

the
PURPOSE



is
to
LOVE
of Life

A GHOSTBUSTERS: ANSWER THE CALL APPRECIATION ZINE

A GLORIOUS WEIRDOS PROJECT

AUGUST 2018

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Dedication

For the entire Ghostbusters family, pros and fans alike, with extra thanks and appreciation to Paul Feig and Katie Dippold.



Director/writer Paul Feig poses with screenwriter Katie Dippold in front of the iconic fire station 8 Hook & Ladder 8

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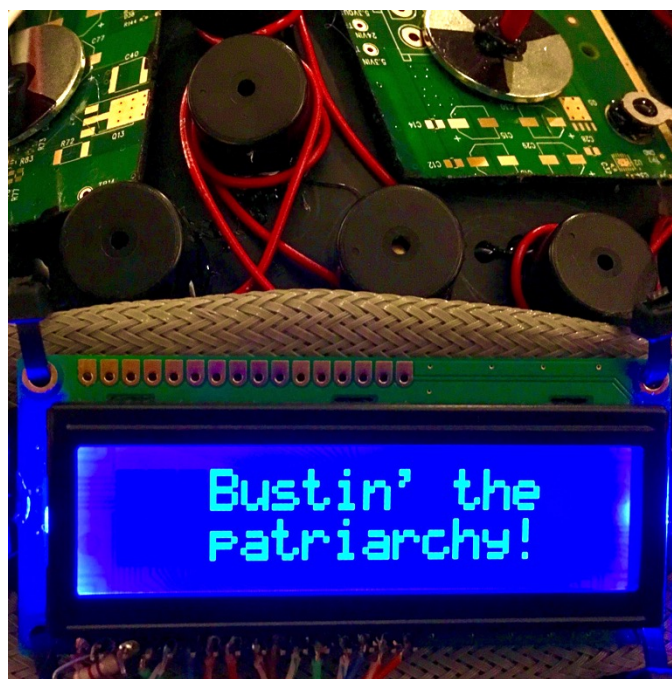
FOREWORD

Love is much more than only romantic love. (We'll mostly leave that to the fanfic writers.) In *The Purpose of Life is to Love*, we honor the love that Holtzmann evoked in her speech: the love of ride-or-die friends, of sisters-in-arms, of found family. We also recognize and appreciate the love of learning and exploration shared by the Ghostbusters and ourselves. We pay tribute to the love poured into the film by its hardworking creators. And, finally, we celebrate the multifaceted love of fans, expressed as fanworks, enthusiastic recommendations, friendships, and more.

This zine is a celebration of *Ghostbusters: Answer the Call* (2016). Sure, everyone here has probably had a critical conversation or two about the film, as thoughtful fans do with their most beloved media. But love and appreciation are our themes. And that's love and appreciation for everyone involved. (Not just Higgs. Not *just* Higgs!) Uh, that is—we're not here only to show our appreciation for the director and stars, but everyone involved: Paul Feig, Katie Dippold, Leslie Jones, Melissa McCarthy, Kate McKinnon, Chris Hemsworth, Karan Soni, Cecily Strong, Andy Garcia, Michael Kenneth Williams, Matt Walsh, all the returning cast, Theodore Shapiro and the music department, Robert D. Yeoman, Melissa Bretherton, Brent White, and the editing department, Allison Jones and the casting department, Jefferson Sage, Jeffery Kurland and the costume and wardrobe department, the art directors and department, the set decorators, the makeup department (especially Trish Seeney, who's been very kind to fans), the sound department, the legions of special effects and visual effects experts, the props crew, the stuntpeople (especially Alyma Dorsey, Jessi Fisher, Meredith Richardson, and Luci Romberg), the

camera and electrical department, the animators, the sound department, location management, the producers, and every single one of the other crew, all the way to the PAs. It took everyone working together to create a film that immediately took hold of our hearts and still hasn't let go.

