Co-Editor



GEORGE WHITE,  
FILM EDITOR

## NEWS



Joe (left) Russo to write The Gray Man

**£150 MILLION AND RUSSOS ON BOARD**

Ryan Gosling and Chris Evans are set to star in *The Gray Man*, an action thriller directed by Joe and Anthony Russo. The brains behind the beloved *Avengers: Infinity War* and *Endgame*.

A Netflix Original, the movie is expected to boast a budget upwards of £150 million, taking the record from the *Irishman* which cost £121.5 million.

Joe Russo has already penned a script, with regular Marvel collaborators Christopher Markus and Stephen McFeely helping to refine the story.

Speaking to *Deadline*, Anthony Russo said: "The movie is a real mano a mano between those two great actors who represent two different versions of the CIA, in what it can be, and what it can do."

**THE END OF AN ERA FOR S.H.I.E.L.D.**

Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. came to an end in August after seven successful seasons on ABC - and

broke records with its final two-hour episode. According to entertainment website *TVLine*, S.H.I.E.L.D.'s series finale averaged 1.35 million viewers in the United States, making it their most-watched episode since its debut in 2013.

The superhero show, which followed *The Avengers'* Phil Coulson and his team of agents was often influenced by developments on the big screen.

The show's final instalment was no different, with the team having to navigate the Quantum Realm made famous by the *Ant-Man* movies.

Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. has gathered a cult following and has picked up a number of accolades over the years - including Best Network Television Series Release at the 2014 Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy & Horror Films awards.



Time travel galore

**GHOST OF TSUSHIMA SETS RECORD**

*Ghost of Tsushima*, from gaming studio Sucker Punch, has become the fastest-selling title in their history, figures from the NPD Group have revealed.

The game, which follows samurai Jin as he seeks to rescue his uncle from Mongol territory, became the fifth best-selling game of 2020 so far, and Sony's quickest-selling new IP on the PlayStation 4.

Spending on overall game content reached \$3.6 billion

in July, increasing by 32% on the year before, according to NPD analyst Mat Piscatella.

He said: "Year-to-date spending reached \$26 billion, 21% higher than the same period in 2019. Content, hardware, and accessory spending are each over 20% higher when compared to the same period."

Call of Duty: Modern Warfare remains the best-selling game of the year to date.



Rebels or Imperial Fleet? Only one can win

**590 HARDBACKS TO HIT THE SHELVES**

Almost 600 hardbacks are expected to be published in early September as books delayed due to Coronavirus are finally released to stores.

On 3 September, known as "Super Thursday" in the industry, publishers across the country will bring out their biggest titles, including Richard Osman's first crime novel and Ant and Dec's joint memoir *Once Upon a Tyne*.

In total, 590 hardback titles are due for publication, seeing an increase

of 28% on the year before.

Waterstones' Bea Carvalho told the *Guardian*: "It's it's about finding space for all of those books and making sure each of them finds the right audience. This year we've found that bookseller recommendations and the power of that interaction has become more important than ever."



600 hardbacks to hit stores

LOVE IS SWEET, FUN, AND F\*\$%ING TERRIFYING

## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

"WE DECIDED TO  
RISK IT ALL  
AND MAX OUT  
CREDIT  
CARDS"

- TYLER COLE



AARON BURT EMILY PEARSE DAVID LENGEL

**PHILOPHOBIA:**  
OR THE FEAR OF FALLING IN LOVE





It wasn't always running away from zombies

Writer-performer Aaron Burt and director Tyler Cole discuss their genre-crossing independent movie Philophobia, their plans for the future and the importance of air conditioning in California.



GEORGE WHITE,  
FILM EDITOR

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**How did Philophobia come about? What was the inspiration?**

**Aaron Burt:** I was in a place where I had given a lot in a relationship and that person kept asking for more and more, and I gave and gave - and then when she inevitably dumped me I became very closed off. I thought the mechanism of love was broken in me and oddly enough I ran into that term [of philophobia].

**Tyler Cole:** We had made a short film version of Philophobia with the goal of raising financing to make the feature film version. After years of trying (and failing) to secure financing, we decided to risk it all and max out credit cards, sell everything we had, and put all of our time and energy into making this movie happen.

**The blends a number of different genres, including comedy, horror and romance. How difficult was that to balance?**

**AB:** It's strange. We never went into the film thinking, "We need to be tonally this way in this section and tonally that way

in this other section." We thought that as long as we just play it as straight and truthful as we can it should work.

**TC:** That was something that we were relatively comfortable with. Most of the projects we are working on involve some level of genre blending. We really just wanted to focus on finding the truth in every scene and keeping the humor as grounded in reality as possible.



Chase scenes, horror, love, comedy - Philophobia has it all

**Were there any challenges to building an independent movie around a horror theme?**

**AB:** Oh my god, yes [laughs]. Everything relied on quality horror-like practical effects/makeup (Lee Madison did amazing and was a one woman team) and solid visual effects, which our team did great with considering the limited money we had. It's the section I think doesn't quite work but works well enough to get our point across.

**TC:** Of course. We actually gravitated towards shooting something with horror elements because it's supposedly the easiest way to find an audience when you're making a low budget independent film with no stars. But it was one of the hardest elements for us to try to incorporate naturally in what is really more of a comedy film.

**Were there any particularly funny moments?**

**AB:** Apart from one crew member who we had some struggles with, the entire shoot was fun. All of the driving scenes were funny because we had no way to shoot them properly. For the Uber scene, we had our cinematographer in the passenger seat and Tyler was in the boot with the monitor as we drove around Hollywood. Everyone was super fun and on board with all the crap because they believed in the project.

**TC:** The night shoots in Riverside, California were hilarious. We rented an Airbnb in the middle of July and found out when we got there that there was no air conditioning. So after a 12 hour night shoot, we ran to Home Depot and bought all the fans and window AC units left. Even though it was miserably hot for three nights, we all sat around playing games and hanging out after the long days on set. Nobody was sleeping much so we were all delirious and it was amazing.

