

# The Aether Chronicle

The Imaginary Alternate History of the Steampunk Empire

From Friday October 17, 2014 to Friday October 31, 2014



LIZ SPAIN, CREATOR OF STEAMPUNK GAME, INCREDIBLE EXPEDITIONS: QUEST FOR ATLANTIS

## INTERVIEW WITH STEAMPUNK GAME DESIGNER, BY KEVIN STEIL

THIS WEEK WE ARE TALKING WITH LIZ SPAIN, CREATOR OF STEAMPUNK GAME, INCREDIBLE EXPEDITIONS: QUEST FOR ATLANTIS, WHERE PLAYERS LEAD A STEAMPUNK EXPEDITION TO EXPLORE FANTASTIC PLACES AND FACE OTHERWORLDLY HORRORS IN A DECK BUILDING STRATEGY GAME FOR 1-5 PLAYERS.

**AIRSHIP AMBASSADOR:** HI LIZ, IT'S GREAT TO CATCH UP WITH YOU AND TALK ABOUT YOUR PROJECTS.

**LIZ SPAIN:** HI! I'M REALLY EXCITED THAT WE'RE SO CLOSE TO REVEALING THE FINAL PRODUCT OF THE PROJECT I'VE BEEN WORKING ON FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS.

**AA:** BEFORE WE TALK ABOUT YOUR CURRENT GAME, WHICH IS DEFINITELY NOT YOUR FIRST, WHAT CAN YOU SHARE ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AS A GAMES DESIGNER?

**LS:** I STARTED IN GAME DESIGN CREATING LOVECRAFT-INSPIRED LIVE-ACTION MYSTERY GAMES. MY HUSBAND AND I RAN THESE MODULES IN OUR HOMETOWN AND AT GEN CON (THE LARGEST TABLETOP GAMING CONVENTION IN NORTH AMERICA). EVENTUALLY, WE ADDED STEAMPUNK ELEMENTS TO OUR GAMES WHICH ENRICHED THE WORLDS OF OUR GAMES AND GAVE EVERYONE AN EXCUSE TO COSTUME TO THE NINES.

I WORKED A LOT ON MARSHAL HUNTER'S STEAMPUNK LIVE-ACTION ROLE PLAYING GAME *RISE OF AESTER*. IN ADDITION TO WRITING WORLD MATERIAL AND HELPING TO DEVELOP THE RULES, I ALSO WROTE THE ORIGINAL MODULES FOR THE GAME. SEVERAL OF THE CHARACTERS I WROTE FOR THOSE MODULES BECAME VERY POPULAR AND THEIR STORIES BECAME PART OF THE WORLD'S CANON.

I'VE ALSO PLAY TESTED, COSTUMED, MODELLED AND DEMOED FOR A NUMBER OF FLYING FROG

PRODUCTIONS BOARD GAMES. THE *SOMETHING WICKED* EXPANSION FOR *A TOUCH OF EVIL* IS THE FIRST GAME I WORKED ON THERE, BUT YOU CAN FIND MY NAME IN THE CREDITS FOR A NUMBER OF FLYING FROG GAMES. I'VE ALSO DID CONSULTING ON THE STEAMPUNK AESTHETIC AND COSTUMED OVER 100 PEOPLE FOR HAREBRAINED SCHEME'S *CRIMSON STEAM PIRATES* ON THE IPAD.

**AA:** WOW, ALL OF THOSE GAMES SOUND INTERESTING, AND IT'S GREAT TO HEAR ABOUT THE VARIOUS ROLES YOU'VE PLAYED IN CREATING AND BRINGING THOSE GAMES TO LIFE. FOR YOUR CURRENT GAME, WHAT IS THE PREMISE OF *INCREDIBLE EXPEDITIONS*?



**LS:** A SLIGHTLY-UNHINGED SCIENTIST, PROFESSOR PENDERGAST, WAS KICKED OUT OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES FOR HIS WILD THEORIES ON THE FATE OF THE LOST CITY OF ATLANTIS. AFTER DISCOVERING THAT THE SUNKEN CITY DRIFTED AND BECAME TRAPPED IN THE ICE SHELVES OFF THE COAST OF ANTARCTICA, HE ANNOUNCED TO THE WORLD THAT HE WAS FORMING AN EXPEDITION. OTHER NOTABLE EXPLORERS THE WORLD OVER JUMP IN ON THE CHALLENGE AND THE RACE IS ON TO BE THE FIRST TO UNCOVER THE ANCIENT CITY.

**AA:** WHAT WAS THE MOTIVATION FOR CREATING *INCREDIBLE EXPEDITIONS*? HOW DID IT ALL COME ABOUT?

**LS:** INCREDIBLE EXPEDITIONS IS MY ATTEMPT TO PUT THE WORLD OF MY LOVECRAFTIAN STEAMPUNK MYSTERY GAMES IN A BOX. I REALLY WANTED TO SEE THE CREATIVE IMAGINATION OF STEAMPUNK IN A BOARD GAME AND DECIDED THE ONLY WAY THAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN WAS IF I DID IT MYSELF.



**AA:** COMPLETELY UNDERSTANDABLE, AND SOMETIMES THE ONLY WAY TO GET SOMETHING DONE, OR TO GET JUST THE ITEM WE WANT, IS TO DO IT OURSELVES. WHY A CARD GAME?

**LS:** I WANTED A GAME THAT WOULD BE EASY FOR ANYONE TO LEARN TO PLAY AND WOULD BE DRIPPING WITH A STEAMPUNK AESTHETIC AND WORLD.