We also celebrate each other, the fans of the film. Once we had bought every licensed item we could find, we made and shared our own art. After we'd read all the books and watched all the extras, we wrote stories to fill in the gaps, to make subtext into text, and to extend the adventure. We traded set photos and bid on screen-used items. We hunted down



Detail from Abby's helmet cosplay prop build by C. C. S. Ryan

commercially-available costume items and told others where to find them. We learned to solder and use microcontrollers. We met on Tumblr, on Facebook, on Twitter, and at conventions. We wore our cosplay to comic cons, Doctor Who conventions, charity events, and Halloween parties (and undoubtedly a Renaissance faire or wedding as well). Sometimes we just low-key cosplayed in favorite characters' street clothes at work.

We work everywhere: science museums, universities, theme parks, startups, bookstores, animation, you name it. The fans represented in this zine range from young adults to middle-aged people with kids. We have female, nonbinary, and male writers;

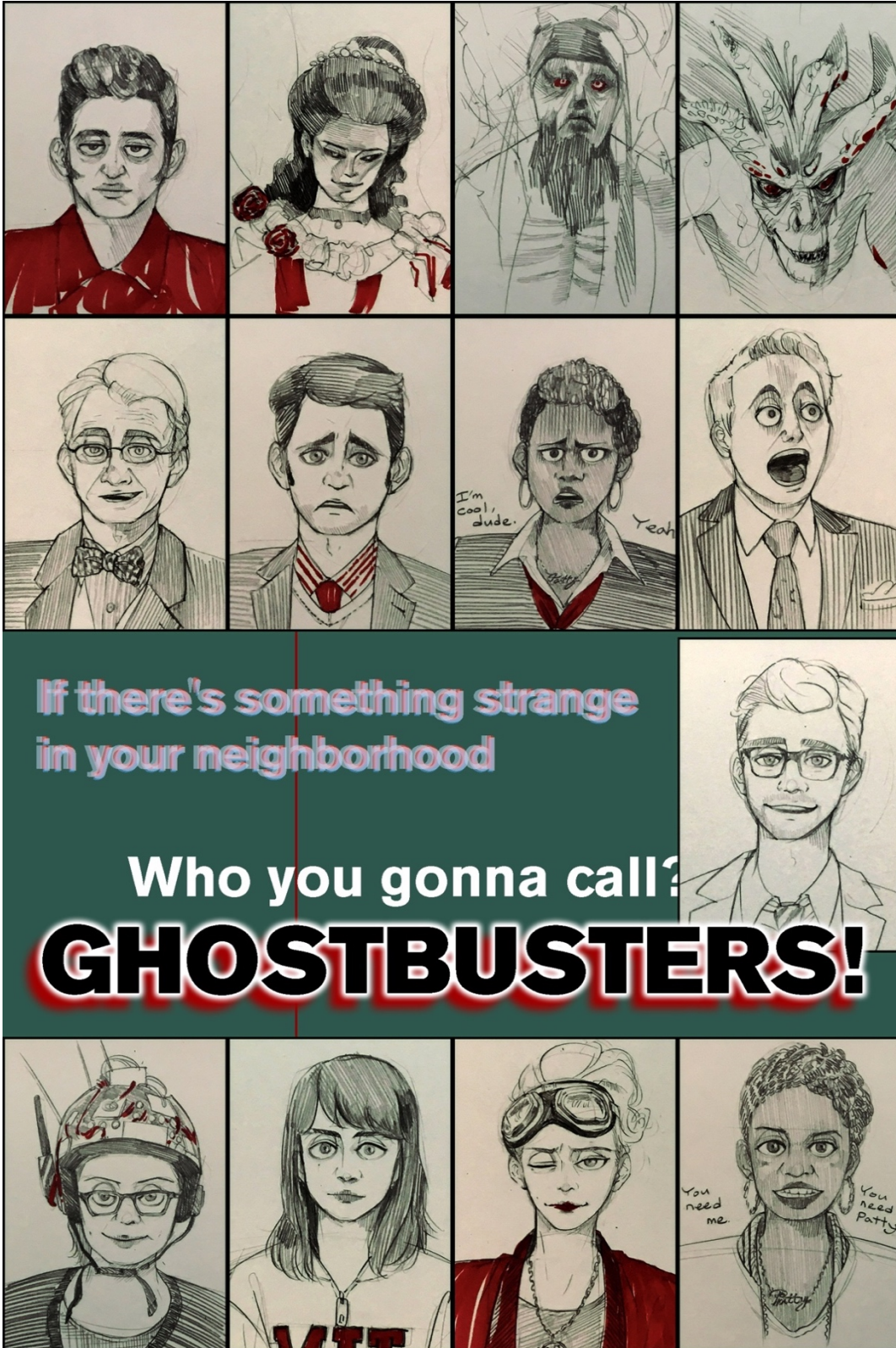
straight, ace, bi, pan, lesbian writers; different national origins, languages, disabilities, and professions. Some of us have been fans of *Ghostbusters* since we were small children. (Raise your hand if you too have library ghost trauma!) Others are completely new to the franchise, or had never been particularly into it before.