**The film has a score of 100% on Rotten Tomatoes. How have you found the feedback to the movie?**

**AB:** Most of it was very constructive and it was all things we expected. We knew what our weaknesses were and what our strengths were, even before finishing post. I think critics have a better understanding of the financial restrictions we were under and could see what we were trying to do with the limited resources we had.

**TC:** We're super grateful that critics have enjoyed the movie. It's always daunting sending it off and waiting to hear back.



Audience-wise it's been pretty mixed but mostly positive and constructive. We get some hate because people are thinking it's more of a horror film when it's not. For the most part, though, the reception has been pretty positive and about what we expected going into the release.

**What do you guys have planned for the future?**

**AB:** We started pitching my most straight forward script about a radio personality locked in his place of work while a frequency is infecting people. It was the first script I wrote and it seems to be more favourable during the current climate, and we actually just locked a huge producer for it. So needless to say I'm excited to quit my day job and make an actual budget feature!

**TC:** We have a few scripts in development and we're excited to start our next film as soon as we can. Our next feature is a horror/thriller called STATIC. It's the first script I read of Aaron's and the reason I wanted to start working with him so badly. It's incredible and I'm itching to get it filmed and out to audiences. We're hoping to be on set in early 2021. 📺



# THE WRIGHT WAY TO DO IT

Why was Edgar Wright's Scott Pilgrim vs The World a box office flop but also a cultural phenomenon?



RYAN HUTTON  
CONTRIBUTOR

People just weren't ready for a stylised action-comedy about 22-year-old Scott Pilgrim (Michael Cera) defeating the seven evil exes of Ramona Flowers (Mary Elizabeth Winstead) in order to date her. So how then, 10 years later, has the film amassed so much love that the cast and creators have been able to host a successful table read of the script to raise money for Water for People?

Post-theatrical release, a lot of people fell in love with Scott Pilgrim on DVD – and in the pre-streaming service era, your film had to be pretty special to pull this off. But why was it such a success?

First, let's appreciate that pacing. Scott Pilgrim vs. the World flies by in an instant. Despite this, Wright remains faithful to much of Brian Lee O'Malley's original graphic novels. Shifting the focus from Scott Pilgrim's life to solely Scott's relationship with Ramona was pivotal in making the film work as a cohesive, fast-paced narrative.

Unfortunately, much of the graphic novels' content had to be cut, though not always for the worse. For example, in the film the transition from outside Ramona's house to the Rockit (where Scott must fight Ramona's first evil ex) is seamless, with the cut to the Rockit finishing Scott's sentence. In the graphic novel there's a somewhat unnecessary moment between the two scenes, which ruins the pacing.

These quick and creative scene transitions are all over Wright's adaptation and are pivotal to upholding a flow that makes it so enjoyable to watch.

The adaptation process isn't all about the cuts that were made, however. The film manages to feel like a graphic novel without being as obnoxiously in your face about it as Ang Lee's Hulk (2003). There's a moment when Scott is transitioning from one relationship to another where, in the graphic novel, we see nothing but the faces of his ex and current girlfriend between his reactions to thinking about each of them.

The page's black gutter (that space between the panels) bleeds over onto the black panel borders, emphasising that these girls are the only thing on Scott's mind. Wright lifts this image directly from the graphic novels and allows it to transition across the screen from left to right.

Wright not only takes the visuals from the page he also reworks them for the screen. The faint lines used to form the image in Scott's dream sequence denote a weak relationship with reality. Using over-exposed lighting, Wright successfully adapts one medium to another while maintaining the same intended effect. This graphic novel language adapted for film gives Scott Pilgrim vs. the World an utterly distinct feeling from many comic adaptations out there (rivalled only by the 60s Batman show, of course).

Adapting over 1000 pages into a single film comes at a price. A few key characters from the graphic novels were cut entirely, with many others, such as Kim (Alison Pine), having significantly reduced roles. Within the context of the film, it works. Could it have been even better served as a series, like Umbrella Academy?

It could allow Envy Adams (Brie Larson) to be fully fleshed out as a character and a victim of her own vanity. The moment in which Ramona breaks up with Scott consists of Scott moping for a few minutes and then deciding to fight Ramona's final evil ex; in the graphic novel's focus on Scott's life as a whole allows for a slow build up to him losing everything (friends, home, girlfriend) around the same time. Which hits harder. Scott then must wrestle with his own demons over a few months, before finding the courage to save Ramona.

That said, the graphic novels meet a few pacing issues that Wright fixes using the medium of film. By the time the fight with the twins rolls around in the graphic novels, you can feel O'Malley's slight regret with writing Ramona to have seven evil exes as opposed to, say, five. While Wright does not develop the twins as characters, he changes their fight radically and creates the most epic fight in the film.

Furthermore, many of the characters in the graphic novels (especially Scott) are insufferable, yet the film only makes Scott insufferable, though does so in a way that is digestible and works as a moral lesson. Scott's ex, Knives (Ellen Wong), is written to be obsessed over Scott for

nearly a year, despite Scott cheating on her. The film taking place over a few weeks makes Knives' obsession with Scott brief and therefore a realistic reaction of somebody coming out of a first relationship (well, realistic within the confines of the world of Scott Pilgrim).

Writing from the perspective of Scott, it is natural that he appears to be the greatest guy around. Making Scott's design simple in the novels allows many impressionable readers to project themselves onto him, teaching them that they won't receive severe repercussions for being lazy or cheating on their ex. Scott Pilgrim is a horrible person whose growth is vaguely hinted at in the final of six graphic novels. In contrast, Wright slaps the audience with Scott's improvements, making it obvious that you are not supposed to be like him from the off, but should learn to grow like he does.

