

King Kong Round Robin: Introduction

Simply put, a round robin is a story handed around like a hot potato. One person writes Chapter One, another Chapter Two, and so on. These stories tend to get wild and weird because of the different narrative voices and the tendency of one writer to try to, ummm, mess up the next! Sound like fun?

King Kong Round Robin Rules:

- 1) Each writer should set up a minimum of one seemingly impossible cliffhanger ending for their chapter, and must have in mind a reasonable solution when they write it. (After the story ends the alternate resolutions themselves make for a fun discussion!)
- 2) Each writer must resolve one cliffhanger (minimum) and somehow continue and embellish a greater storyline.
- 3) Each writer gets to invent The Title of The Next Chapter, and it is up to the next writer to somehow make it relevant to the story. *Bwah-haaah-haaaaah!*
- 4) The King Kong Round Robin will go full circle only once, so everyone gets just one shot at it!
- 5) Post each chapter as quickly as you'd like, but I think we should all keep in mind that each writer should be allowed at least three days to really take the time to do it right.

King Kong Round Robin: Chapter One

Comic Kong, An Unexpected Party

by Larry "mrgrooism" Steller

I was awakened by an earth-shattering, mighty **ROOOOAR**, which was going to take some getting used to. The alarm clock in Cal's guest room blared to the growl of **King Kong**, which he had ripped from the DVD of the 1933 original. Cal's an even bigger *Kong-geek* than I am, he really loves them all: **Son of Kong**, **Mighty Joe Young**, both of the **Toho Kong** flicks, **King Kong '76**! He even calls **King Kong Lives** one of his favorites! I know he just says that to annoy me, I mean really!

Me, I love **King Kong vs. Godzilla**, **King Kong Escapes**, even campy copies like **Konga**, but I draw the line at the Dino-less *DeLaurentiis Debacles*. Nothing can match **Kong 33**, though, and many is the heated debate we've had about the upcoming *Peter Jackson* spectacle. I'm worried that PJ might be remaking **Seventy-six** more than **Thirty-three**, while Cal actually delights in the possibility!

Cal always was a pretty weird kid. I know I'm not supposed to say that sort of thing about friends or patients (Cal has of course been both), but it's his word, not mine! He carried that silly stuffed animal all through Elementary School, and I know he hid it in his locker during High School. I even visited him at MIT and found his old plush pal propped up against his pillow, time ravaged though it was.

Hee hee. *time ravaged*, now there's an expression for you! But I'm getting ahead of myself!

The trip to Vermont to see my old buddy is, I'm sure, all part of an elaborate goof. Let's face it, even at twenty-nine Calvin is still a daydream believer! So awakening this morning to the roar of the *Mighty Kong* made me smile as I yawned myself awake, stretched, and headed downstairs for breakfast.

"Mornin', Doc!" Cal yelled cheerfully. So this was gonna be one of his up days? Good!

"Mornin' back Cal. Oh! Chuck and Marcy send their love."

"Great, right back at 'em! Are you ready for the Big Day?"

"Dude, whatever you've got cookin', I'm ready for ya!"

"Cool, the others are meeting me at the lab, this is gonna be great!"

"*Others*? Hmmm, I didn't expect a party, who else have you got lined up for this snipe hunt?"

"Ahhh, the nonbeliever shows his stripes! Well let's see, Curtis and Michelle, Dolly, and of course Annie."

"*Of course* Annie. You two are still an item, then?"

"Yes and no. Her Daddy is financing most of my research, and I do love the adventurous type, but she sometimes loses patience with me and my impulsiveness."

"An understatement, I'm sure."

"So right now we give each other room until we can't stand to be apart, then rush together until we can't stand being together."

"Classic. Well, you're both strong willed, so it makes sense."

"You're always on, aren't you Doc? You were never this sarcastic as a kid!"

"Well, with a sister like mine, you learn! Anyone else?"

"*Rrr-th-n-ps-kwl...*"

"*What?* Calvin!!! Who. Else. Is. Coming!!!"

"Ruthie and Pasquale..."

"Good grief, you know I can't stand those little twerps!"

"Well they are my partners, you know, and he's frankly brilliant in ways I could never be. Totally focused but still able to fly in his dreams."

"Wow, The Ego pauses!"

"Bite me."

"Plus this Project would never have gotten off the ground without Ruthie's dogged determination..."

"Project? What project? I thought all this Time Machine nonsense was just a big goof! I was gonna play along until you unveiled your big old cardboard box, but, I mean, man! You're not saying you believe you've really invented a Time Machine!?"

Calvin looked at me coolly, arms folded, spiky hair standing straight up, that practiced glare just oozing sarcasm.

"Doc, *look at me Doc*. This is not a goof. Ruthie, Pasquale and I really have invented a Time Machine, we're done with inanimate and animate testing, we've taken a quickie jaunt ourselves, and before we unveil it to the board we thought we'd take our closest friends joyriding!"

"*J-j-joyriding?* Have you thought this through, Cal?"

"Oh, you'll change your tune when you hear where we're going!"

That look on Calvin's face always means trouble!

"But, but, but, what about, I don't know, the whole Sound of Thunder effect. Aren't you afraid you'll screw up the past and change history?"

"No sweat. We've determined that what Pasquale calls the *Rigorous Time Stream Theory* holds sway. If we go back in time, say to 1776, then historically we've *always gone back to 1776!* There can be no changing the past or future, because any effects from our actions have always happened because we've historically been there, done that!"

"So if we try to save Lincoln or Assassinate Hitler..."

"We're doomed to fail, because it's a fact, it's happened. You didn't do it!"

"Calvin?"

"Yeah?"

"You really did this? You really built a Time Machine?"

"We really did this."

"We're going *where!*?" asked Michelle incredulously.

"Just what I said, Times Square, New York City, December 5 of this year, to go see Peter Jackson's remake of **King Kong** at the Big New York Premiere!"

"Isn't that a bit of a waste?" asked Annie. "I mean, *really* Calvin, we can go anywhere, anytime, right? Why only two weeks into the future?"

"Actually, it's my idea" said Ruthie. She was short with handsome enough features, a heart-shaped face underneath short bobbed black hair that just fell short of cute, at least for me. "We need to take baby steps at first, for safety reasons, before we try anything mind-blowing. A quick jaunt forward and back two weeks isn't a big deal. What's the worst that can happen, we're stuck two weeks in the future and have to deal with some late bill payments?"

"Hmmm, well we all know how Cal's been Jonesing for the new King Kong, so I guess this is the ultimate sneak peak, huh?" I ventured.

"Right you are, bro! *Heigh-ho, heigh-ho, it's off to Kong we go!*" yelled Calvin.

"Hang on there, Cal, this is going a bit fast for me. Ruthie's caution is well founded, and I have my patients to consider. I just need to call my office." I said.

Dolly agreed. "Good idea, I'd better call home as well."

As I reached for my Blackberry I noticed everyone else trying to look casual as they grabbed their phones.

"Yo, Gunther, can you take my appointments for a few..."

"Hi Daddy, it's me, can you watch Sandy a bit longer..."

"This is Ms. Keane calling..."

My call was picked up after 9 rings. 9 rings!!!

"Hi Agnes, this is Dr. Van Pelt, is my sister available? Hmmm, yes, yes, ok. I need to leave her a mess- Yes, I'll hold..."