**AA:** WHY USE STEAMPUNK AS THE GAME'S AESTHETIC?

**LS:** INCREDIBLE EXPEDITIONS IS MORE THAN JUST A BOARD GAME. I DESIGNED IT TO SHOWCASE THE IMAGINATION AND CREATIVE MAKER SKILLS OF THE STEAMPUNK COMMUNITY AT LARGE. BY STARTING WITH A STEAMPUNK AESTHETIC, I'VE BEEN ABLE TO BRING IN FRIENDS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROJECT WHO ARE ILLUSTRATORS, PROP MAKERS, COSTUMERS, MUSICIANS AND EVEN A DANCER AND A CALLIGRAPHER.

**AA:** THAT'S AN INTERESTING RANGE OF SKILLS TO BRING INTO CREATING A GAME. WHO ARE THE OTHER PEOPLE WHO ARE PART OF THE TEAM TO CREATE THIS GAME?

**LS:** THE BIGGEST CONTRIBUTOR TO THE PROJECT HAS BEEN MY HUSBAND, AUSTIN. THROUGHOUT THIS PROJECT, HE'S BEEN THERE AS A STRONG VOICE OF CRITICISM AND HELPED IMMENSELY WITH ORGANIZING THE KICKSTARTER CAMPAIGN AND PLAY TESTING. INCREDIBLE EXPEDITIONS OWES THE DEPTH AND BALANCE OF ITS STRATEGY TO HIS CONSTRUCTIVE SCEPTICISM AT EVERY STEP IN DEVELOPMENT.

JADE CHEUNG (OF ARCTIC PHOENIX STUDIOS) IS A FRIEND AND ARTIST WHO HELPED ME DEVELOP THE DISTINCTIVE ART NOUVEAU STYLE FOR THE GRAPHIC DESIGN. THE CARD FRAMES ARE HER DESIGN AND SHE ALSO MADE COSTUMES AND MODELLED FOR DIFFERENT CHARACTERS IN THE GAME.

BEYOND THAT, THERE ARE SIMPLY TOO MANY WONDERFUL PEOPLE TO NAME. OVER A DOZEN ARTISTS WORKED ON THE ILLUSTRATION AND GRAPHIC DESIGN AND THERE WERE DOZENS OF MODELS, MOST OF WHOM MADE THEIR OWN COSTUMES AND PROPS. THERE'S HARDLY A STEAMPUNK IN THE SEATTLE AREA WHO HASN'T CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROJECT IN SOME WAY.

CHECK BACK FOR PART 2 WHERE LIZ TALKS ABOUT RESEARCH, ARTWORK AND THE KICKSTARTER EXPERIENCE:  
[HTTP://AIRSHIPAMBASSADOR.WORDPRESS.COM/2014/07/28/SPAIN1/](http://airshipambassador.wordpress.com/2014/07/28/spain1/)





Cover Art for the beloved Children's Book Series THE JUPITER CHRONICLES.

## THE JUPITER CHRONICLES KICKSTARTER CAMPAIGN NOW LIVE!

WELL DEAR READERS, I HAVE WHAT WE HAVE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR: A STEAMPUNK BOOK SERIES THAT INTRODUCES CHILDREN TO THE WILD AND WONDERFUL WORLD OF STEAMPUNK. THE JUPITER CHRONICLES IS A CELEBRATED SERIES WRITTEN BY LEONARDO RAMIREZ (COVER ART BY: POOCHIEMARS) THAT READERS CALL "FANTASTIC AND CAPTIVATING FOR ALL READERS".



THE JUPITER CHRONICLES IS A SERIES THAT HIGHLIGHTS THE JOURNEY OF YOUNG IAN CASTILLO, A BOY WHO, TOGETHER WITH HIS SISTER CALLIE, DISCOVER THEIR SECRET: THEY ARE THE SON AND DAUGHTER OF A JOVIAN KING WHOSE WORLD HAD BEEN SUBJUGATED BY THE EVIL LORD PHOBOS OF MARS. AFTER A GREAT BATTLE WAS FOUGHT THEY RETURNED TO THE STEAM-POWERED WORLD OF JUPITER WHERE FIREFLIGHTS AND SKYROCKETS RULE THE AIR. NOW, AS PART OF THE NEWLY REBORN CHRONO LEGION, IAN STRUGGLES TO FIND HIS PLACE IN A WORLD POWERED BY STEAM.

THE FATE OF THE JOVIAN REALMS ARE IN HIS HANDS AS HE FIGHTS AGAINST THE MARTIAN DOOMSLAYERS AND SEEKS TO PROTECT EARTH FROM WHAT IS TO COME. A MUCH DEEPER STRUGGLE LIES WITHIN HIM. WITH NO FATHER TO GUIDE HIM, IAN DESPERATELY SEARCHES FOR THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION HE'S BEEN ASKING HIMSELF ALL OF HIS LIFE: WHY DID MY FATHER LEAVE ME?