Despite the limitations created by length and pacing, Wright's

Scott Pilgrim vs. the World is arguably better than its source material. Not only does Wright successfully adapt the graphic novels, he improves upon their shortcomings. Both O'Malley's graphic novels and Wright's film are well worth your time and Wright's film captures the graphic novels excellently, cementing itself as one of the best (if not the best) adaptations of all time. ■







Fringe defined itself by being hardcore sci-fi

# WHY NO LOVE FOR FRINGE?

One of the least talked about sci-fi shows of this millennia, Fringe may not be Star Trek or Firefly but we think it deserves your attention.



JAMES MASON,  
CONTRIBUTOR



Fringe, at a glance, bears more than a passing resemblance to The X-Files but with more of a sci-fi bent. Despite its quality and the parallels with the more popular aforementioned show, it doesn't get the love it deserves. Here is why you should take the plunge on one of the most underrated TV shows of all-time. The series starts off with a viral outbreak aboard a passenger jet, part of an unfortunate series of events called "The Pattern". This gives rise to a lot of freaky yet entertaining episodes with a loose overall arc. The arc's strands weave closer by the second half of season two, after which it goes all in. Let's just say it involves alternate Earths, bio-engineered

supersoldiers, overly powerful tech companies and other delightful oddities. A great show is nothing without a group of characters that we can get behind and connect to. Anna Torv's "Olivia Dunham" is sharp, focussed, driven and has a strong moral compass. You may not love her immediately but she commands your attention and respect. Her no-nonsense attitude needs a counterpart. Walter Bishop is the perfect character to add comic relief. John Noble plays Walter with gusto, gravitas and a lot of humour, all the while never being a joke of a part. Joshua Jackson plays Walter's son "Peter Bishop" who has a lot of unresolved issues without being overly angsty.

Jasika Nicole brings a lovely touch of likeability and serves the show as a proxy for the viewer and her role as the empathetic Astrid Farnsworth is pretty much the heart and the soul of the series. The figure of authority comes in the form of Lance Reddick's "Phillip Broyles", who initially is combative to Olivia Dunham but is honorable and protective of the team he leads. Reddick is also the best at sighing on camera I've seen. These five make up the core cast of the show and all of them were perfectly cast in their roles. They are so good that the writers gleefully embraced plotting storylines they knew would be fun and challenging for the actors. Thanks to there being an alternate Earth as part of the main plot over 5 seasons, they were given plenty of opportunity to experiment with different takes on the characters. Olivia had "Fauxlivia" who was noticeably different in attitude and Walter had "Walternate". Astrid was still Astrid but radically different as a higher functioning and socially distant version of her. But it wasn't all alternate realty high jinx. A running theme was loss and people doing everything to reunite with their loved ones. This gave the show some extra depth. Fringe, when not restricted to more "weird of the week" episodes, really shone brightly. That's not to say that their standalone episodes weren't fun, they were gory and brilliantly "science gone mad" at times. And that's why in my eyes Fringe was a superior show to The X-Files. Granted, Fringe owes its very existence to the pioneering 90s series, but it managed to avoid the things that have hamstrung and impacted The X-Files' legacy. Keeping Mulder and Scully essentially the same for over 10 years stretched an already fantastical show beyond belief.



A will they won't they to rival X-Files



From FBI to far from home, Fringe has it all

The "will they, won't they" romance between Scully and Mulder was another thing that they would hint at but never fully embrace. Fringe did put some roadblocks at first between Olivia and Peter, but they got things going in a way that felt realistic and organic. In the end, their romance felt much more believable than their X-Files counterparts, which is just another reason this show deserves more in the way of mainstream popularity. The mythology of The X-Files' to this day still isn't resolved and left the series a muddled mess. This has left it in lower regard than it deserves, as it set a high standard for a genre show. The final season was maybe a bit too unfettered but they peppered it with some great callbacks to the previous seasons and had a heartfelt and definitive end to the adventures of the characters that were so well played. I may seem a bit too gushing in praise for Fringe at the expense of The X-Files but I was, and still am, a huge fan of what The X-Files did. And some of the episodes are, to this day, the gold standard of brilliantly realised storytelling and technical production. Thanks to X-Files, Fringe got to be a better overall series as they saw what the best decisions to make were with a series of this genre. And yet, whenever I mention this show, I am met with blank looks. But for those that have watched the series with Olivia Dunham and the Bishops, they smile and say that it was a wonderfully weird, heartfelt show. It truly deserves to be rescued from the fringes of fandom. 📺



# ONE PIECE TO RULE THEM ALL

We take a look at the success of anime and manga One Piece, telling the story of a series that is looking to take over the world.

In the West, the word “anime” is most likely to conjure up images of Pokémon or Dragon Ball Z - but over in Japan, the first thing to come to mind will almost always be the swashbuckling saga that is One Piece.

The franchise began life in July 1997 as a manga series by then-amateur Eiichiro Oda, and tells the story of a boy named Luffy who dreams of being “King of the Pirates”. To achieve this, Luffy - who accidentally eats a cursed fruit that gives him a stretchy, rubbery body - must find the treasure left behind by the previous Pirate King, Gol D. Roger, which is hidden “all in one piece”.

The keys to the longevity of the series have been there since the start: its excellent character development and world-building. With each island Luffy explores and each crewmate he recruits, the world Oda has created becomes increasingly rich, with individual story arcs as engrossing as the wider narrative. Because of this, the studio Toei Animation was quick to adapt these escapades into an animated TV series for a whole new audience.

One Piece's anime has aired a new episode almost every week since 1999, with the first season chronicling the formation of the core “Straw Hat” crew: captain Luffy, swordsman Zoro, navigator Nami, marksman Usopp and chef Sanji. These episodes found their way to UK shores in the form of the botched 4Kids localisation in 2005, which attempted to erase the series' mature elements by redrawing pistols as water guns and cigarettes as lollipops. The company soon



It's not all smiles for the One Piece gang

gave up and dropped their version of One Piece within a year.