Cal couldn't resist. "Your own secretary put you on hold! *Snickersnort!*"

"Shut up, she's very bus- Yes! Hi Ag- Yes, just tell Lu- Yes, well, tell *him* to hold a minute, this will only take- SIGH!"

"Doc, you are the only one I've ever met who actually uses the word 'sigh' as an expletive!" said Calvin.

"It's very therapist- **Agnes! Message! Listen!** I'll be brief! Just tell Dr. Van Pelt that my weekend plans might, *might only*, be extended for two weeks- Yes, I said *two weeks*. I'll be out of touch so she won't be able to reach me- Yes I know I said this would be brief, just listen for once! If it *is* extended I'll be back around December 6th, so my sister needs to handle my clients until I return. *No*, now I already said I don't know, I'll probably be back in time but just in case- *Of course* she's gonna pitch a fit, what else is new? Yes, yes, yes, **YES!** Yes, now just make sure you tell her I said *Kid Gloves*, ok? Thanks. Oh, and Calvin says hi. Cal, Agnes says to say hi to Hobbes..."

"Tell Agnes Hobbes says hi back!"

"*I will not!*"

"Ohhh you're no fun anymore!" said Calvin as I finished the call.

Calvin picked up his beat-up stuffed buddy and strolled over to the Time Machine, still covered in a bright orange cloth. It was quite a rarity for Cal to be carrying him around openly like this, and it frankly worries me. I'd caught him talking to the stuffed tiger a couple of times over the years, enough to make me really wonder about my bud, but this was unheard of. It's like he's slipping back just a bit, after all of the progress we made together.

"Tah..." Calvin said, slowly, deliberately "...Dah." He snatched the cloth off with a flourish to reveal the sweetest toy I've ever laid eyes upon. A disc about twelve feet in diameter and 5 inches thick gleamed heavily upon the floor, it appeared to be made of solid gold. There was a sexy keyboard with three ultra flat monitors atop a Plexiglas podium, with the nub of a silver post about six inches tall and four inches around standing next to it. Calvin stepped upon the golden disc, which thrummed expectantly in a low bass tone, dropped a backpack center stage and tapped the screen a couple of times.

"Guys, when you step up just leave your overnight bags in the middle and we'll stow them in the bins shortly." he announced.

The silver post telescoped up, up, up about ten feet high, and Calvin grasped it in the center with both hands. A golden crackle of energy played over his body.

Squat and pudgy Pasquale stepped up next, the vibe hummed just a bit higher as he touched the post. "We've got to phase each passenger into the warp field individually. In fact, it takes a *good half hour* before each jump to attune everything properly."

Next came Ruthie. As she tuned in and the energy sparked around her the pitch rose yet again.

"Annie baby, come on up, I want you to be the first real passenger besides us techies to phase in!" chirped Calvin.

She approached with her usual staid confidence and caution, a unique air if you can manage it. Of all of my friends, she's the most emotionally solid, hands down! Tall and commanding with the sort of lively red hair that turned heads everywhere, Annie was the great globetrotter. She dropped her surprisingly modest, travel-worn satchel in the center of the platform, and without hesitation grabbed the post with both hands.

"Dolly?" Cal offered, and up she went. Her red ponytail swished back and forth neatly with every step; I was mesmerized by her even gait. She stepped quickly, albeit uncomfortably, her moon face betraying her eager awkwardness as well.

I turned to Curtis. "Well, bro, looks like ladies first, what say we let Michelle go next?"

Curtis said, "I think Michelle and I should go together." Curtis and Michelle were lovers since

childhood, although their fights were many and passionate. Her 6'2" svelte dark-skinned frame was lithe and graceful, while Curtis was stocky like his father, tending towards a pot belly a well. You'd think a barber would take care of his own hair, but Curtis let his afro run wild, almost 70's style, wearing his trademark cap to exaggerated effect.

Pasquale said "No can do, we've gotta board one passenger at a time so our calibrations are accurate. Michelle first, then Curtis, then Doc bringing up the rear."

"Yeah, we'd better ease that big old butt of yours up gently, Doc, if we don't want this machine to collapse in a miserable heap!" Ruthie giggled. She reminded me of Violet at her worst.

"Dolly looked at me and winked "More like saving the best for last!" The warmth in my cheeks changed to a happier hue, and I smiled dumbly back at her. Whoa.

Each passenger brought the thrumming of the disc higher and higher, until the whine became a high-energy trilling.

I came to a decision.

"Calvin, this is a monumental, historic trip, and you need to execute this with a clear head. Are you sure you're up for this?"

"What!? Of course, what in the world are you getting at.?"

"You *know* what I'm getting at. *The tiger.*"

"Oh come *on*..."

"I mean it buddy, I'm worried about you, as your friend and your shrink. I want you to leave Hobbes behind-

"*Ohhh no you don't!* You are *not* getting judgmental on me today of all days! You're not on the clock, you're here because you're the only one I know who shares my passion for King Kong, and who understands *all* of my obsessions!

"All too well!"

"Ok Doc. Hobbes stays, but only if you open up your duffel bag and prove to me you're not carrying any emotional baggage of your own!"

"Wh-wh-what!!!" I stammered.

The blanket, *Linus*. It's in your bag, isn't it?" he said, gently as a matter of fact.

I hung my head as my face went from pink to red to a fierce crimson. All eyes were fixed upon me, boring into me, judging me... "*Good grief* Hobbes can come!" I muttered.

Pasquale and Ruthie started to laugh, but Dolly and Annie shut them up right quick.

"*Damned right Hobbes is coming!*" Cal announced.

Dolly's warming smile turned my face a friendlier shade of blush and I stepped up onto the golden disc of Calvin's Time Machine. I could feel the air charged with, with, well, maybe not electricity exactly, as it wasn't static-y, just a light and airy energy, as the sweet glow enveloped me. Calvin was passing around goggles to help with the glare while Pasquale tapped lightly at the keyboard.

Suddenly a soothing, deep-throated voice spoke from the console. It was a new voice, not one of my companions. "Calvin, Pasquale, Ruthie, good to see you all again. Where and when to?"

"Hey Hobbes, the coordinates are already in your data base, so let's get this party started! Take us to *King Kong!*"

"You got it bud, here we go!!!"

"Hobbes!" I laughed. Of course he'd name the Time Machine *Hobbes!* I laughed out loud long and lustily; all eyes were upon me once again, but now I was fine with it. Hey, it's all too appropriate for Calvin to bring his mascot along for the ride with its alter ego driving!

Ruthie started to say "Now Hobbes, just to be safe the coordinates are..." but she got no further as we were all enveloped in a crushing golden glow, a searing light that the goggles only barely muted.

My extremities grew numb, I felt faint, the trill grew to a soprano scream that pierced my brain before passing into frequencies too high for human ears. My whole body was vibrating, I was locked in place and couldn't move a muscle, couldn't twitch or smile or scream. Just as I felt I would pass out the gold started to fade and life flowed back into my limbs.

The first voice I heard was Ruthie... *angry?* "Calvin, you impulsive *idiot!* How many times do I have to tell you not to skip protocols and *be specific!!!*?"

"Yeah, yeah, well, I'll just tell Hobbes to take us back, don't sweat it."

The yellow glow dimmed to leafy greens and browns. The air was warm and damp; it smelled like a week old bath towel, everywhere there was the lilting and squawking of birds. We were in... a *jungle?*"

"Where are we?" asked Curtis.