We're all here because the cast, crew, and creators of *Ghostbusters: ATC* created a film that showed us characters and scenes that we'd never seen before, showed us ourselves in a way we'd never been shown before, and showed us possibilities of which we had hardly dreamed. They raised the standards of what we expect to see in a film, and we're all better for it. In fact, for a lot of our contributors, including me, *Ghostbusters* literally changed our lives.

Recently, an insightful friend observed that this kind of intense fandom can be fraught for a fan, because it's such a vulnerable place to be in. (Even if the work in question *isn't* one that's a target for recreational online attacks.) Not only do you not want to overwhelm your friends, but you don't want to make the artists and creators uncomfortable. When the creators and pros appreciate your enthusiasm as the compliment that it's meant to be, my friend noted, it means a lot. To their credit, everyone who was professionally involved with *Ghostbusters* with whom I've had contact has been kind and supportive, whether it was on Twitter or in person, and I've heard the same from many other fans.

So, thank you.

And ... we love you.



Artist: Sun

WHAT THE NEW GHOSTBUSTERS MEANS TO ME

Amber Purcell

It's difficult to put into words what the new Ghostbusters movie means to me. I went into my local theater, six days after the release, without a lot of expectations. The trailers I had seen all seemed to clash with my sense of humor, but I was determined to support a female-led movie no matter what. I quickly discovered the trailers were a bunch of lies. This movie was hilarious! It was amazing! I wasn't regretting buying a ticket for this movie at all! And then, about halfway through, when Erin Gilbert shared her Ghost Girl story with their newest team member Patty Tolan, my jaw dropped. This movie had characters. True, deep, fully-fleshed out characters with histories and backstories and relationship dynamics built long before the start of the movie. This was not the 1984 *Ghostbusters*. Heck, this wasn't even most mainstream comedy or action releases, but it was exactly what I've needed from movies to get me hooked. And oh boy, did this new *Ghostbusters* hook me.

From the backstories justifying the focus on ghosts to the visual progression of the ghostbusting technology to the incredible Times Square battle that culminated in that spectacular moment of Holtzmann dual-wielding proton pistols while the Ghostbusters main theme dramatically blared—I fell in love. Head-over-heels, completely in love like I have never fallen in love with a movie before. And being in love with this movie taught me several things:

- 1) I could've felt this way about the original Ghostbusters as a kid. If it had been made for me and not adult white men in the audience, I could have fallen in love with it just as hard. I could have been that kid on the playground running around in makeshift coveralls with a stick pretending to bust ghosts. I know this

because after watching *Ghostbusters 2016*, I desperately wanted to run around in coveralls pretending to bust ghosts. I wanted to buy all the merchandise, even if the majority available were children's toys. I wanted to play Ghostbusters. I wanted to be a Ghostbuster, and that was such a shocking revelation to me. I had known and enjoyed the original Ghostbusters my entire life, but never in this in-depth fandom way. I never thought the premise was interesting enough to spend energy on. I didn't realize the premise wasn't the problem.