THE JUPITER CHRONICLES BOOKS CAN BE

PURCHASED AT THE FOLLOWING LINK:

[HTTP://JUPITERCHRONICLES.COM/BOOKS/](http://jupiterchronicles.com/books/)

WELL FOLKS, THE BELOVED JUPITER SERIES IS NOW GOING TO HIT THE BIG SCREEN! AUTHOR LEONARDO RAMIREZ HAS PLANS TO TURN THE SERIES INTO AN ANIMATED SHORT, AND THE THRILLING STORIES WILL BE DELIGHTING READERS FROM THE WORLD OF FILM! THE KICKSTARTER CROWD-FUNDING CAMPAIGN WENT LIVE THIS WEEK, AND NOW AUDIENCES ARE CONTRIBUTING TO THE PROJECT SO THEY CAN SEE THEIR BELOVED CHARACTERS COME TO LIFE.

THE KICKSTARTER CROWD FUNDING CAMPAIGN FOR THE ANIMATED FILM SHORT BASED ON THE JUPITER CHRONICLES IS NOW LIVE! JOIN IAN AND CALLIE CASTILLO AS THEY ARE ROCKETED TO AN IMPRISONED WORLD POWERED BY STEAM AS THEY SEARCH FOR THE ANSWER TO THE ONE LOOMING QUESTION THAT HAS PLAGUED THEM FOR FIVE YEARS. . .

. . . WHY DID THEIR FATHER LEAVE?

CLICK THIS LINK TO GO TO THE KICKSTARTER CAMPAIGN SITE:

[HTTPS://WWW.KICKSTARTER.COM/PROJECTS/LEONARDORAMIREZ/JUPITER-CHRONICLES-A-STEAMPUNK-ANIMATED-SPACE-EPIC](https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/leonardoramirez/jupiter-chronicles-a-steampunk-animated-space-epic)

MEET THE ANIMATED CHARACTERS FROM THE JUPITER CHRONICLES:



THE AETHER CHRONICLE WILL BE POSTING NEWS ABOUT THE JUPITER CHRONICLES KICKSTARTER CAMPAIGN, AND KEEPING READERS UP-TO-DATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THIS HIGHLY ANTICIPATED ANIMATED SHORT! TO WITNESS THE JUPITER CHRONICLE'S UPCOMING ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN, SUBSCRIBE TO THE AETHER CHRONICLE BY "FOLLOWING" THE DISCUSSIONS AT EITHER OF THE LINKS BELOW:

THE STEAMPUNK EMPIRE WEBSITE:

[HTTP://WWW.THESTEAMPUNKEMPIRE.COM/FORUM/TOPICS/REIGN-OF-GIANT-OCTOPUS-PLAGUING-LONDON-COMES-TO-AN-END](http://www.thesteampunkempire.com/forum/topics/reign-of-giant-octopus-plaguing-london-comes-to-an-end)

THE STEAMPUNK WRITERS AND ARTISTS GUILD WEBSITE:

[HTTP://STEAMPUNKWRITERS.NING.COM/FORUM/TOPICS/REIGN-OF-GIANT-OCTOPUS-PLAGUING-LONDON-COMES-TO-AN-END](http://steampunkwriters.ning.com/forum/topics/reign-of-giant-octopus-plaguing-london-comes-to-an-end)

IAN CASTILLO: HUMAN, MALE, AGE: 13, HEIGHT: 4'11" WEIGHT: 70 LBS. HAIR COLOR: BLOND. IAN WAS BORN ON JUPITER BUT RAISED ON EARTH IN THE POOREST OF CIRCUMSTANCES. HAVING NO FATHER TO GUIDE HIM, HE ALWAYS LOOKED TO THE STARS FOR HELP IN FIGURING OUT WHY LIFE BORE HIM INTO GROWING UP WITHOUT A FATHER-FIGURE AND WHO HE IS. HE SEES OTHERS FIND THEIR DESTINY AND WONDERS IF HE'LL EVER FIND HIS. HE'LL NEVER FIND IT BEING OVERLY CAUTIOUS. BECAUSE HE'S ALWAYS LOOKING FOR ANSWERS, HE IS ALMOST OBSESSIVELY PERSISTENT. THIS LENDS HIM TO OFTEN BE THE BRUNT OF THE JOKES AND JABS COMING FROM HIS STEP-BROTHER AND SISTER.



CALLIE CASTILLO: HUMAN, FEMALE, AGE: 10, STUDENT, BROWN EYES, HEIGHT: 4'6" WEIGHT: 65 LBS. HAIR COLOR: DARK BROWN, WAVY. BELONGINGS: JOURNAL, PENCIL, LEATHER HELMET WITH GOGGLES, A CLOTH BAG THAT HOLDS HER BELONGINGS. CALLIE WRITES IN HER JOURNAL EVERY CHANCE SHE CAN. SHE ALSO ENJOYS PESTERING HER OLDER BROTHER IAN AND CALLING HIM NAMES LIKE "TOAD". CALLIE IS NAMED AFTER THE JUPITER MOON CALLISTO. UNLIKE HER BROTHER, CALLIE WAS BORN ON EARTH AFTER THE MARTIAN WAR. FUN AND ADVENTUROUS, CALLIE IS NEVER TOO AFRAID TO EMBARK ON A NEW JOURNEY WHEREVER IT MAY TAKE THEM WHICH SOMETIMES GETS THE GANG INTO TROUBLE. SHE OFTEN READS OUT LOUD WHAT SHE IS WRITING IN HER JOURNAL, MUCH TO THE ANNOYANCE OF HER BROTHER IAN. SHE IS THE ONLY WORDSMITH IN EXISTENCE IN THE CHRONO LEGION.