"Well, this ain't no concrete jungle," said Michelle.

"Yeah, it looks exciting! Is it safe to explore?" said Annie.

"No!" said Dolly, "I've got a bad feeling about this!"

"I'll pinpoint our position in a moment," said Pasquale.

"Don't bother I know where we are." I announced, my voice confident if intoxicated with panic, thrilled by the impossibility. "Tell them, Calvin."

"Calvin?" asked Ruthie.

The jungle's cacophony was pierced by a distant yet earth-shattering, mighty **ROOOOAR**, this roar putting to shame Calvin's trusty alarm clock. Everyone rushed together, huddled in the center of the gold disc.

"Hobbes? I, I, I input the date and address for my lab in NYC, December 14, 2005? *Didn't I?*"

"Yes bud, but King Kong is here, not there!"

I couldn't resist! "Welcome folks, to 1933... *Skull Island!*"

Michelle shrieked in horror, a primal scream worthy of Queen Fay herself! A parrot-jawed, mottled grey head watched us with curiosity from a stand of massive ferns. About the size of a pony, it ambled towards us, head cocked sideways, displaying greenish brown armored spines running along its back, ending in a vicious little spiked tail! A juvenile Stegosaurus! Cool!

"How precious!" Dolly cooed. As it got closer the Steg shied away from the disc and let out a worried creak from its throat. It wanted to make friends but was afraid of the Time Machine!

Pasquale, Ruthie and Cal huddled in thought while Annie and Dolly stepped off the disc, yanked some ferns and started feeding the little tank.

"I think," said Pasquale, we not only traveled in Space and Time, but have achieved a dimensional shift into another reality. We've slipped sideways across the Multiverse. Hobbes somehow honed in on King Kong himself. Skull Island must have been represented clearly enough in our database to allow the illogical leap, so Kong must be somewhere close!"

"Ohhh *greeeat!*" said Curtis. "What I *reeeeeally* wanna know is where this baby's *momma is!*"

Calvin said "My guess is sleeping off one of Carl Denham' gas bombs!"

"Who is-**EEEEEEEEEEeEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!**" Michelle beat her previous scream with an Oscar-worthy performance!

"Or Not." I said, as the Momma Stegosaurus ambled into view.

"*Leaping lizards!* Everyone back on the disc, get us outta here stat, Calvin!" yelled Annie.

"I can't!"

"You *can't???*"

"No, he can't" added Pasquale, not very helpfully, I thought.

Hobbes, who had been silent until now, spoke up. "Power levels will peak to travel intensity in 19 minutes, 34 seconds!"

As we all huddled in the golden glow of the Time Machine the Steg let out a bitter warble, put it's head down and charged to her baby's rescue...

Next up! 8th Wonder with Chapter Two: *Rainy Day Women Numbers 33 and 76, From Dusk Till Dwan!*

King Kong Round Robin: Chapter 2

Rainy Day Women Numbers 33 and 76, From Dusk Till Dwan!

by Eighth Wonder

Everyone screamed, but I barely heard them over the thunderous footfalls of the Steg Cow bearing down on us. Out of the corner of my eye I saw the party flee into the bush and quickly followed suit, running as fast as I could. *"6 years at the gym and they're leaving you in the dust pal, you're too old for this kind of thing,"* I thought to myself as I lost ground to the girls.

I heard Pasquale yelling something and turned to look, only to find the Steg hot on my trail gaining fast. "It's on me!!" I yelled to the girls, and I watched as they split off, diving under broad leaves to watch me sprint past. I didn't have much left in me. This was it, I was going to die under the 5 ton feet of an angry parent. Dad was right afterall.

Suddenly there was a voice in my head. "Keep running Doc, we're almost there!" Calvin's voice seemed calm, unafraid. My mind regained focus blocking out the monster almost on top of me. I made a wide 180 and tried to fool the Steg, but it only bought me a few yards. I yelled "Whatever you're gonna do, do it fast!" Cal spoke to my mind again "We're right in front of you, just keep coming" I could see light through the trees, I was nearing a clearing in the jungle, almost a meadow. Cal was there, I could feel it. My legs burned with lactic acid, but I pushed even harder. I just hoped Calvin and the others had a plan, I wasn't going much further. The Steg's breath hit my back and I looked back as we broke into the high grass of the clearing. She was so close I could see the anger in her eyes. I turned back hoping to see my rescue, but only found grass up to my chest.

I jiggled left at 90 degrees and stopped, hoping the Steg would overshoot, and she did, skidding around to see where I had gone. I crouched in the grass hidden from view and began to crawl toward the jungle quickly. I saw a flash of white, within the green and my mind screamed 'It's Dolly!!' I stopped my crawl and watched Dolly, who pointed behind me and mouthed "She's right there!" I looked over my shoulder and there she was. The Steg. Less than 5 feet away, standing stone still looking right at me. The grass moved with her breathing, as she pawed the ground and lowered her head to charge.

I fell back and closed my eyes to await my end when a battle cry filled the air. "DIE FOUL BEAST!!!" It was Cal! I opened my eyes to look, but what I saw stunned me dumb. There was Calvin, flying through the air, brandishing a raygun and wearing a spacesuit, complete with bubbledome helmet, which would have been enough to shock me, but it was what he was riding as a steed that really boiled my noodle. He was riding a giant tiger.

The tiger bounded past me, to land between me and the Steg roaring furiously backing the Steg down. The enormous tail swished through the air above my head, creating a swift breeze. "RUN DOC!! We'll hold her here, back to the machine!!" Cal let out a gleeful "YIYIYIYIYIYI!!!" as the Steg reared up bellowing back at the man astride the beast.

Leaping to my feet, I flew into the jungle looking for Dolly, but she had gone. I found the trail of devastation that the Steg had left in it wake and followed it back towards the time machine and the party. As I approached I could hear Pasquale yelling 'I'm telling you it is!'

"Is what?" I asked coming out of the bush. I took a quick head count and saw that Dolly had not returned. Pasquale was eyeing me like he knew something but didn't want to tell me. He shuffled his feet, but kept his eyes on the time machine's computer. "Cal is gone, and he's..." I waved a hand and said "I know, he and that tiger just saved my bacon, but I'm a little foggy on what exactly is going on."

"Well, apparently when we made our trans dimensional shift and ended up in an alternate reality a few rules of nature were, umm, effected. Our intrepid leader was the first to figure it out, as evidenced by his orange and black striped friend."

"In laymans terms please Paz?"

"Calvin has the power to make any wish come true. He brought Hobbes to life, created a spacesuit and raygun out of thin air and went off to rescue you."

I could only stare at Pasquale in utter shock. The sheer impact of what he had so casually said sat me down on the cool ground. I had to let it sink in. Calvin had brought Hobbes to life, and created things out of thin air. I had to know more.

"How?"

Pasquale smiled and looked me dead in the eye. "He said, 'Let's go Hobbes' and suddenly there was a giant tiger standing right here next to me. When I turned back Calvin was wearing the spacesuit and leapt onto Hobbes' back and they bounded off. As they left he said 'SPACEMAN SPIFF TO THE RESCUE!!'. That's about it, do I have it right Ruthie?"

Ruthie was pale and quiet. "Don't even ask me, I haven't the foggiest what's going on."

"What's going on is I just saved Doc's skin and Hobbes had Steg for dinner."