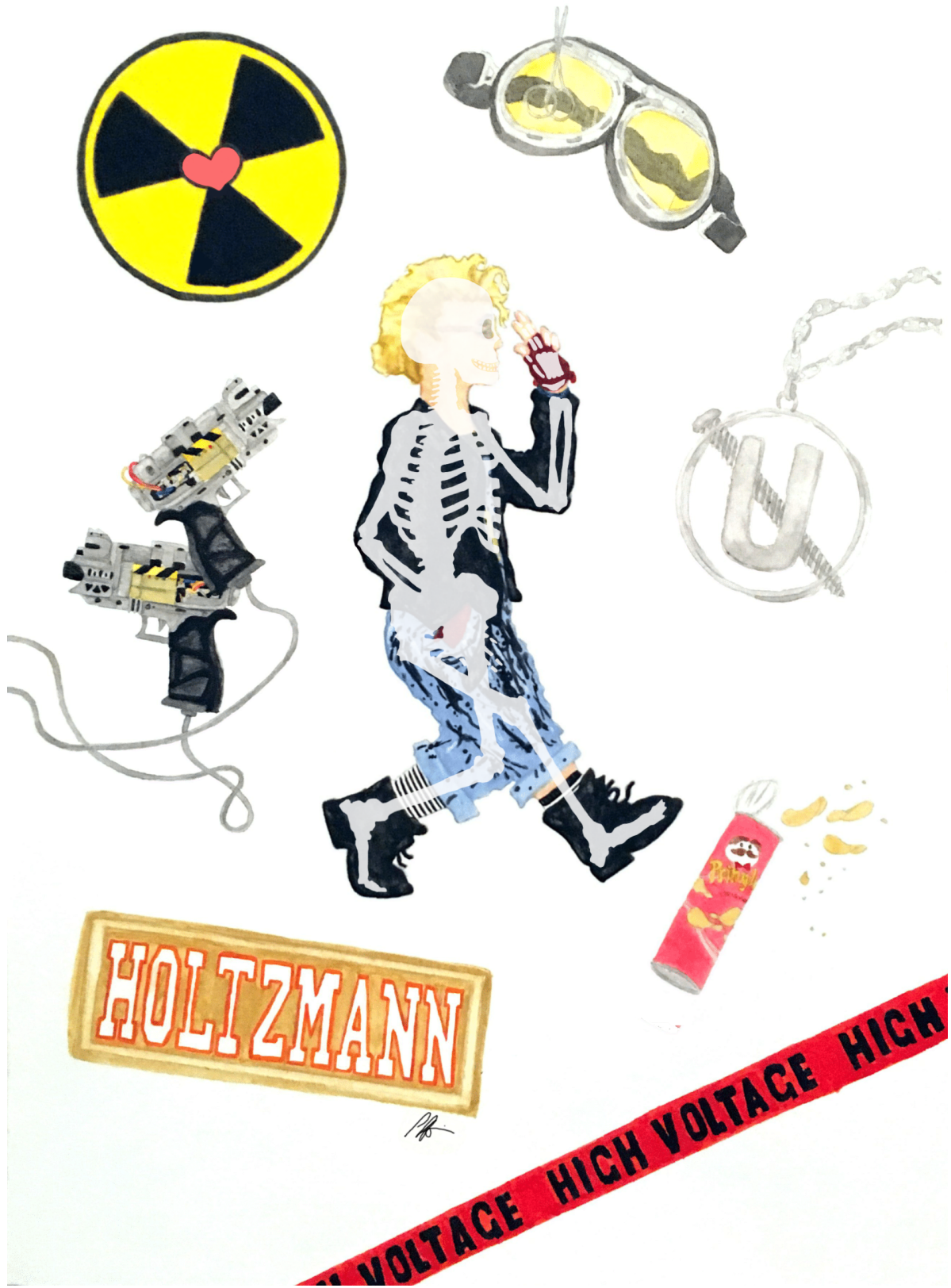
2) It is entirely possible for me to watch a movie over and over without growing tired of it. I thought I could only do that with television shows, but no. Give me a movie with fully-fleshed out characters and dynamics on top of a wonderful story and I will quite happily watch it on repeat for the rest of my life. (I ultimately saw *Ghostbusters* twelve times in theaters, and my only regret is not seeing it that first weekend. It could've been fourteen!)