The material covered by 4Kids has since been rereleased on DVD in the UK in its original unaltered format, as well as subsequent arcs including the Straw Hats' infiltration of marine base Enies Lobby, the Tim Burton-infused Thriller Bark saga, and the explosive events of the Paramount War. Each of these stories has seen characters learn new skills, reveal the secrets of their pasts, and share their dreams for the future - strengthening the bonds between the crew and the viewers' investment in their journey.

It's not all smooth sailing, though. Sometimes the anime's pacing slows right down to avoid catching up with the manga, and if Toei's best animators are occupied with other projects, the animation quality suffers too. Fortunately, sometimes said projects are feature-length One Piece films, which tell self-



Yes they really did replace a cigarette with a lollipop

contained adventures fans can embark on in under two hours. Strong World (2009), the tenth movie, was actually written by Oda himself so he could pit the Straw Hats against Shiki the Golden Lion, a nefarious pirate only fleetingly mentioned in the main series.

Oda also contributed to the next feature, simply titled 'Z', albeit this time only as a creative supervisor. It was with Z (2012) that One Piece really tapped into its cinematic potential. Director Tatsuya Nagamine crafted a high-stakes blockbuster with lavish battlefields, fluid fight scenes and a story dissecting Oda's recurring themes of justice and the generation gap through a compelling new antagonist.

Projects like these really put the scope of Oda's work into perspective. On numerous occasions he's stated that, despite the manga running over four times its initially-planned length, some of his ideas will remain unseen. But by collaborating with the staff working on the TV, film and video-game adaptations, these cutting-room-floor ideas can flourish into enjoyable offshoots of the One Piece universe.

23 years in, One Piece remains a pop culture giant. Oda won a Guinness World Record when the manga's sales surpassed 320 million in 2015, and now

fans worldwide can read the latest weekly chapter of the manga for free on the official app. The anime has also followed suit with simulcasts on Crunchyroll. It even got its first ever UK theatrical release this year with the 14th film, Stampede, which saw over 50 returning characters fight over a compass leading directly to Roger's treasure.

You can probably guess how that plays out, but the current ongoing arc has nonetheless hit some major milestones, including a flashback of Roger's life and hints regarding what his “One Piece” could be. The Straw Hats have also recruited their tenth (and possibly final) member ahead of an impending war against the series' most powerful pirate crew - the conclusion could be in sight.

Even if that were the case, a new era of One Piece may only just be beginning. A live-action Netflix series is currently in the works and is set to begin filming in South Africa by the end of 2020. Producer Marty Adelstein has predicted it could be the most expensive TV drama ever made, and Oda is on board to ensure that it'll be a faithful adaptation. Will One Piece be the next Game of Thrones or will this be the worst thing to happen to the franchise since 4Kids? Whatever happens, nothing will put fans off following Luffy's journey until the very end.

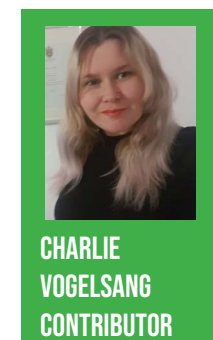


JAMIE MORRIS,  
CONTRIBUTOR



”  
**23  
YEARS  
IN ONE  
PIECE  
REMAINS  
A POP  
CULTURE  
GIANT**





CHARLIE  
VOGELSANG  
CONTRIBUTOR

# INTERVIEW

## THE OTHER SIDE OF OTHERCIDE

We talk to the team behind Othercide and find out just how this turn-based gem was made

The studio behind Othercide, Lightbulb Crew, are an indie Franco-Swedish development team made of two separate studios across Northern Europe. Meteor Media spoke to Lightbulb Crew's CEO and director Anders Larsson, Art director Alexandre Chaudret, and lead producer Jérôme Smidt to discuss the lore and biggest inspirations in Othercide.

**What influenced you to create the horror-themed, turn-based strategy game?**

**Anders Larsson:** Initially, I set out to create a turn-based game that was more dynamic than traditional games. We spent a bunch of time watching action movies to figure out what makes action epic and how to transfer it into a turn-based system. We realised that some of the best turn-based games would make terrible action movies.

**Alexandre Chaudret:** A lot of people think that one of the main inspirations for Othercide was Sin City, especially for the black/white/red vibration in the Art Direction. Strangely enough, Sin City was never a primordial reference for Othercide as the project was

digging for a long time in the universes of Lovecraft or the World of Darkness.

After hours of crafting and thinking, Othercide kind of became independent and had a universe vast enough for us to find all the inspirations and solutions we needed to build the game.

**Othercide is set in a nightmarish realm with creatures that feed off human suffering. What message were you trying to achieve?**

**AC:** The lore of Othercide is full of symbolism and metaphors. The game itself is less on suffering and pain rather than how do we confront those emotions? It's a battle between forces that could be identified as good and evil at first - but you discover that the truth is more complicated.

We wanted Othercide to bring another layer of comprehension for the players who were ready to unveil our secrets. This psychological dimension gave the game structure and pillars a flavour quite different from what we can see in the tactical genre.

We wanted to create a project that felt quite personal, that can resonate with our players on a personal level. These kinds of projects really resonate with our audience.



© Lightbulb Crew



The daughters are central to the game's mechanics

© Lightbulb Crew

**Othercide's art design is unique and extremely different to other games in the genre with the art style and colour palette. How did you decide on the art direction?**

**AC:** Very early in production, we decided to go different from the other games in the tactical genre. Trying to find another path than the usual sci-fi military or medieval heroic fantasy universes that were constituting the majority of the tactical titles.

The game-changer was when we decided to add personal experiences in both the designs and the lore. A lot of the creatures and topics you tackle in Othercide are born from the nightmares of the art team, and mine especially.

When I was a teenager, I contracted a blood disease that stuck me in bed for several months. At night, the pain was making me see things such as creatures nibbling my bones, hiding in the dark corners of my room. Those visions inspired part of the monsters of Othercide.