Cal strolled casually into the clearing, dressed sharply in a tuxedo, holding a martini. The grin on his face was wide and toothy. "Living in a fantasy world has it's advantages does it not Doc?"

"Calvin what's going on' I demanded.

Calvin put a finger to his lips. "Shhh... tigers sleep after they eat, and you don't want to wake him up, trust me."

I rubbed my face and tried to clear my head. None of this was making sense. I suddenly remembered Dolly.

"We have to find Dolly, she hasn't come back yet."

In unison the party looked at me and stared.

"Well, let's go find her then!" said Cal and when I turned to looked he was wearing a safari outfit, complete with elephant gun and pith helmet. I stifled a laugh and grinned broadly. A fantastic imagination did have it's advantages.

I closed my eyes and imagined an M-16 with a grenade launcher attached in my hands, but when I opened by eyes, nothing was there. Cal smiled and shook his head.

"Nice try Doc, you'll get it eventually."

I blushed and changed the subject.

"You guys stay here, Cal and I will find Dolly."

"I'll get Hobbes" Cal called over his shoulder as he bounded into the jungle.

"I don't trust tigers!" I called towards Cal, but he had already gone, and returned gripping the same timeworn stuffed tiger I was used to seeing.

"Ok, let's go Doc"

I tossed a bemused look at the others and then followed Cal into the bush towards where I had last seen Dolly.

We walked to the clearing where the Steg still lay, it's half eaten corpse already drawing flies. Cal hefted his rifle and crouched at the edge of the meadow. Pulling a blade of grass from the ground, he sniffed it, and then pointed across the clearing.

"She went this way."

I laughed and enquired how he could know that.

"I'm Calvin Quartermaine, 'Great White Hunter', and I always bag my prey. She went this way."

I stood and watched Cal carefully. This was going to take years to figure out.

"I never thought I'd end up needing therapy"

Calvin laughed heartily and walked into the meadow headed for the other side.

"Just relax Doc, you're wound too tightly."

"Dinosaurs attacking me and my patients displaying the ability to bring stuffed animals to life and create matter out of thin air will do that to a guy."

Calvin turned and leveled a steely gaze at me.

"Hobbes has always been alive.", he whispered and continued across the field of tall grass.

In the center of the meadow the ground rose into a rounded knoll, offering a view across to the jungle on the other side almost a mile away. As we reached the top Calvin suddenly dropped to his knee and waved me down with him.

"Something is coming and it's massive."

"I don't hear any..."

I couldn't finish the sentence as I saw a terrifying sight. Crashing through the jungle emerging onto the meadow came three huge apes each holding a tiny blonde woman. The phalanx of simian giants ran at a full sprint, clutching the women to their bodies. One was dusty grey, almost sepia, with a bulging forehead that ran on three legs like the second ape which sported a gleaming silver patch on his back and a single lower canine protruding from his lower lip. The third ape was much larger, twice the size of the first two, walking erect like a man.

"Cal are those... what I think they are?"

"We three King's Doc."

Cal pointed each one out. "Thirty three, the tall one is seventy six, and the silverback is the new model."

"They're coming right at us Cal, we better get out of here."

Cal pointed and shook his head.

"We're staying right here Doc, I just found Dolly."

"Where!!"

I stood to see over the grass but cal pulled me down hard.

Parting the grass Calvin pointed.

"Right there."

My gaze followed his gesture and there was Dolly, running for her life, about to be crushed under the thundering footsteps of the Kings Kong.

Calvin cocked his rifle and gave me a smile. As I looked at Cal I became aware of heavy breathing behind me. Out of the corner of my eye I could see orange and black flashing through the grass behind Cal.

"You get Dolly, Hobbes and I are going to save those women."

I reached out to stop him.

"I thought Pasquale said we can't change the future?"

Calvin looked back over his shoulder as the same giant tiger that had saved me before appeared beneath him from out of the grass.

"This place isn't the past, so it has no future. Besides, I've always wanted to meet Fay Wray.", and he was gone, galloping down the hill toward the trio of monstrous visions.

"I'm too old for this" I said as I followed, sprinting down the hill, making to rescue Dolly from the fate of flatness.

Next Up: Peter S with Chapter 3: *T for two, or V for vous?*

King Kong Round Robin: Chapter 3 Tea for Two or V for Vous?

by *Altaira & BG*

...I hesitated for a moment as I watched Cal charge down the knoll, rifle in hand, with his newly reincarnated tiger bounding after him; both fearless, both reveling in what to me was a very surreal, life-threatening and (I hate to admit it) very intimidating situation. Could I possibly suspend disbelief and throw myself into this new world as freely as they were? I heard Dolly scream and I had my answer.

I bounded down the steep slope with renewed energy and determination. I couldn't let Dolly perish in this fantasy land possibly to be forgotten forever! Cal was already in the shadow of the three Kongs, and though they towered over him, he showed no fear. He started shouting and waving his arms. The rifle, which I had assumed he would use against them, was pointed straight up as he shot into the air. Hobbes roared an answer.

"A diversion!" I thought. "Brilliant!" I ran as fast as I could toward Dolly. Cal's plan worked! The three Kongs attention was immediately drawn away from Dolly as they hesitated and moved slowly towards Cal and Hobbes. In the next instant, Dolly fell into my arms.

"Thank God you found me!" she cried. "I got turned around and thought I was running towards the time machine, only to have a very rude awakening, times three!" As she wrapped her arms around me I could feel the warmth of her body against mine. She was wet with sweat, but it was the sweat of exhilaration, not fear. I found myself beaming with admiration. It took all my willpower to redirect my attention to what was happening in the other part of the field; and what was happening there was beyond belief.

Cal had used his newly found conjuring abilities to conjure up two T-Rexes who were closing in on '33 Kong and '76 Kong, and a V-Rex who was closing in on the '05 Kong.

"A 'T' for you two and a 'V' for vous!" Cal shouted, laughing gleefully at the Kongs.

As the V-Rex barreled down on '05 Kong, the two T-Rexes suddenly veered towards '33 Kong, leaving '76 Kong free to renew his attention on Cal and Hobbes who's backs were now turned! I knew this was no mere man in a monkey suit. I had to do something and I had to do it fast!

"I believe in this new world!" I cried. "I will conjure something worthy of '76 Kong!" I closed my eyes, concentrated hard and thought of the most horrible creature imaginable. Sure enough, I heard '76 Kong issue a terrifying roar and, at first, I was smugly satisfied. However, upon opening my eyes, I could tell I still had some fine-tuning to do on my conjuring skills. There in front of me was '76 Kong wrestling a gigantic rubber snake and, despite its total lack of a brain and central nervous system, the rubber snake was gaining a definite advantage!

Stunned with disbelief (and a fair amount of embarrassment) I felt a tap on my shoulder. I turned, expecting to find Dolly urging me to run, only to find Dwan, temporarily freed of the '76 ape, gazing into my eyes: "And... what is **your** sign?" she cooed.

"It's an off-limits sign to you!" interrupted Dolly as she stepped between us with a rather endearingly fierce look on her face.

I had no time to dwell on this exhibition of loyalty on Dolly's part as Cal ran by me yelling

something about getting back to the time machine as the allotted 19 minutes to a new transport time were up. Realizing this was our most important priority, I grabbed Dolly's hand and high-tailed it after Cal and Hobbes (who was once again in tow as a somewhat raggedy stuffed toy).