3) Some interests can win out over my introversion and anxiety. It's been so long since I first got hit with depression and anxiety, that I had forgotten that. But I loved *Ghostbusters* so much, I wanted to talk about it with everyone. I talked it up to my coworkers; I dove into the online fandom without lurking first. I even spoke to my fellow viewers in the theater where I met a lovely family on vacation who adored everything Ghostbusters and had even gone to high school with Melissa McCarthy (true story). One of the little girls was dressed in Ghostbusters coveralls and a sparkly tiara, and the family asked me to take their picture in front of the large cardboard Ghostbusters cutout in the hall. It was the best day. I also started going to the theater by myself because my husband had reached his tolerance for rewatching the same movie, but for once, I wasn't scared to do it. I was always excited,

even when I was driving 80 miles to a town I had never heard of because that was the only place in the area still showing *Ghostbusters*.

Finally, while I had realized my sexuality several years ago and while this movie wasn't explicitly queer, it could have easily been what pulled the veil back on heterosexuality and taught me what loving women as a woman actually means. It's a movie about four women connecting with each other and supporting each other without any male leads or heterosexual romances to steal the focus, and more importantly it's a movie that treats these women as normal human beings without a speck of the male gaze. It was incredible and immediately clicked with me, and it's a movie that would have clicked with me regardless of if I had been 8 or 18 or 28, regardless of whether I understood my own romantic interest in women or not. It would've given me insight into my own personality and make-up. It would've given me examples to point to whenever I was criticized for not being "girly" enough so that I could prove that I don't have to be like that. I'm quite good enough just being me, thank you very much.

Ghostbusters may have come out too late to give me any revelations about myself, but it was still revolutionary. It still broke me out of my shell, and rearranged my views on movies and which kinds I could like. It still gave me examples of real representation to cling to, and I'd still call it life-affirming, even if it wasn't life-changing. I'm thankful to live in a time when *Ghostbusters 2016* exists, and I am so proud that the current generation of little girls and every generation to come will have this movie to look up to. Maybe it will even be life-changing for one of them.



Artist: PhilippaK

IN PRAISE OF PATTY

Clint Ryan

Patty is my favorite Ghostbuster otH.¹ We first meet her in her MTA booth, where she is torn between trying to interact with MTA riders and reading her book. As someone who loves to read but discovered that I didn't actually enjoy being completely antisocial *quite* as much as I thought I did, this feels pretty familiar. Patty is reading Herbert Asbury's *The Gangs of New York*, and she has at least six other books in her booth. Why does she need so many books in her booth at once? She doesn't seem like a person who would finish a book and leave it lying around in a small space that she has to share with workers

on other shifts. Does she read a book an hour? Does she need the others so she can cross-reference stuff? Either way, I approve.

I know Patty has been the subject of a lot of complaints and criticism, much of which was written by diaperbabies trying to sound like anything other than misogynist garbage animals. Some



Artist: GhoulGirly

of it, though, was written by reasonable people who weren't thrilled that the only Ghostbuster who wasn't a scientist wasn't white, either. Yes, that's a problem. Only four other physics majors graduated in my year. We were 100% white and 80% male. One movie won't change that, but we do need to be showing people a wider array of people who can study physics.