**There are three classes of warriors that you begin with in Othercide (Blademaster, Shieldbearer and Soulslinger), how did you decide on these types?**

**AC:** The trio roster of Daughters came after a lot of maturation and iterations. It has been a lot of work for Anders and the game-designers to get those three archetypes both unique and acting with synergy in a gameplay that was quite complicated and with a lot of imbricated ramifications.

Each Daughter is a replica of an original warrior, the Mother, that

modeled her memories to create this legion to fight the Child and Suffering.

**What was your favourite boss fight in the game?**

**Jérôme Smidt:** First of all the character design is astonishing and the environmental artists truly aced the visual composition of the level. I really love the fight against the Surgeon. It requires a whole new level of strategy and skills. Ultimately, the music in the background, which is bonded with the phases of the boss, adds epicness to this memorable fight.

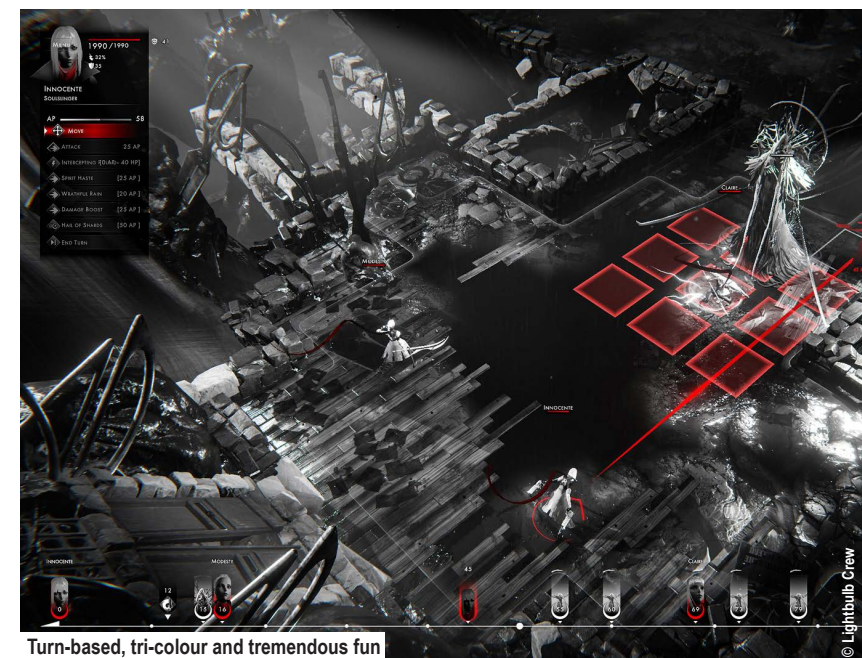
**What has been the biggest challenge you had to overcome during the game's development?**

**JS:** Releasing the game during the pandemic outbreak has been one of the biggest challenges I have had to face in my career. However, we had strikes in France back earlier in December 2019 and that was a good rehearsal.

**What are Lightbulb Crew planning for the future?**

**AL:** We want to keep supporting Othercide for the future and are now working on the next update coming out in about a month or so. In the meantime we are starting to draw up plans for our upcoming projects. There's a lot of work left before we will be able to talk about any of it yet though!

**Want to know more about Othercide? Check out our website for a full review!**



Turn-based, tri-colour and tremendous fun

© Lightbulb Crew





© Bethesda



DEWI  
HARGREAVES,  
CONTRIBUTOR

Could we be seeing gaming's sweetheart fall?

GAMING

# BETHESDA'S BLUNDER

We take a look at how the gaming's maestro fell so hard, so quickly and why they need to improve.

Until recently, Bethesda Game Studios were the golden boy of the gaming world. They could do nothing wrong. Though their games were always a bit wonky— glitches and crashes were fairly common — their rich worlds and immersive storytelling made them beloved, as their close rivals like Blizzard saw their reputations drop.

I'm sure you remember the enormous hype in the months before Fallout 4's release. Bethesda seemed to encourage it, releasing teaser videos and drip-feeding information to the fans. It debuted to rave reviews from leading games journalism sites too. The world was ready for it to be a modern masterpiece and the perfect successor to Fallout 3.

But public reception was mixed. Initial impressions were good. But as the months rolled by and people kept

playing, many seemed to come to the same conclusion: there wasn't much there. Some on social media were talking about going back to Skyrim — four years old, by that point — or even Oblivion, and saying those games just felt like they had more soul to them.

The game failed to win over fans, but Bethesda themselves largely escaped criticism. All developers flounder at some point, right?

But there is no excuse for the fiasco that was Fallout 76's launch.

By all accounts, the game should have been a roaring success for Bethesda. They achieved the impossible: they adapted the old engine for multiplayer. It was a landmark achievement, an example that Bethesda could now do things they couldn't do before.

So what went wrong?

First, the engine wasn't stable. This

isn't such a problem in a single player game, but people are less forgiving of bugs when they're in a multiplayer world where all players are in competition with each other. Combine this with yet more microtransactions (which riddled Fallout 4 and Skyrim) and the inescapable removal of NPCs and you have a recipe for disaster.

Kudos to Bethesda, they haven't dropped the game. They've put great effort into improving it, for free, and as it stands the game is much better than it was at launch. It suggests Bethesda sees this as a reputation-defining issue. In their opinion, if the game was allowed to flop, it could have been the end of the Fallout franchise. 76 was supposed to carry the flag for Fallout for the foreseeable future, much like how The Elder Scrolls: Online has kept people talking about that series even though the last major game in the series is nearly a decade old.

They've saved Fallout, but it's taken over a year of unanticipated, extra work, work which they undoubtedly hoped would go into their next project.