Back at the time machine, the group watched as Cal jumped in and started madly turning dials.

"No!" He cried. "I don't believe this!"

"What??!!" We all cried back in unison.

"Well," he said. "It seems that 19 minutes in our time has a different definition in this fantasy world. It seems in this world, 19 minutes equals 19 days!!!"

"19 days??!!" we all cried. "We'll be dino-dinner in 19 days!" I said.

"Not to worry," said Cal. "If I just tweak a few more...."

Suddenly, several things happened at once: Kong '76 barreled into the clearing and everyone except Cal scattered to avoid being trampled. At the same instant Cal cried, "Eureka!" drawing the attention of the mad-as-hell ape. '76 Kong ran across the clearing and stepped into the time machine. Then, Cal, '76 Kong and the time machine all disappeared with a loud *poof*!

Even in the chaos of the moment, you could have heard a pin drop. We all stood stunned, wondering where Cal and '76 Kong could be. Would either of them make it back alive? ... not to mention the predicament all of us were in without the time machine.

Then, just as suddenly, *poof*, Cal and '76 Kong reappeared, still in the time machine. Cal's eyes were wide open with disbelief. Kong '76 ran away from the time machine and back out into the jungle with what could only be described as a silly look on his face.

"What have I done?" cried Cal.

"What are you talking about?" said Annie. "Where did you go?"

Cal just stared into the jungle in the direction '76 Kong had gone.

"You can't just sit there!" cried Curtis. "Are you okay? And what do you mean by saying 'what have I done'? I thought you couldn't change things by going back in time."

"That's what's so horrible," said Cal, temporarily snapping out of his daze. "To think this has been true all along."

"WHAT?" We all cried in unison?

Cal turned towards us slowly. "You're not going to believe this," he muttered. "I took '76 Kong back with me in time and now I know for a fact that '76 Kong is '33 Kong's father!!!"

"What?" We all repeated again?

"Cal, how can that be?" I asked.

"Trust me on this one, you don't want to know the details. Suffice it to say that I just know," said Cal.

"I can see how this has affected you, Cal," said Annie. "But the important thing here is that you got the time machine to work. So shake it off and let's all get the heck out of here before we find

out what other things are out to kill us in this place!”

Cal physically shook himself. “You’re right, of course, Annie. And yes, the machine is technically working and will take us away from here, but I’m not sure it will take us to anyplace we want to go.

poof Before anyone could say anything else, Cal and the time machine disappeared again.

“Great!” cried Annie. “Now where did he go?”

Before any of us could speculate out loud, we heard a great crashing in the bushes behind us. We instinctively huddled closer together and looked up. Towering above the bushes in the small clearing was '33 Kong and he wasn't happy. We covered our ears as he roared and beat his chest. A small, blond woman beside him screamed a familiar scream.

Just as we turned to run, the time machine reappeared with Cal at the controls, but he wasn't alone! Towering above him and the time machine was Godzilla in all his lizardy glory! Kong and Godzilla took one look at each other and immediately started asserting their dominance. The sound of their roars was ear-splitting! They started to move towards each other with all of us but Cal stuck hopelessly in between them....

Next up: Atomicmutant! Chapter 4 *“Let's do the time warp again: animation meets reality”*

King Kong Round Robin: Chapter 4

Let's Do the Time Warp Again: Animation Meets Reality

by Atomicmutant

Godzilla and Kong '33 faced each other and squared off like midget wrestlers. Only more like giant midget wrestlers with scales and fur and looking more like Kong and Godzilla than any midget I had ever seen.

In the middle of the face-off, there we were, helpless and sure-to-be-squished. Fay Wray was screaming monophonically in Kong's paw as he looked left and right for a place to put her so he could face down the big G.

"It's now or never!" I screamed. "Either this imagination thing works or it doesn't. We have to find a way to protect ourselves, but quick!"

Annie yelled "Godzilla's fins are glowing, and Kong's got no place to put Fay! We've got to do something! Everybody think TREE!"

Now, I like Annie, personally. But that wasn't the first thing that leapt into my mind. Or the second. So in that split second where everyone was doing the wincing and the tensing and the trying to be so darned imaginative that it would materialize into reality, tree just didn't enter into my mind. I was thinking armor. I was thinking firepower.

And as it turns out, I wasn't the only one who had other ideas. 'Cause in a flash, we were off the ground and up in the air. The growling and stomping seemed farther away, because we were in some sort of enclosure now, with windows, at head height between Kong and 'Zilla. They leapt back in alarm as they stared at the strange monolith in front of them. What in the name of Carl Denham had we conjured up out our disjointed collective consciousness? Darkly reflecting in the midday sun, we peered out from our command turret atop.....

..... a huge Iron Asparagus.

At least that's what it looked like, reflected in Godzilla's firey eye. We didn't have time to think, before Kong somehow overcame his initial fear at the new structure and nestled Fay atop it, in order to free both of his hands to pummel the big G into lizard-sauce.

"Someone see if there are stairs in this thing, let's see if we can get to Fay" I yelled. The gang scrambled as I examined a console in front of me filled with knobs and switches labeled with various pictures of fruits, vegetables, and tubers. Not the rockets and smart bombs I had been wishing for, but hopefully, helpful in a pinch.

Kong '33 dodged left as a huge blast of radioactive power thundered out of Godzilla's maw. His shoulder slammed into the Iron Asparagus with mighty power, and the ensuing GONNNGGGG rattled us all, but the structure held firm. For the time being, we were protected.

The Asparagus provided needed cover as Kong snuck around behind Godzilla and grabbed his tail. With a mighty heave and a twist he flipped the gigantic lizard on his side and leapt atop him. The two of them locked in a titanic struggle that half disappeared into the kicked-up dust.

I pushed the Turnip button, and stood back. Nothing. Hmm. This thing was going to take some figuring out.

Pasqual yelled "I think I've found a hatch going up. There's a label with a bunch of Brussels Sprouts on it. What should I do?"

"How should I know? I can't get the turnip to work! Just try something!" We could hear Fay's screams muffled atop the mighty iron sprout.

Big G and Kong were cutting each other up pretty bad, and it looked like G had the upper hand. Kong '33 was tiring. Something needed to be done. I was a Kong fan, I didn't want to see the big guy lose.

Godzilla's breath was really taking it's toll on '33 Kong. Bits of fur were burnt off, and chunks of rubber and armature were beginning to show through. His movements were getting jerkier and he was moving at far fewer frames per second than he previously had been. If this continued, he was gonna be Anime, quick. I had to hurry.

I pressed Arugula. I pressed Pokeweed. I even pressed Okra and Gherkin TOGETHER. Nothing.

Then suddenly a mighty creaking sound came from the forest. The sound of a thousand leaking hydraulic fluid lines. The combatants paused briefly, startled by the noise, and turned to face it. There, in the clearing, inert, ill proportioned, and wearing a silly crown, was GIANT ROBOT '76 KONG.

Kong and Godzilla, all tuckered out from their titanic tussle, knew not what to do in the face of the mechanical monstrosity that hovered over them. They were transfixed at its inappropriateness and immobility. Even Fay Wray shut up at the sight.

Then, just as suddenly as he appeared, he began to....wobble. To and fro, he wobbled so. His eyes grotesquely twitched as hydraulic fluid pitched out of his furry rubber navel, and then suddenly, he was falling forward like a giant bowling pin, buckling under his own weight....and slamming directly onto the hapless Godzilla, pinning him utterly.