However, having a degree in physics (or any other STEM field) isn't the same as being smart. Having been through graduate school, I can assure you that neither one is necessary for the other. In the US, at least, scientists don't get a whole lot of respect, but they typically get more than people in the arts and humanities. You can find lots of books and movies where science or scientists save the day, but it's harder to find cases where the hero studied, say, mass communication or history.

Historians can make great heroes, especially in supernatural investigation stories. Seriously, who out there would want to play Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* RPG without at least one historian in the party? But while Patty does seem to be the only person on the team who knows much about history, I don't think it's fair to say she's only a historian. I'm not one of those people who argues that she can't be educated since she doesn't talk about her degree, though. That's silly. She's interested in joining, as Erin puts it, "a scientific research group." Leading with something like "I have a degree in French literature" seems less practical than "I read a lot of nonfiction".

No, what I actually mean is that Patty seems to be as comfortable reading something like "Reversed diffraction in bio-inspired photonic materials" as she is reading *The Gangs of New York*. Why did I happen to pick that particular example? Well, it's one of the articles in *Physics Today* 2014 67:12, which happens to be the

magazine she is reading while waiting to talk to the rest of the gang for the first time. And, if you watch the extended version, you'll also see her reading the *Journal of Astrophysical Mechanics*. This is also a real publication, and unlike *Physics Today*, the *Journal* introduces brand new research and includes a fair amount of math and some very technical language. In the real world, it's completely off-the-wall fringe garbage, but in the Ghostbusters universe, it would be serious, cutting-edge research. My point is that, while scientists and historians are both cool, people who can easily cross academic boundaries have got to be at *least* as cool, if not cooler.

Finally, Patty is the most heroic of any of the Ghostbusters. Specifically, she is the only one who understands what she's in for and still signs on to bust ghosts because it's the right thing to do. Holtzmann would show up to the apocalypse with a home-made nuclear reactor strapped to her back just for the lulz. Erin and Abby have some serious childhood (and more recent) trauma pushing them into it. All three of them, as well as Ray, Egon, and Peter, are otherwise unemployed and probably a little bit obsessed with the supernatural. Winston decided to save the sum of things for pay. (And both Louis and Kevin are excluded by the part about understanding something.)

While many people have pointed out ways in which Patty's character could have been even better, she's still great—and Leslie Jones really brings her to life.

¹ "other than Holtzmann." I think this sounds better than if everyone says "My second favorite Ghostbuster is".



Artist: PhilippaK

WHY I LOVE THIS MOVIE

Philippa K.

I wish that I could have seen this movie when I was a young child, because I truly believe it would have broadened my then-limited horizons on what women are capable of doing and becoming, namely succeeding in STEM fields, never giving up, having their work and words taken seriously, inhabiting their own lives for their own worth, and most importantly; simply being allowed to be yourself.

All four of the Ghostbusters (Erin towards the end of the film) are unashamedly themselves, not cowed by what the people around them think, and to my mind that's the most important message this film gives out: Be yourself, even when others don't want you to be.

This sentiment rings true with Dr. Jillian Holtzmann in particular. She's weird, unpredictable, eccentric and has an appearance like few others. Basically she's strange, but that's the magnificent thing about her: She is totally, utterly, one hundred percent only, herself.

Holtzmann's uniqueness stands out to me because she diverges away from the 'norm' further than the other three do in certain



Laura M & Philippa K

ways. I have no doubt that Kate McKinnon delivered her with queerness in mind, being a gay woman herself, and throughout the fandom that's something sapphic women have taken to heart more than anything else. To see a mainstream, big blockbuster comedy/action movie starring a gay woman portraying a gay character is beyond belief, and while it is not official due to Sony and their blatant homophobia, it is this that I, and a lot of other fans, take love and inspiration from.