# The Aether Review Of Books

## Firefly Glade, By Alan Smith

ART 1

**T**HE DARKENING SKY AND THE SCUDDING CLOUDS SEEM TO BE COMPETING TO SHROUD THE LAND IN A BLANKET OF DARKNESS AND EVEN THOUGH THERE IS A FULL

MOON, IT ONLY PEEKS THROUGH THE BREAKS IN THE FAST MOVING CLOUDS BUT EVEN AS IT DOES IT FACE IS QUICKLY WHISKED AWAY. WITH SUNSET A GOOD HOUR AWAY WE FIND A YOUNG COUPLE IN A OPEN TOPPED HORSE DRAWN CARRIAGE PULLING TO A STOP NEAR THE EDGE OF A QUIET FOREST. A SMARTLY DRESSED MAN STEPS OUT OF THE CARRIAGE HE TURNS AND WAITS TILL THE BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN OFFERS HER HAND TO HIM. HE INSTEAD REACHES FOR HER WAIST AND LIFTS HER FROM THE CARRIAGE AND SETS HER GENTLY ON THE GROUND. SHE BLUSHES AT HIS BEING SO FORWARD BUT SHE SMILES AS SHE LOOKS INTO HIS FACE AND SEES THE LOVE HE HAS FOR HER SO CLEARLY DISPLAYED FOR ALL THE WORLD TO SEE. HE TURNS AND REACHES INTO THE CARRIAGE AND PULLS A HURRICANE LANTERN FROM UNDER THE SEAT AND LIGHTS IT BRINGING A WARM GLOW TO THE KNEE HIGH GRASS WHERE ITS LIGHT FALLS. HE PLACES IT ON THE STEP OF THE CARRIAGE THEN PULLS A HANDKERCHIEF FROM HIS BREAST POCKET AND STEPS BEHIND THE YOUNG LADY. PLACING THE BLINDFOLD OVER HER EYES SHE SEEMS TO HAVE SOME RESERVATION BUT INSTEAD SHE REACHES FOR HIS HANDS BUT WAITS TILL HE HAS TIED IT ABOUT HER HEAD THEN SHE TRACES HER FINGERS ON HIS SKIN THEN DRAWS HIS HANDS TO HER LIPS AND GENTLY PLACES KISSES ON EACH PALM. HE STEPS CLOSER PRESSING HIS BODY AGAINST HERS AS SHE DRAWS HIS ARMS ABOUT HER AND HE PLACES A KISS ON HER NECK. LOOKING AT THE FADING LIGHT HE SLIPS ONE ARM FROM HER GRASP AND TAKES THE LANTERN. HE THEN BEGINS TO LEAD HER STRAIGHT TO THE FOREST.

THE HIGH GRASS ENDS AT THE EDGE OF THE FOREST ALLOWING THE MAN TO LEAD THE WOMAN MORE EASILY FURTHER INTO THE WOODS. THE FADING SUNLIGHT AND THE INTERMITTENT MOON LIGHT SEEMS TO OPEN A PATH DEEPER INTO THE FOREST. NOT A SOUND OF THE NORMALLY NOISY WOODS CAN BE HEARD BY THE COUPLE GIVING NO CLUE TO THE BLINDFOLDED LADY WHERE SHE IS BEING LEAD. HE KNOWS SHE MIGHT PROTEST BEING TAKEN INTO THE DARKENING WOODS. BUT HE ALSO KNOWS SHE HAS PLACED HER TRUST IN HIM TO KEEP HER SAFE, THIS GIVES HIM COURAGE TO LEAD HER ON TO A PLACE THAT IF SHE WERE TO PROTEST WOULD LOSE IT'S ENCHANTMENT FOR HER. SO ONWARD HE DRAWS HER DEEPER STILL TILL THEY ENTER INTO A GLADE IN THE MIDST OF THE FOREST.

HE TURNS TO HER AND WHISPERS IN HER EAR. "STAY VERY QUIET AND STILL AND TONIGHT YOU WILL SEE MAGIC." MOVING BEHIND HER HE GENTLY REMOVES THE BLINDFOLD.

SHE BLINKS SEVERAL TIMES TILL THE SCENE BEFORE HER BECOMES CLEAR. SHE SLOWLY TURNS LOOKING AT THE TWILIGHT DARK FOREST. THERE SITS A SMALL CABIN WHICH CLEARLY HAS BEEN APART OF THIS PLACE FOR SO LONG THE FOREST SEEMS TO BE TRYING TO RECLAIM IT BY INTERTWINING ITS LIMBS AND VINES INTO THE CONSTRUCTION. BUT UPON CLOSER INSPECTION SHE SEES THE CABIN IS NOT EVEN MAN MADE BECAUSE THE WALLS ARE STILL LIVING TREES. ITS ROOF IS BOUGH AND THEIR LEAVES ARE SO EVENLY SPACED TO LOOK LIKE SHINGLES ON A QUAINT LITTLE HOME. UNDER THE

COVER OF THE NATURE MADE PORCH SHE SEES TABLES AND CHAIRS HAVE BEEN SET UP. UPON THE TABLE IS A SETTING FOR TWO COMPLETE WITH BURNING CANDLES WHICH CAST THEIR WARM GLOW JUST FAR ENOUGH TO ADD TO THE MYSTERY AND ROMANCE OF THIS GLADE. A MAGNIFICENT STAG STANDS NEAR THE CABIN LOOKING AT THE INTRUDERS WHICH HAVE COME INTO HIS KINGDOM. SLOWLY IT BENDS ITS NECK SO HE CAN TAKE ANOTHER BITE OF GRASS AND THEN HE LOOKS AGAIN TO THE COUPLE AND WITHOUT A BACKWARDS GLANCE WONDERS AWAY INTO THE FOREST LEAVING THE GLADE TO THE INTRUDERS.