Kong '33 staggered to his feet, fur bristling as if under some invisible hand. We all gathered at the window to stare at the unlikely sight. Suddenly, the top of GIANT ROBOT KONG's head swiveled open. A small, kindly looking balding gentleman with spectacles crawled out of his head, waving his arms, and we heard him speak.

"Kong! Kong! It's Willis! It's daddy! Are you alright?"

Kong's eyes widened and his fur bristled intently. He settled into a sitting position and watched the man approach. His look softened and he reached his hand out gently to the man.

We leaned over to watch this tender reunion when suddenly Fay began to scream again.

"Is that all she does?" muttered Pasqual. Then we started to feel it; a shudder, and a shift.

It was true. We were moving. Godzilla's mighty tail had struck the base of the Iron Asparagus and we were buckling at the base, about to topple straight into Kong and his daddy Willis, the little man who lived in the head of '76 Giant Robot Kong.

Intense vertigo came over me as the horizon went cattywhompus, and I began pushing buttons like nobody's business. Garlic, Onion, leeks, potato. Horseradish and cauliflower together! Cabbage and Parsnip! Rutabaga and Beets! Nothing was working! Some combination of these strange buttons had to be the answer!

Willis and Kong looked up at us in fear as the Asparagus creaked and groaned under its mighty weight and leaned towards them. Their goose was cooked, and I couldn't come up with a side salad.

As we tumbled towards them, Fay Wray screaming atop our Asparagus, out of the corner of my eye I somehow noticed that Godzilla's head had come off. His Godzilla head, that is; inside the giant rubber suit was something I never expected to see.

Next up: ***Moose migration, Elvis, and the Electric Peanut Brigade***

King Kong Round Robin: Chapter 5

Moose migration, Elvis, and the Electric Peanut Brigade

by Bawpcwprn

Godzilla's large scaled rubber suit peeled back. His glowing fins started to pulsate creating an eerie feeling for Calvin, Annie and Willis looked over to see a shape emerging figure from the suit. "What are you doing here!?" yelled Calvin and Annie together. Willis was speechless. None other than Bullwinkle stepped out of the suit.

"How...what...when...I don't understand...!" stammered Calvin.

"We don't have time to explain kids right now. First we gotta get away from here. There's a really large wall near here. If we can get there and behind it, it can protect us from the other creatures of this place," replied Bullwinkle.

"But..." questioned Calvin

"NOW!!" shouted Bullwinkle

They all rushed through the dense jungle. Mosquitoes launched full-scaled attacks on their faces. Twigs snapped like toothpicks under their heavy feet. Their hearts were pounding. Cold sweat ran down their faces, slipping past their lips momentarily. The taste of the salt pushed them further and further. They ran for over half an hour but it felt like days. Their feet were numb and they wanted to stop but they couldn't. Bullwinkle pushed them on. All they had left was hope.

"Come on guys, we're almost there.....I think" said Bullwinkle nervously

"What do you mean 'I think'?" replied Calvin angrily. Bullwinkle was lost for words. "We're lost aren't we?! You got us lost! I can't believe we even trusted you! You're a... you're a... YOU'RE A MOOSE FOR HECKS SAKE! WE TRUSTED A MOOSE!" he shouted. "What did you do today? 'Oh I time traveled to Skull Island and met all 3 Kong's, a stegosaurus and then got lost when a moose gave us directions" he mumbled then stormed off to a nearby Norfolk Pine Tree.

"Don't go to far Calvin," said Willis. "There are far too many dangers on this island for you to be going far."

An hour passed and it was getting dark. Calvin was still sitting by the pine. He was falling asleep. Willis and Doc chatted away and Annie had nothing else to do but stand around. Calvin could feel the sleep building up in his eyes. It seemed inevitable. He slowly drifted off to sleep.

"We have to find that walled city Bullwinkle talked about. It's not safe here in the jungle. There are beasts more fearsome here than any of us could imagine," said Willis.

"But we're lost. That moose got us lost. How are we going to find it?" replied Doc

"Well the people who lived in the city must have needed water to survive and what better than to build it over a river. So we just need to find the river and follow it downstream, and that would lead us to the sea and possibly to the city," assumed Willis.

Doc told Annie the plan, and she went to wake up Calvin. The enormous pine loomed over her. It felt like it was going to reach down and grab her. She couldn't see him. Her heart pounded with fear. "Where can he be? Why would he run off...unless...no that wouldn't have happened, we would have heard something...wouldn't we have?" she thought. Her heart pounded faster. It felt like it was going break a hole in her chest, it was hitting so hard. She nervously rushed around looking for him.

"CALVIN!" she said anxiously, "WHERE ARE YOU!?" There was no answer. "CALVIN IF YOU DON'T TELL ME WHERE YOU ARE, WHEN WE GET BACK HOME I'LL...I'LL..." She burst into tears. "CALVIN WHERE ARE YOU!" she sobbed. Calvin was roused from his sleep by the shouting.

"What? Annie is that you? I'm here," replied Calvin in a drowsy tone. Annie rushed over to where Calvin was.

"Oh, what happened? I thought something happened to you. I thought you were taken. Don't ever do that to me again." She wiped the tears from her eyes. "I've come to get you. Doc and Willis have found a way to find the walled city. We've gotta go now before it gets dark." Annie took Calvin's hand and they walked back to the group.

It was about 3 hours from sun-down. There was a flash of light and a low rumble in the distance.

"If we hurry we can probably beat the rain," said Willis. A loud hissing sound was heard and then large drops of water pounded them.

"I guess you spoke to soon," said Bullwinkle

"I guess you should really keep your mouth shut," said Calvin

"Can we not fight please? We really need to concentrate on getting to the city," said Annie.

There was silence among the group, despite the occasional sigh or cough till they found the river.

"Shall we follow it downstream now?" asked Doc, by then it was quite dark

"I think it would be wise to. I wouldn't like anything sneaking up on us while sleeping," replied Willis. "Hopefully we shall reach this place before dawn."

They trudged on down the river, guided by the sound of rushing water. No moon or stars for light. Every now and then they heard the occasional squawk or hiss. The rain drenched their clothes and they all felt miserable. It felt like for an eternity that they were walking. In the distance there was an orange glow and columns of black smoke rose, dissolving into the night sky. The beauty of it was indescribable but its terror loomed over them.

They all ran towards the towering inferno. The city was alight. As they drew nearer everything became clearer. The infrastructure was crumbling before their eyes. The place was deserted.

"Who could have done this?" asked Annie

"I don't know, but they certainly didn't want anyone to know what was in this city," replied Willis.

"It wasn't like this when I was last here!" exclaimed Bullwinkle

"Look there is a section of the city that isn't burning; if we can get there we might be safe!" shouted Willis.

They all headed for that section of the city, dodging burning buildings. The heat was intense. They felt suffocated. The place was in ruins. They had the non burning part of the city in sight. It was 10 meters away. They ran across to it. It was a relief to be safe from harm.

"We've made it!" exclaimed Doc, "You were right Bullwinkle, this place is exactly what we needed!"

"Now if only we had the Electric Peanut Brigade here to fight these fires we would be even better off," said Annie. Calvin laughed.