A personal thing for me is seeing Holtzmann as neurodivergent and non-binary, both of which I am. I came to realise I was non-binary within the last year or so, and this movie and Holtzmann's character has played no small part in that.

I emulate her clothing style, frequently wearing shirts, waistcoats and trousers that aren't shaped to my body. I used to wear similar things in college but drifted away from that, feeling I needed to wear a more traditionally feminine clothing style. However, thanks to seeing Holtzmann being unabashedly herself and wearing these outfits that I would previously shy away from, due to how thoroughly 'looking good for others' has been hammered into my brain growing up in such a heteronormative household, her character has given me the inspiration and courage I needed to finally let go of that, release my family's and strangers' expectations of what I should be, and be myself.

Another aspect of her portrayal is being able to spot the neurodivergent traits in her mannerisms, and how she reacts to the situations the Ghostbusters are placed in throughout the film, especially when compared to the other characters in the film. Traits from people who have ADHD and autism have been easily identified in her character, and in a similar vein of Holtzmann being queer, this has given a usually downtrodden and

underrepresented group of people a role model of a character, one that everyone loves, is incredibly smart, people quote frequently and cosplay as, which can only be a very, very good thing in my eyes and a step forward for representation as a whole.

That's my personal thoughts on Holtzmann's character and how it has influenced me for the better. She is without a doubt my favourite character from any movie or TV show, in anything, in fact, and I can't say I'd be the same person right now without having this influence over the past year. I'm sure there are more people out there like me who took similar heart with her and the other characters from the film.

It's simply so refreshing to see a movie about four women being *people*, with no camera shots catered to the male gaze, no forced romances, no chopping down of their characterisations to fit in with some narrow idea of 'womanhood'. These women are genuinely treated as capable and smart, and that is an incredibly legacy to be able to leave behind for future generations to see and grow up watching; that women are people too.

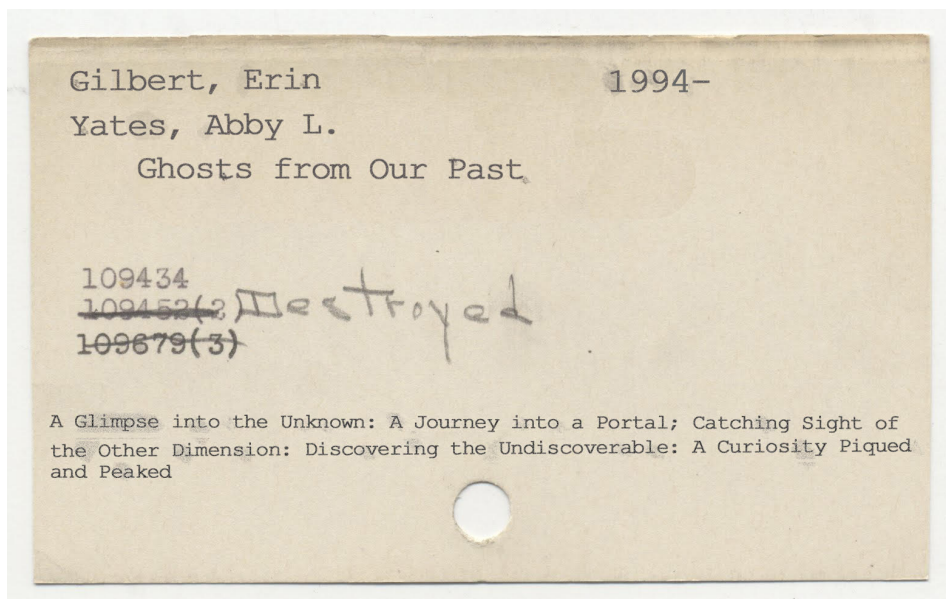


Laura M and Philippa K

INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW SHAFFER

Clarissa C. S. Ryan

Andrew Shaffer is a longtime Ghostbusters fan and the author of *Ghosts From Our Past*—at least, the one that you can buy in this universe. He also designed several promotional images, including the Zhu's business card and covers for many of the nonexistent books referenced in *Ghosts From Our Past*. He kindly took time out of his *Hope Never Dies* book tour to answer these questions.