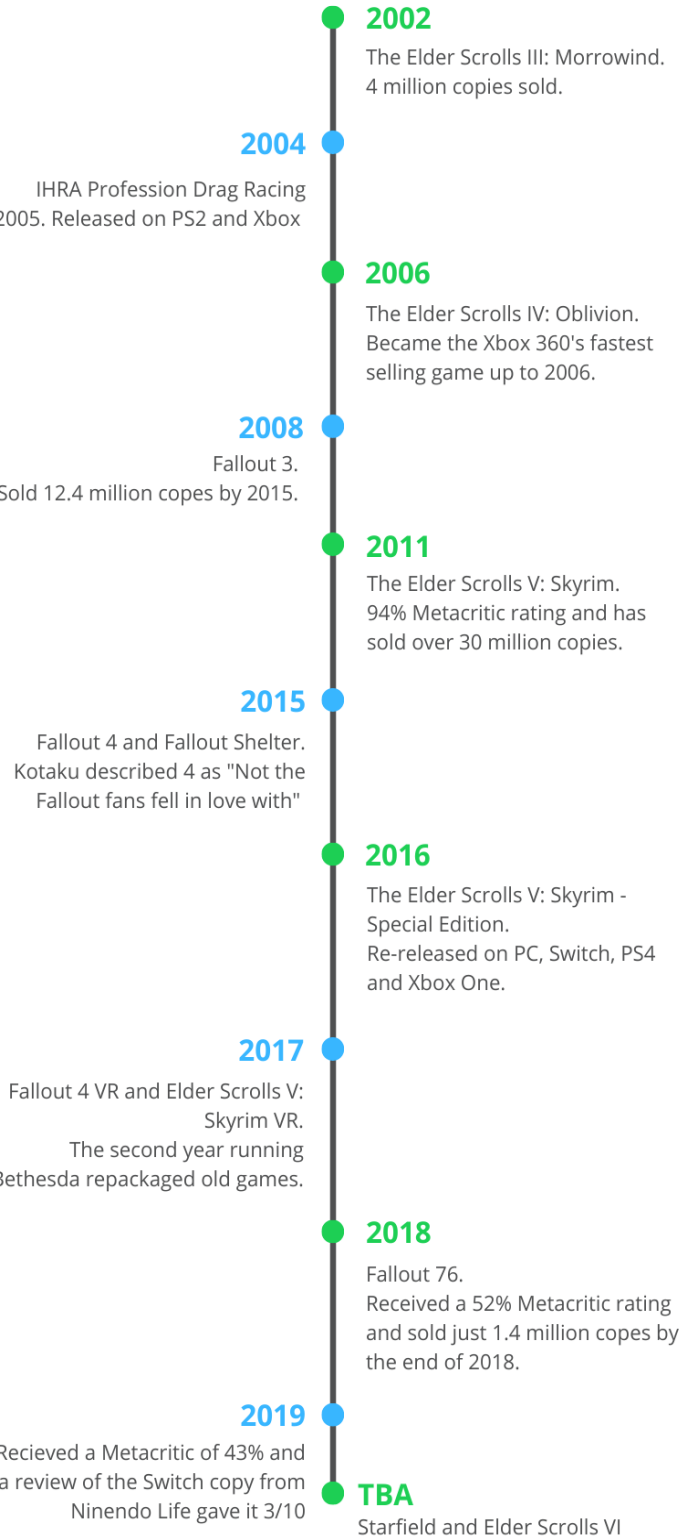
Which brings us to Starfield. According to rumour, Starfield has been planned since around 2005, when development of The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion was wrapping up. It will be the first new IP for the company since 2008 — and no doubt a relished opportunity to work on something new after a decade of cycling between the same two franchises.

It is also a unique chance for a fresh start. It is a chance to sweep away the controversy of recent years and present a new face. A chance to remind people that the Bethesda they love — the Bethesda that got 92% positive reviews on Steam for Skyrim — still exists.

This is their moment to prove they are still capable of making a single player game with great roleplaying, an expansive world, thoughtful storytelling and meaningful decision-making. That might sound like a high bar —and it is — but it's one that Bethesda has consistently been able to hit in the past. It is a chance to save their reputation.

Let's hope it's a good game. 🍀

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF BETHESDA



All stats are according to Metacritic and Polygon



# MY SPARKLY SECRET

So, it's time to finally admit it. I think it's time I told the truth. I love Twilight.

**Y**es, you heard me. I love Twilight! I will shout it from the rooftops if I have to: I adore that sparkle-filled vegetarian vampire saga.

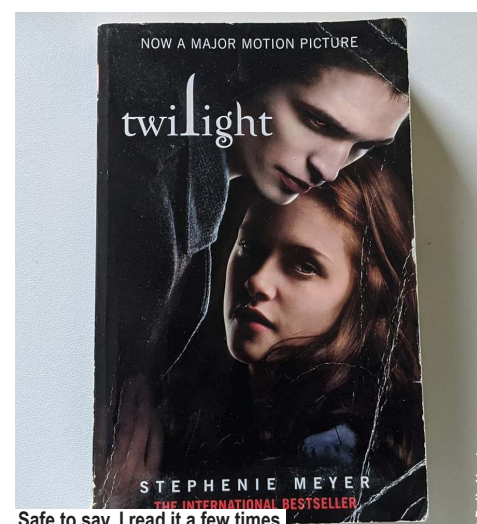
Though, don't get me wrong, I'm not one of those "Twi-hards" that were popular back in the days when the film came out, individuals who were obsessed with Twilight and its actors to the point of slight concern. No shade at all to those people, you do you, but my love of Twilight won't have me get a vampire bite tattoo, and my fangs come out solely at Halloween.

This love for Edward Cullen's saga has come to head in these last few weeks, as the fifth twilight book, Midnight Sun, was released at the beginning of August.

Midnight Sun is basically a rewrite of the first book in the saga, titled Twilight, but this time from Edward's perspective. While this might sound like a bit of a cop out, Midnight Sun is twice as long as the original book, and promised fans new insight and plot lines, and just generally more revelations about the Cullens and the vampire world they live in.