"The Electric Peanut Brigade?" inquired Willis

"Oh it's a cartoon on TV about these peanuts that use electric water guns to fight fires" said Calvin, "there was this one episode and the Empire State Building was on fire, and it had a reference to Kong in it. A really big hound dog was trapped in the building and he had to get out, but he was carrying a Barbie doll in his mouth, it was his favorite toy. He lived up on the top floor of the ESB and was at the top barking at helicopters filming the footage."

"Yeah that was a..." Annie was cut off. A building crashed down blocking their exit. There was no escape.

"Oh damn it!" exclaimed Willis, "Now we are going to have to wait till the fire goes out! And we are going to have to make sure it doesn't spread into here!"

"Look there's a stream and some buckets," said Bullwinkle. "It seems some people tried to save the buildings. I wonder what happened to them."

They started throwing water on the fire. The hiss of the fire being extinguished sent chills down their spines.

A snarl echoed off the walls. They looked around to see the light flickering off a beast. The beast edged towards them. They had no escape.

King Kong Round Robin: Chapter 6

T-Minus 33 Days Until D-Day

by John Michlig (*Kongfiles*)

Smoke. Heat.

My legs are suddenly unable to support my weight. My mind refuses to focus. Down to one knee, I see Calvin beside me, already succumbed. Where's that damn giant moose ...

Giant moose?

Smoke... Heat...

I see... Fay Wray? Ann Darrow? She seems to be fading away...

Something looms ahead, but I can barely make out a shape. The Mighty Peking Man? A*P*E?

Not Queen Kong; please, not Queen Kong...

I can still form thoughts. Mr. Sulu gunned down by a strafing fighter plane. Or was that Chekov? Dr. McCoy struck dead by the Black Knight. My mind wanders. Is that season three DVD set the blue or the red package? Should I even bother buying the season three set - - I mean, who really needs "Spock's Brain" on DVD...?

What's the damn Star Trek episode where they experience whatever they imagine? The one where the cute ensign's uniform rips *just so*

No! Purity of thought – that's what I'm after. Can I conjure Mr. Spock and get a quick mind meld? No. I'm fixated on the Spock-zombie in the "Spock's Brain" episode. Useless – damn Star Trek season three!

Now I'm flooded with the image of Leonard Nimoy on the cover of his sixth album. Why, oh why am I stuck on something titled "The Touch of Leonard Nimoy"?

Not. Helpful.

Purity of thought. There's too much here. If I could pare things down to their essential essence...

Leonard Nimoy made *six* albums?

The howling wind now begins to subtly morph into a basso drone. Oh no.

"If I had a hammmm-er..."

I feel a hand on my shoulder; it is Willis O'Brien.

"Think only of the moment," he says calmly. The fabric of his shirt appears alive, as if chipmunks crawled beneath it. Of course; he's animated.

I manage to form a singular image in my mind. It is Kong rolling the log, sailors falling, screaming. They land, and then...

"Stopped the picture cold."

What?

"Stopped the picture cold, so I cut it out myself."

I look up to see a towering figure. His head brushes the treetops. And he has a pipe clenched in his teeth. He appears to be speaking to no one in particular.

"Subtext? There's no damn subtext," he roars. *"It's an adventure tale. Anyone who reads more into it than that is a damn fool!"*

We seem to be alone in the clearing. Where did ...?

"Son, you have to keep it simple. Don't clog up your story with a lot of extraneous garbage! Adventure, danger, a pretty girl—that's your story!"

Simple. Keep it simple.

"It's the thrill of a lifetime and a long sea voyage that starts at six o'clock tomorrow morning!"

The thing is addressing me now. It appears to be some weird hybrid of Merian Cooper and Carl Denham, stitched together like a Silver Age Batman/Superman hybrid. Bits of Cooper here, a portion of Robert Armstrong there.

The roaring fire and smoke clear around me. Everything is distilling down to myself and the apparition that I sense more than see.

Then a rustling in the brush behind me. Another apparition; huge, but really well tailored and with oversized eyeglasses.

"No one cry when Jaws die. But when the monkey die..."

Uh oh.

"I spend 24 million on my Konk."

The well-dressed figure suddenly *leaps* over me—as he sails overhead I note a white turtleneck under a snazzy sportcoat—and lands atop the Cooper-Denham hybrid. He's had a drink in his hand the entire time.

"I give them quality!" he bellows. The hand-made sportcoat's monogram glitters; it's stitched from gold thread.

D.DeL.

We are alone. And it is De-Day.

King Kong Round Robin: Chapter 7

A Man, a Plan, a Canal: Panama!

by JPB

"Oh my GOD!" shouted Annie, suddenly beside me and I looked at her! She was in shock - her eyes were as white as saucers. (They always were, given the lack of pupils and all...)

There were already way too many Kongs, and now there are two too many giant directors.

Calvin was busily trying to calculate how we could get out of this. Was there some secret constant of the cosmos, some formula to get us back home?

He started mumbling to himself:

*Here is my pi, e, song,
complex lattice polygon
Find an answer, find it quick
Or we'll be in trouble thick*

"Calvin, are you remembering to factor in the Golden ratio in your work?" I asked. "I thought that number was crucial before."

"**I PREFER PI**" he shouted back at me, as he continued to scribble.

* in the depths of my soul, I heard a hollow voice say "A Man, A Plan A Canal... Panama" *

God, we were all getting so hungry.

Wait! Hunger! That's it!!

Cooper and Dino were both *notorious* gourmands.

I shouted up to them: "**STOP ATTACKING US! YOU TWO SHOULD FIGURE OUT SOMETHING BETTER TO EAT THAN US!!!**"

"I want a steak and a potato" bellowed Cooper.

"You-a plebian... you'a want to eat-a simple meat, you a-fool! What about-a the anti-pasto, what about the-a salad?" replied a disgusted Dino DeL.

"Keep the food simple, you fool! You complicate everything! Just like you complicated my story – ruining it in your poor excuse of a remake."

Oh boy! The two directors were no longer paying attention to us! Just to each other. And I was *not going* to step in their way.

"You-a don't even know how to eat and enjoy-a life! Who-a cares about the action! It's about the emotion! Its-a bout the art ! And my ape – he had emotion. When my monkey a-died, every-a-body....."

“.....Laughed!” completed Cooper for him. “You have no legacy; your film was a waste of celluloid! Go back to your pizzas, you hack!”

At that, Dino DeL got angry. *He grabbed Cooper by the throat and Cooper did the same!* Locked in a death struggle, they swore at each other, and only one last phrase was heard from Dino DeL:

“PIZZA? Cooper! You can-a talk about your American trash-a film all you want! I know how-a to eat. You can’t come close-a to what I can do! So just-a....just-a... *GO HANG A SALAMI! I’M A LASAGNA HOG!*”

* in the depths of my soul, again, I heard a hollow voice say “A Man, A Plan A Canal... Panama” *

At that – they both collapsed – *dead!*

Everyone just stood around...quiet... breathing kinda funny.

Calvin looked up from his calculation.

“Oh oh,” he said.

“What’s wrong?” I queried.

“My calculations were wrong. We missed our window of returning home! We needed to be back on the time portal disc *hours* ago.”

Willis looked *furious*. “WHAT? We’re stuck here?!?”

Everyone just stood – dazed and confused. Like a Deadhead at a hip-hop convention, we had lost our groove.