COMPLETELY ENSHROUDED BY THE WOODS THE DELL HAS A SMALL STREAM RUNNING BETWEEN THE CENTURIES OLD TREES. IT SLIPS INTO AND OUT OF THE FOREST BUT AS IT CURLS AROUND A MOUND OF EARTH UPON WHICH THE CABIN IS AT ITS PEAK. THE STREAM FORMS A POOL RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE CABIN. THE POOL IS ALMOST PERFECTLY ROUND EXCEPT WERE THE STREAM BOTH FEED INTO AND OUT OF IT. THIS STRANGE POOL SEEMS TO SLOWLY SPIN AS THE WATERS MAKES ITS WAY AROUND IT.

SHE TURNS AND LOOKS AT HER NEW HUSBAND AND SMILES. "IT IS SO BEAUTIFUL HERE." SHE WHISPERS.

HE LOOKS AT HER AND GENTLY PULLS HER INTO A KISS THAT SEEMS TO STOP TIME. SLOWLY THE FOREST WAKES AS THEIR KISS STRETCHES ON FOR MANY MOMENTS. THE NIGHT BIRDS BEGIN TO SING, THE FROGS CROAK, THE CRICKETS SEEM TO PICK UP THE MELODY OF THE FOREST AND ADD COUNTER POINT TO THE RHYTHM, AND THE WINDS BEGIN TO SIGH HIGH IN THE TREES AND ADD TO THE VOICES OF NATURE. SLOWLY HE BREAKS THE KISS AND SMILES AT HER. THEY SPEAK NO WORDS AS THEY TURN TOWARD THE CABIN. HE TAKES HER HAND AND THEY WALK UP THE SMALL RISE. DOUSING THE LANTERN AND PUTTING IT ASIDE. HE THEN LEADS HER TO STAND NEXT TO THE TABLE AND ONE AFTER THE OTHER SNUFFS OUT THE CANDLES. HE TAKES HER HAND IN HIS AND TURNS TOWARD THE POOL.

SHE SQUEEZES HIS HAND AS A TRICKLE OF FEAR GROWS AS THE LAST OF THE DAYS LIGHT BEGINS TO SLIP AWAY. HE PLACES HIS FINGERS TO HER LIPS. SHE NODS, PUTTING HER TRUST IN HIM.

SHE HOLDS HIS HAND AND LOOKS AROUND WONDERING WHAT HE HAS IN MIND. THE FOREST SONG SEEMS TO COME TO A CLOSE AND THE MOONLIGHT FLICKERS WITH THE RACING CLOUDS. THE LIGHT GROWS BRIGHT FOR A MOMENT THEN DIMS AS IF MOONLIGHT IS TURNED DOWN LIKE A GAS LAMP, LEAVING THEM IN THE NEAR TOTAL DARKNESS OF A FOREST ON A CLOUDY NIGHT. AGAIN SHE SQUEEZES HIS HAND AND HE GENTLY SQUEEZES BACK GIVING HER REASSURANCE THAT HE IS WITH HER.

OUT IN THE FOREST BEYOND THE STREAM A RED LIGHT BEGINS TO GLOW. THEN A SECOND ONE RIGHT NEXT TO IT WINKS OPEN, AS IF A WOLF HAD JUST OPENED HIS EYES AFTER SLEEPING ALL DAY. A SECOND PAIR OF EYES MOVE SLOWLY CLOSER, THEN A THIRD, AND A FOURTH, THEN MORE AND MORE JOIN THEM. SOON THERE ARE DOZENS OF EYES SEEMING TO STARE THROUGH THEM. SHE BEGINS TO STEP BACK THEN LOOKS AT HER HAND HOLDING HIS. EVEN IN THE GLOOM OF NEAR TOTAL DARKNESS HE IS WATCHING HER. SHE SEES HIS LOVING SMILE REMEMBERS HIS PROMISE TO LOVE HER AND TAKE CARE OF HER ALWAYS. SHE DRAWS COURAGE FROM HIM AND PUTS

HER TOTAL TRUST IN HIS JUDGMENT. SHE KNOWS IN HER HEART OF HEARTS THAT HE WOULD NEVER PUT HER IN DANGER KNOWINGLY.

SHE CLOSSES HER EYES AND TAKES A DEEP BREATH AND RELEASES HER FEAR. WHEN SHE OPENS HER EYES SHE SEES HIS PROUD SMILE THEN HE MOTIONS WITH HIS HEAD TOWARD THE HAUNTING EYES IN THE WOODS. SHE TURNS AND LOOKS AT THE EYES DARING THEM TO GET PAST HER LOVER. AND TO HER AMAZEMENT THE EYES SEEM TO DRIFT APART THEN IN ONE'S AND TWO'S CHANGE COLOR. SHE IS TAKEN ABACK BUT WATCHES FASCINATED BY THIS TURN OF EVENTS. THE COLORS ARE EVERY COLOR IN THE RAINBOW, THEY BEGIN TO BOB AND WEAVE THROUGH THE WOODS MOVING CLOSER TILL AT LAST THEY COME OUT OVER THE GENTLY BUBBLING WATERS OF THE BROOK. THEY SWOOP LOW OVER THE WATER SEEMING TO DANCE WITH THEIR OPPOSITE REFLECTED THERE.