The first Twilight book was released back in 2005, with the other three books in the four-strong saga released yearly after that, and the final book Breaking Dawn (or at least what we thought was the final book) released in 2008. Midnight Sun was going to be released at the time of Twilight's peak. However, there was a fair bit of scandal around this book that led to its twelve-year limbo.

Back in 2008, Midnight Sun was purely in the first draft stage, with



Safe to say, I read it a few times

author Stephanie Meyer having written only a few chapters at the time. However, these chapters were somehow leaked to the internet, and it was safe to say that Meyer was pissed. Distraught that the unfinished manuscript had been blasted over the internet, Meyer decided that the Midnight Sun project was on hold indefinitely.

"If I tried to write Midnight Sun now, in my current frame of mind, James would probably win and all the Cullens would die, which wouldn't dovetail too well with the original story", she said in an announcement on her blog, and released the chapters herself to her readers.

At the time, we all thought that was it. I remember reading the chapters and thinking "huh, this sounds good, but oh well we'll never get to read it." That is, until 2020 came along.

Of course, I don't need to tell you that 2020 has been a tumultuous year,



The first film took a whopping \$402,280,159 worldwide alone, the entire movie franchise grossed \$3,317,470,739

“**EDWARD CULLEN IS NOT THE PRINCE CHARMING WE SHOULD ALL HOPE FOR**”

but it has led to a new Twilight book and arguably Taylor Swift's best album, so I'm choosing to remember it based on these highlights. It's not crystal clear why Meyer decided to head back to her computer and finish the book, and though it's sold 2 million copies in the UK alone it has received mixed reviews from readers.

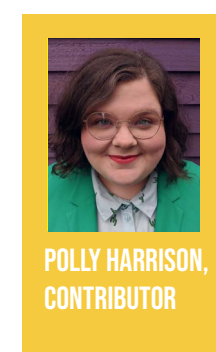
To be honest with you, I'm not sure why I like Twilight so much. I think it's more of the romanticism of the relationship combined with cool supernatural lore that creates a really interesting world to explore. Vampire and supernatural romance were all the rage in YA fiction when I was younger, and to be honest, I think we all related to Bella – a gawky awkward seventeen year old girl who somehow caught the eye of a century old god.

Don't get me wrong, I get why Twilight is bad. It romanticises toxic relationships in a way that is very unsettling. As a 13 year old, the idea of Edward Cullen, or a similar hottie, breaking into my room to watch me sleep was so alluring, I used to imagine I was being watched when I was sleeping. That combined with

a lot of other abusive tendencies – following Bella around, stopping her from seeing her friends and just general mild creepery, Edward Cullen is not the Prince Charming we should all hope for.

Probably the most criminal thing of all in the books is how boring Edward and Bella are compared to the rest of the vampires. We learn so very little about the Cullens' past; Carlisle is four hundred years old for goodness sake and he gets about two pages explaining his history. I'm so desperate for more about the actual interesting characters and the world of the vampires that I really hope we get some of that in Midnight Sun. Leave out the love triangles and the sparkles – give me backstory!

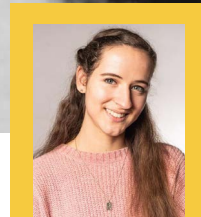
Meyer apparently also has two more Twilight books in the works, though it might be a while before we get to read them. This begs the question, is still relevant in today's world? Has YA moved on from the vaps of my youth? Midnight Sun really is more of a fan service, and as a proud and excitable fan myself I can't wait to get stuck in and go back to Forks for my next vampy fix. 🧛



POLLY HARRISON, CONTRIBUTOR

BOOKS



FAITH PRING,  
CONTRIBUTOR

## BOOKS

# THE ART OF THE BIOGRAPHY

From real to fictional, we take a look at what makes a biography great.

**T**he history of biographies is a long and complicated one but offers an insight into the lives of some of the world's most interesting and famous people.

For many years, it feels as though biographies, autobiographies and memoirs have been placed on the backburner and were never really properly appreciated. That was the case until recently, where there seems to be a renewed interest in the biography.

In my own personal literary journey, I tried again and again to pick a biography up and read it whilst at school, but found myself losing interest after just a couple of pages. To a child or a pre-teen, biographies aren't exactly the most

appealing of books. We prefer to read about fictional adventures that fictional characters have been on and imagine ourselves slaying the dragon and finding all the gold, rather than reading about the life and times of some of history's most courageous or dangerous people.

I suppose the one exception to this trend may be the Diary of Anne Frank, for a wide variety of reasons. For many children, Anne Frank's diary is probably the first non-fiction book we ever try to read. Studying World War Two in school might have meant it was compulsory reading, or for some people it may have just been out of interest.

Hearing about the war from a child's perspective is unique and Anne Frank

is by far the most famous example. This autobiography places the war into context for children for probably the first time. No longer is it a war that seems so distant and inconsequential, but suddenly as children we can place ourselves in her shoes and imagine what her restricted world would have looked like.

The first autobiography I ever read was Jacqueline Wilson's *Jacky Daydream*. At the time, I could boast that I possessed a large collection of all her novels, and after meeting her in person I could claim I was her number one fan. Delving into her life as a child enabled me to see a side of the person I had grown to admire as human. She was no longer just a name on the cover a book, but a person with a backstory, a conscience and a life.

More recently, I have gone further into the world of biographies, from Michelle Obama's *Becoming* and Lily Collins' *Unfiltered*, both captivating me in numerous ways.

Michelle Obama tells us the story of her life and how she went from a lawyer in Chicago to First Lady of the United States of America, while Lily Collins explains how her relationship with her father has impacted her life, and how she has navigated through an eating disorder and her career.

Though I can't necessarily relate to certain aspects of Obama's or Collins' lives, I can't help but be inspired by them. Whether it's the lives they've both led in the public eye, or the things they've achieved and overcome behind closed doors, their open accounts and insight into these obstacles allows the reader to connect with them on a deeper level than before.

Barack Obama says it best: "Reading is the gateway skill that makes all other learning possible."