But we were not allowed to rest..... for coming out of the bushes were the great hunters from our world, Thompson and Thomson! For years, they searched out the elusive TinTin, but just like that coyote in the southwest USA, they never could find their prey!

And they looked at Calvin and shouted “*Tintin!*” – They confused our blonde science-boy with their Belgian reporter! As they raised their guns, we all started running away from them as fast we could, into the jungle, but they kept up the pace! Not noticing where we were going, we suddenly *all* tripped and fell on a mess of vines strewn on the ground. As I fell, my mouth landed on a odd bulb growing out of the vine, and it smashed its way into my mouth – and I swallowed!

WHAT WAS THAT I just ate???

Fortunately, Willis noticed a note attached to the vine. Reading it, he said “Experiment 9 from outer space, brought to you by *Deus ex machina* distributors. This is a VINE of INSPIRATION. Anyone who eats the bulbs of this vine will speak in verse for a limited time. The ingredients of this bulb are patented by RAVEN-POE industries.”

“Oh oh!” I said. “I gotta get outta here and find some help for all of us. I’ll distract the Thompson twins by running – leaving you all in peace, for a while.”

But as I got up, I could feel the drug within the bulb start to take effect.... All thoughts came in verse...

*I looked at my tripped-up time-mates, we have way too much on our plates
First Annie, my sweet soft orphan, who I cannot but adore
and Pasquale, who is of Rose born, and Calvin with Hobbes, so forlorn
and my soul is now so torn, for I must leave them behind
If I'm to try to save them, I first leave them behind
So I'm alone again once more*

*And I wondered how I got here, now so far from all I hold dear
My two legs keep up their straining, oh my feet are very sore
As I thought of time remaining, I saw the Thompsons gaining
And my feet resumed complaining, of their ever growing pain
Hurting in tight shoes they're crying, of their ever growing pain
aches that hurt just more and more*

*I ran fast through a clearing, their presence always nearing,
The Twins tried five times to shoot me, as I trembled to my core
But they tripped each other fully, and I ran ahead now quite free
They yelled, bitter and angry, at my oh-so-lucky break
They really were frustrated, at my oh-so-lucky break
But I had the better score*

*As I escaped their silly wrath, I then noticed that there's a path
In the woods that I did follow, at the path's end: a large door
I stilled fears with a swallow, and I struck the door: It's HOLLOW!?!?
Should I sit here and just wallow, waiting, knocking, wait some more?
"Will it's owner ever find me?", so I wonder while knocking more
For the owner of the door*

*OH! the handle started turning and my stomach started burning
as if I were a preacher, caught red-handed with a whore
It's a rolly-polly creature, from some hoary double feature
"Will you be a helpful teacher, showing me what's next in store?
Heaven, hell or in the middle, please show me what's in store,
.....or I'll curse you at your door"*

*The monster had five square eyes, and he wore a gaudy bow-tie
and he told me "Come and enter", as my heart began to soar
He continued "I'm your mentor, you've now reached the island's center,
So don't be a dissenter, rest your feet please I implore
And you may call me Clarence, rest your feet please I implore
...Or I'll shove you out my door*

*This island here has purpose, and because now with your free verse
were you able to come find me, so please now hear some more
I am here to teach you kindly, of the thing life should remind thee:
THAT IMAGINATION IS KEY, to be in your home once more
Use your own imagination, to be in your home once more
Now this next verse sure won't bore*

*"Now, to you, REAL, you're seeming, but in other lands your dreamed-things
by cartoonists with some skill!" "I'm not crazy!" I now roar.
"Your news is quite a big pill, and I cannot quite just sit still,*

*As you tell me what you will. I have spirit in my core!"
I cannot be but a dream, I have spirit in my core!
He continued "wait - there's more"*

*He resumed now without pausing, and a heartache he was causing
But he tried to add some calm, saying "And you worry now what for?"
"It doesn't matter where you come from, a zygote or a cra-nee-um"
"you own what you will become, so please smile for me once more"
"Your life here's up to you, so please smile for me once more"
"And there is just one thing more"*

*"You show some consternation, at this power of creation"
"but it's really up to you, so now exit out my door"
An analytical review, I'm overwhelmed now, Gosh! Phee-ewww!
But what he said rings true, so I don't worry anymore
I knew how to save my friends, so I don't worry anymore
so I headed out his door*

*I returned to all my time-mates, saw them down all in their sad states
And I told them what I was taught, and they listened to my lore
"If we're creatures made from thought, then we should, oh yes we ought,
turn the tables, take who made us, bring them to this island's shore"
Yes! Take our own creators, and bring them to this shore"
And we felt esprit de corps*

*"But who made us up in their minds? We really don't know we're blind!
We know we're IN their funnies, and I'll give you now what for..
now none of us are dummies, so that's a clue my hunnies,
now name some comics, buddies, they must be in our own funnies
That must be it - oh my yes! They must be in our own funnies
And we'll settle our own score!"*

*"I pick THIS one" said Annie, "how I LOVE it, it's uncanny
and it's in my news subscription, and I know you all adore
the strip called CRAZY KIKN, It's my favorite addiction
if in OUR world they're our fiction, well, here they'll be comics no more
We'll bring them to this world, then here they'll be comics no more
swap us with them, mi amour!"*

*"Now chant together, one and all, 'Vets and SKIIPs, please hear our call
Enthusiasts hear us ranting, all of you come to our shore!"
And oh my! it was enchanting! watching all of this transplanting
OH! Annie's body, slanting, as she fainted with a snore
Into my arms, my sweet Annie, had she fainted with a snore
Then we heard a thundrous roar!*

*Suddenly my spech was altered, and my poetry - it faltered
and I realized that the magic, was now running out of steam
and I need to rhyme no more
No more verses
.....nevermore*

"Thank heaven," I said. I finally had rid myself of that verse-curse. I was glad, because a person who just produces cheap poetry all the time is a lame excuse for an artist.

But things started turning black... and as darkness fell, I saw people appear in our places! A giant dinosaur, Godzilla like, but different, someone looking like Fay Wray, but with odd red eyes, a woman in a short mini-skirt, with a pet robot. And many others. And they looked so confused. But then all lights left my vision. Then, I saw *everything*: the lights of a million suns swirled around me. Galaxies performed cartwheels for my amusement, and I watched the cycle of stars – bursting forth in nebulae, only to live, expand and die, leaving small remnants of themselves in the end. Time swirled around me, and for a moment, I could understand everything. I knew everything. But it slipped away – and I knew that will never feel so alive again.

And I woke up. Annie was in my arms, still, but she awoke, and stood up, somewhat shyly. Willis, all my friends, stood around me.

And we were in New York City again! Snow was falling, and there were people milling, enjoying the event: the premiere of a picture that had been anticipated for so long! And the show was just beginning... *we didn't miss a thing!*

"Thank you Clarence!" I shouted! And I heard a Salvation Army bell ring. And Annie said "Every time a bell rings..." and Willis concluded "...a balrog gets its wings"

We're home!

.....but..... in a land that time forgot..... in a world uncharted on any star maps made by man..... stand a group of people... ripped from their homes... their keyboards... their computers...

...and in that land...

.....far from the smokeless bars and restaurants he loves.....

.....the giant gay dinosaur bellows to the heavens: "*NOW I'LL NEVER KNOW THE FINAL BOX OFFICE TAKE*"

THE END?!?!?!?!?