ONCE AGAIN THE SOUND OF THE FOREST MUSIC FILLS THE GLADE. THE DANCE OVER THE WATER SEEMS TO FOLLOW A PATTERN AND WITH IT, THE WATER SEEMS TO BE REACTING. SLOWLY MIST CAN BE SEEN TO RISE FROM THE WATER. NOTHING UNUSUAL FOR THE WATER TO RELEASE ITS HEAT IN TO THE NIGHT AIR. BUT THIS, THIS IS DIFFERENT. THE MIST SWIRLS IN PATTERNS FOLLOWING THE LIGHTS. AS IF THE DARTING LIGHTS ARE COAXING THE MIST, DRAWING IT FORTH AND ASKING IT TO JOIN THEM IN THE AIR. SLOWLY THE MIST SWIRLS HIGHER, FORMING COLUMNS AND CONES OF VAPOR. WHEN THE FIREFLY LIGHTS SEEM HAPPY WITH WHAT THEY HAVE WROUGHT THEY BEGIN TO SWARM TOGETHER INTO LOSE FORMATIONS. SLOWLY THE CLUSTERS OF LIGHTS CONDENSE DOWN TILL THEY TAKE THE FORM OF MEN. WHILE THE MANY REMAINING LIGHTS MOVE FORWARD AND ENTER THE MIST AND SEEM TO DART TO AND FRO INSIDE THE MIST FURTHER SHAPING IT TO THEIR WILL. WHEN AT LAST THEY ARE DONE THERE ABOVE THE WATER STANDS MEN OF LIGHT AND LADIES OF MIST ADORNED WITH JEWELS OF LIGHT AROUND THE WRIST, AND NECK, THE HAIR WITH TIARAS OF LIGHT AND FACES WITH EYES OF BLUE. THE FOREST SOUNDS SEEMS TO TAKE ON A NEW FORM AS IF ONE SONG HAS ENDED AND ANOTHER IS BEGINNING.

SHE GASPS AT THE SIGHT MARVELLING IN WONDER AT WHAT IS HAPPENING BEFORE HER. THE LADIES OF MIST AND THE MEN OF LIGHT BOW TO ONE ANOTHER AND THEN THEY BEGIN A DANCE ABOVE THE WATERS OF THE POOL.

THE COMBINED LIGHT FROM THE GLOWING FIREFLIES CAST A WARM LIGHT OVER THE POOL AND A PATH SEEMS TO APPEAR LEADING DOWN TO THE POOL FROM THE CABIN.

THE MAN LIFTS HIS WIFE'S HAND TO HIS LIPS AND KISSES IT GENTLY THEN HE LEADS HER TO THE EDGE OF THE POOL AND STEPS BEFORE HER, HE TOO BOWS TO HER AND SHE TAKES THE CUE AND CURTSIES TO HIM ACCEPTING HIS REQUEST TO DANCE. HE TAKES HER HAND AS SHE LAYS HER OTHER UPON HIS SHOULDER AND HE PLACES HIS ON HER SIDE. WITH A NOD OF HIS HEAD THEY FALL IN STEP WITH THE MUSIC. WITHOUT NOTICING THE POOL IS COVERED COMPLETELY WITH A FOG THAT DRIFTS UP THE BANK OF THE POOL. SOON THE OTHER DANCERS HAVE JOINED THE COUPLE MOVING AROUND THEM AS THE MUSIC PLAYS ON. THE YOUNG WOMAN NEVER REMOVES HER EYES FROM HIS AND HE FROM HERS. THEY MOVE IN AND OUT OF THE OTHER DANCERS, SO CAUGHT UP IN THE MOMENT THAT SHE NEVER NOTICES THAT IT IS THEY WHO HAVE MOVED OUT OVER THE WATER AND HAVE JOINED THE FIREFLY DANCERS.

# The Aether Review Of Books

## Firefly Glade, By Alan Smith

**W**ELL DEAR READERS, TONIGHT WE HAVE A FLIGHT OF FANCY, A JOURNEY INTO THE WORLD OF ROMANCE FOR YOUR READING PLEASURE!

FIREFLY GLADE COMBINES THE WORLD OF ROMANCE WITH THE SPIRIT WORLD. THE WONDER OF THE NATURAL WORLD IS EXALTED IN THIS TALE, AS THE MYSTERIOUS WORLD OF THE NIGHTTIME FOREST OPENS UP TO THE READER. THE DESCRIPTION OF "THE NIGHT MUSIC" IS VERY COMPELLING. THE ROMANCE OF THIS SETTING ALSO CONJURES IMAGES OF THE WONDERFUL, SENSUAL THINGS THAT MIGHT HAPPEN ON A WALK WITH YOUR LOVER IN THE FOREST AT NIGHT. BUT THEN, NATURE BEGINS TO TELL ITS OWN TALE. THERE IS A DEFINITE HINT OF PASTORALISM IN THIS TALE, IN THE SIMPLICITY AND BEAUTY OF THE NATURAL WORLD. BUT ALSO IN THE IMPLICATION THAT NATURE HERSELF MIGHT HOLD HER OWN SECRETS AND MIGHT IN FACT BE "UP TO SOMETHING" AS THE BEAUTIFUL SCENE UNFOLDS BEFORE THE TWO LOVERS.