A relatively new development in the field of biographical writing is also that of fictional biographies, whereby the author will pen the biography of a completely fictional person and their completely fictional life.

I admit that maybe you have to have a certain level of interest in celebrity culture in order to find this appealing, but if you do, it's a fascinating journey to take. Fictional biographies give the author a huge amount of free will.

Taylor Jenkins Reid is the prime example of this. Her two most popular novels, *Daisy Jones & The Six* and *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*, both of which are being developed into television series, tell the stories of fictional but famous figures.

*Daisy Jones* is the titular character of Reid's most successful novel, named one of 2019's best books of the year, and tells the story of a rebellious singer trying to find her way through the music scene in the 1970s. Reid crafts a fictional universe of music and celebrity culture so well that you'd be forgiven for actually believing the characters once existed.

*The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* tells a similar story of Hollywood starlet Evelyn Hugo who is determined to write her memoirs and reveal all her secrets, regardless of the effect they'll have on people. Whilst reading both of Taylor's novels, I was drawn in and captivated by her fictional constructions, and ultimately convinced that I was reading the story of real lives – ones that actually happened.

As readers, we're naturally intrigued by celebrity culture. Now, more than ever. We crave information about the private lives of some of the world's biggest stars, often resorting to tabloid newspapers or gossip magazines just to fill this desire.

When a celebrity releases a biography, or better still an autobiography, it is bound to be a success simply due to our need for information.

It has become a trend, where we see autobiographies detailing the most dramatic, embarrassing and surprising events that serve principally as self-exposure. The writer of any autobiography is likely to expose some deep and dark secrets that were previously kept hidden and will introduce a powerful shock factor into any biography.

Biographies offer us the opportunity to open up many previously closed doors and present us with the information we need to change ourselves and our lives. While for some people memoirs are still a last resort, I encourage you to broaden your horizons and enter the mind and life of someone you never knew and find out what makes them tick. You might learn something about them, and you may learn a few things about yourself too. 📖

Anne Frank's diary has sold over 30 million copies and been translated into 70 different languages, according to Time

© Netflix



## 2 LUCAS LEE

A skater-turned-action star, Lucas is probably the coolest and most sympathetic out of the seven exes. Lucas is the classic example of an introvert that ends up becoming a superstar. If he didn't use his stunt men to fight Scott, Lucas could've been number 1 on this list.

## 3 GIDEON GRAVES

The mastermind behind the league of Ramona's Evil Exes, Gideon truly is someone to fear. His battle with Scott is the most epic, and the closest Scott ever comes to giving up. It's without a doubt that Gideon is a formidable ex that you'd definitely want to avoid.

## 4 ROXY RICHTER

Ramona and Roxy dated for a brief "phase." Roxy is a pretty cool character/ninja. But she doesn't even seem that distraught over their breakup, which is why she's so low on this list. Roxy literally fights Scott as an obligation and, frankly, we wanted more passion.

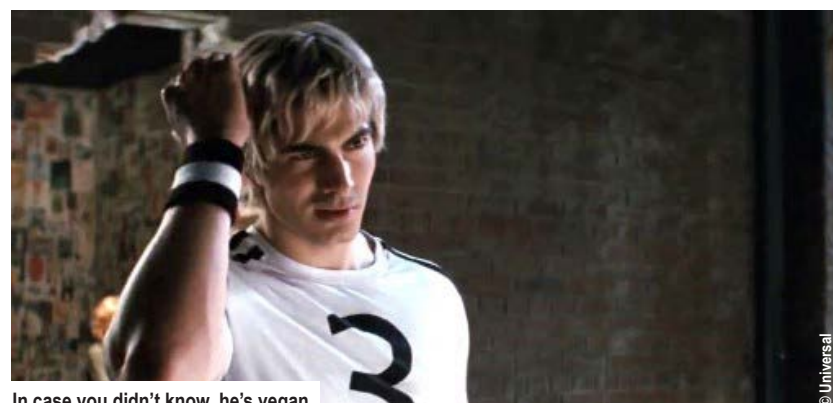


# RANKING THE 7 EVIL EXES, PLUS A SPECIAL MENTION

## 1 TODD INGRAM

The power of veganism, who knew it was really a thing? Todd was Ramona's third ex and is one of the worst human beings in the league - but he's also the funniest. Ramona dated Todd for the remainder of high school after she left Lucas Lee. Todd was loyal to Ramona and even punched a hole in the moon for her - you know, as you do. They broke up after he was sent away to Vegan Academy and he later dated Scott's ex, Envy. Played by Brandon Routh, Todd is a narcissistic jerk who is a bit of a phony when it comes to his veganism.

It's no shock that he's the biggest douche on this list, but that's why he's number one. He gets bonus points for being a musician, and a marvelous bass player at that. While his trash talk is hilarious, the best bit in the movie is definitely the competition between himself and Scott. If it wasn't for the vegan police, then Todd would have wiped the floor with his nemesis - and without the Vegan Academy perhaps Ramona and Todd could've stayed together. Watch out for those vegan exes, you never know what hidden powers they've got!



In case you didn't know, he's vegan

## 5 KYLE & KEN KATAYANAGI

Sorry, but these twins don't deserve separate sections. Ramona dated both Kyle and Ken at the same time, and neither of them realised. Granted, their keyboard playing is so incredible that it can tear the literal roof off - but they are boring otherwise.

## 6 MATTHEW PATEL

As Ramona's first evil ex, you'd expect him to be the most pathetic on the list. He seeks revenge on a girl that he kissed twice in middle school - which is so creepy. The only thing he adds to the film is kicking off the parade of Ramona's Evil Exes and warning Scott about the league. Otherwise, he's forgettable. Next.

## 7 KNIVES CHAU

Knives is a whiny child obsessed with Scott throughout the film. Her relationship with Scott was bad, but she needed the break-up to move on and be the best version of herself. We're glad that she at least got her happy ending with NegaScott.

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