WHEN THE COUPLE FIRST SEE THE FIREFLIES, THE SCENE IS BEAUTIFUL, BUT INNOCUOUS. WHEN THE FIREFLIES BEGIN THEIR CHOREOGRAPHED DANCE, THERE IS MORE OF THAT SENSATION THAT THE TWO INDIVIDUALS ARE ONLY PROPS IN THE STORY THAT NATURE IS TELLING THE WORLD. THE SYMBOLISM OF THE FIREFLIES IS VERY EVOCATIVE. FIREFLIES REPRESENT A SINGLE POINT OF LIGHT FLUTTERING IN A DARKENED WORLD: LIGHT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A METAPHOR FOR TRUTH, CIVILIZATION, WONDER, MAGIC, RENEWAL, ETC. THE IDEA THAT *THESE* LIGHTS, AS LIVING THINGS, MIGHT HAVE THEIR OWN PARTICULAR MAGIC, THEIR OWN PARTICULAR PLAN, IS A LOVELY THOUGHT.

THE NOTION OF THE FIREFLY DANCERS TRANSPORTS THE READERS INTO THE WORLD OF THE STORY. ARE THE HUSBAND AND WIFE A PART OF THIS DANCE, THIS RITUAL THAT TAKES PLACE ONLY IN THE SUMMER FOREST? AS THEY DANCE, DO THEIR FEET STILL TOUCH THE GROUND? ARE THEY STILL SURROUNDED BY DRIFTING FOG, OR HAVE THEY BEEN MAGICALLY WHISKED AWAY INTO THE WORLD OF THE FIREFLY DANCERS?

I FOR ONE AM VERY INTRIGUED AND WONDER WHAT THE SECOND INSTALMENT OF THIS TALE HAS IN STORE FOR US. I CERTAINLY HOPE THAT THIS ISN'T THE A PRELUDE TO SOME SORT OF NIGHTMARE SCENE, AND THE FIREFLY GLADE TURNS OUT TO BE SOME SORT OF INSIDIOUS TRAP!

WELL, READERS, IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO FIND OUT MORE, THEN YOU WILL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT EDITION OF THE AETHER CHRONICLE!



NEW AUTHOR ALAN SMITH

SHOULD YOU WISH TO SEND A LETTER TO THE EDITOR, SUBMIT YOUR WRITTEN WORK, OR OFFER A TIP REGARDING A POTENTIAL STORY (EG. POLITICAL UPHEAVAL, CRIME, SPECIAL EVENTS, ART AND MUSIC) PLEASE CONTACT LESLIE ORTON AT: [ORTONLJ@HOTMAIL.COM](mailto:ORTONLJ@HOTMAIL.COM).



THE FIREFLY GLADE

# Travel

## Amelia Owen Kibbey, Lost En Route To Prague!

DEAR READERS, WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT OUR BELOVED TRAVEL WRITER MISS AMELIA OWEN KIBBEY HAS NOT ARRIVED AT HER DESTINATION IN PRAGUE, CZECHOSLOVAKIA. THE

ZEPPELIN SHE WAS ABOARD NEVER ARRIVED IN PRAGUE. WE LAST RECEIVED WORD FROM MISS AMELIA WHEN SHE SENT US A BRIEF TELEGRAPH INFORMING US SHE AND HER TRAVEL COMPANION ALICE HAD ARRIVED AT THE GRAF ZEPPELIN WHICH WAS GOING TO THEM TO PRAGUE. SHE ALSO MAILED A FRIEND AT THE NEWSPAPER A CHARMING SNAPSHOT OF HERSELF AND ALICE POSED IN FRONT OF THE ZEPPELIN BEFORE IT TOOK FLIGHT. LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT HAS BEEN NOTIFIED, AND SCOTLAND YARD HAS CONTACTED THEIR POLITICAL AGENTS IN EUROPE, AS WE ATTEMPT TO TRACK MISS AMELIA DOWN. FOR NOW, OUR PRAYERS ARE WITH HER AND ALICE, AND OUR HEARTS GO OUT TO THEM IN THEIR TERRIBLE PLIGHT!

GOD SPEED, MISS AMELIA OWEN KIBBEY.

—THE STAFF AT THE AETHER CHRONICLE



ALICE (LEFT) NEARLY KNOCKS AMELIA (RIGHT) ASIDE WITH ONE OF HER INFAMOUS PARASOLS, TO PROTECT HER FAIR COMPLEXION WHILE TRAVELLING THE GLOBE.

# The Aether's Weekly Steamswaddle

By Tropple E. Armitage

**K**

OH-I-NOOR OR KOH-I-  
NOTHING

A RUMOUR HAS COME  
TO THE EARS OF YOUR  
CORRESPONDENT THAT IS SO  
OUTRAGEOUS IT MUST BE TRUE.

THE RUMOUR INVOLVES THE WORLD'S  
LARGEST DIAMOND THE, KOH-I-NOOR  
ALSO KNOWN AS THE MOUNTAIN OF  
LIGHT, CURRENTLY ON DISPLAY AT THE  
GREAT EXHIBITION THAT I AM SURE  
ALMOST EVERY SOUL IN LONDON HAS  
VISITED. IF TRUE THE RUMOUR MEANS  
THAT THE ARTEFACT WE ALL SAW AND  
WONDERED AT IS IN FACT NOT THE KOH-I-  
NOOR BUT A REPLICA PRODUCED BY ONE  
ARTHUR SMITH A JEWELLERY ARTISAN OF  
EDGEWATER ROAD. MY INFORMANT TELLS  
ME THAT THE REAL KOH-I-NOOR WAS  
SUPPOSED TO BE IN A BOX TRANSPORTED  
BY TRAIN TO LONDON FROM PORTSMOUTH  
WHERE THE SHIP CARRYING IT FROM  
INDIA BERTHED. IT WAS SAID TO HAVE  
PASSED INTO THE CARE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
OF THE BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY  
AND TO HAVE BEEN SAFELY STORED IN  
EAST INDIA HOUSE IN LEADENHALL  
STREET. BUT WHEN THE BOX WAS  
OPENED IT WAS FOUND TO BE EMPTY,  
LEAVING THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EAST  
INDIA COMPANY IN A STATE OF APOPLEXY  
SINCE HE WAS TO HAND THE DIAMOND  
TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN AS PART OF  
THE TERMS OF THE CONCLUSION OF THE  
SIKH WARS.

IT WAS THE CHAIRMAN'S SECRETARY  
WHO SUGGESTED MAKING A REPLICA OF  
GLASS, WHICH MIGHT ACCOUNT FOR THE  
LACK OF LUSTRE OFTEN REMARKED ON BY  
THOSE WHO HAVE SEEN THE EXHIBIT AT  
THE EXHIBITION. AS TO WHAT HAPPENED  
TO THE GENUINE JEWEL? NO ONE KNOWS  
EXCEPT THAT A FELLOW WEARING LONG  
SILK ROBES AND A TURBAN WAS SEEN  
ALIGHTING FROM THE SAME TRAIN  
THAT THE JEWEL TRAVELLED ON. IF MY  
INFORMANT IS RIGHT, THE KOH-I-NOOR

IS KOH-I-NOTHING AND I ASSUME HER  
MAJESTY WILL NOT BE AMUSED.

YOUR HUMBLE CORRESPONDENT,

TROPPL E. ARMITAGE

INDEED, THERE IS NO SUN SHINING UNDER  
THE LILY.

YOUR HUMBLE CORRESPONDENT,

TROPPL E. ARMITAGE

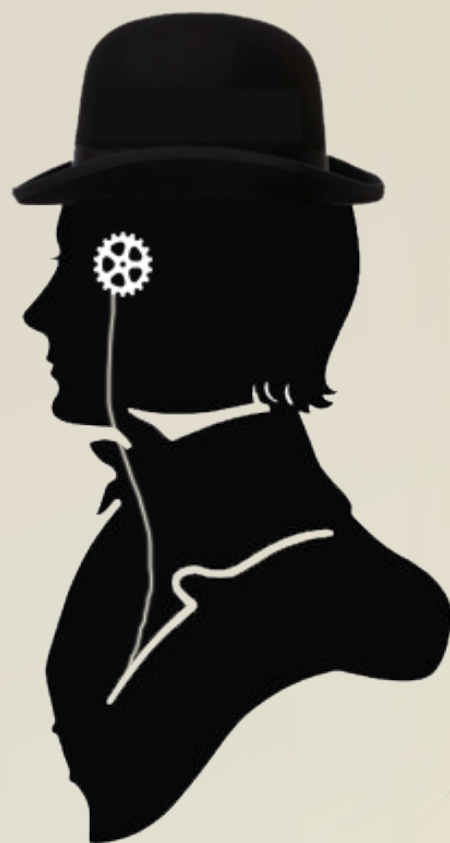


**A**

N UNFORTUNATE MATTER

IT GIVES ME NO JOY  
TO BRING NEWS OF AN  
UNFORTUNATE MATTER IN  
RELATION TO THE FATE OF  
ONE WILLIAM DWIGHT COBURN ESQUIRE.  
READERS OF A REFINED NATURE WHO  
FOLLOW THE LITERARY GOING ON WILL  
HAVE, I AM SURE HEARD OF MR COBURN,  
SOMETIMES POET AND MAN ABOUT TOWN  
WHO WROTE THAT WORK OF PROSE 'THE  
SUN SHINES NOT UNDER THE LILY'.

THE UNFORTUNATE MATTER CONCERNS A  
STEAM CARRIAGE, WHICH HE IS SAID TO  
HAVE TAKEN POSSESSION OF JUST LAST  
WEEK AS A RESULT OF AN INHERITANCE HE  
RECEIVED ON THE UNTIMELY PASSING OF  
HIS FATHER, WILLIAM CLARKE COBURN  
OF MIDDLESBROUGH. MY INFORMANT  
TELLS ME THAT COBURN THE YOUNGER  
WAS STRONGLY WARNED TO NOT OVER  
STOKE THE BOILER FOR FEAR OF AN  
EXPLOSION, ADVICE HE WAS PRONE TO  
IGNORE. HE WAS LAST SEEN WILDLY  
CAREENING DOWN TOTTENHAM HIGH  
STREET BARELY MISSING HORSES AND  
STREET CARTS AS HE WENT. THAT WAS  
THREE DAYS AGO AND NO SIGN HAS BEEN  
SEEN OF HIM OR THE STEAM CARRIAGE  
SINCE. WE CAN ONLY GUESS THAT HE HAS  
EITHER BLOWN HIMSELF UP OR THAT HE  
WAS TRAVELLING SO FAST THAT HE HAS  
LAUNCHED HIMSELF INTO THE SKY NEVER  
TO BE SEEN AGAIN. OF COURSE IT COULD  
BE THAT HE DROVE INTO THE CANAL  
AND HAS FOUND OUT FOR HIMSELF THAT



TROPPL E. ARMITAGE,  
NEW FEATURE COLUMNIST