This image courtesy Crown Publishing

CR: What was it like "co-authoring" a book with a couple of fictional characters?

AS: When I started the first draft, I'd been told that Melissa McCarthy would be playing Erin, and Kristen Wiig would be playing Abby. I had nothing else to go on except what other characters the actresses had played in the past. Of course, once filming began, I corrected things, but some of the jokes made it through the first draft and into Paul Feig's hands. There was a joke about Abby eating cat food in college to save money, and I think

Paul thought I was making some sort of fat joke about Melissa McCarthy! I was mortified. But we all got on the same page eventually.

You immersed yourself in Ghostbusters lore for months to write this book. As an existing fan, what was that like?

For every book I write, I do a couple of months of research—a really deep dive into old, out-of-print books, looking for obscure factual details to spice up the work. For my *Day of the Donald* satire, this meant stacks and stacks of books about Donald Trump. *Ghosts from Our Past* was more enjoyable, obviously. Not only did I pick up every Ghostbusters-related book, I watched and re-watched the movies and the animated series.



Getting paid to immerse myself in the Ghostbusters universe was really a dream job. While *Answer the Call* takes place in a parallel dimension, it was still informative to know what had been done and hadn't been done with the brand.

I had a total fangirl moment when I got back my first set of notes from Paul Feig and Katie Dippold, two writers I have immense respect for. (I say "fangirl" because fanboys are a little creepy sometimes.) Dan Aykroyd read the book and gave it the thumbs up as well. And that's all before the premiere, where I met Paul, Katie, Dan, Ernie Hudson, and a bazillion other folks at the after-party and almost jumped in the pool just to prove to myself I wasn't dreaming!

What was a part that was particularly fun to write?

I loved writing the chapters about Abby and Erin as kids and then as teens. It was like sneaking a young adult novel into a ghost-hunting guide. (By the way, Jill Baguchinsky—a huge *Answer the Call* fan—wrote a ghost-hunting YA book a few years ago called *Spookygirl*, which I recommend checking out.) And the fact that Sony let me imbue them with my own love of the *X-Files* was such a wonderful thing. Yes, *X-Files* is owned by a rival studio...but c'mon. Anyone interested in ghosts who came of age in the '90s would have been obsessed with the show.

Were there any connections you made or research you found that you were particularly pleased by?

How about one that I was particularly frustrated by? I don't know anything about physics or hard science. I read several books on particle physics, and my mind was just not absorbing much of it. Thankfully, Sony had a professor on retainer who checked over what I wrote.

The funny thing was, the more I learned about particle physics, the more I became convinced that "ghosts" as we conceive of them don't exist. I believe ghosts are helpful for storytelling purposes, and for talking about our own mortality without going crazy. There's just no way to reconcile physics—on the particle level—with the idea that ghosts are literally spirits of the deceased. The genius of Dan Aykroyd, though, is that he had the Ghostbusters fighting interdimensional entities as well as "ghosts." And parallel dimensions, while theoretical, at least have some scientific backing. This gave me a lot of leeway in the book to find some middle ground between science and the supernatural.

While you working on GFOP, did you realize that fanfic writers would be using your book as a reference work? (I personally own three editions of the book, including the ebook because it's easier to search!)

I had no idea, so that's really nice to hear. It's also popular with cosplayers. Those are things you really can't think about while you're working on a book, though, because between the first draft and publishing a book, any number of things could happen—the movie could have been delayed, the book could have been cut from the script, etc. I worked on a book that was a tie-in to a TV show that wasn't picked up, so there went the book! And I own three copies of the book, too, but that's because I wrote it. ;)

This is more of a compliment than a question...I know that the Powers that Be may not care, but you know we'd eat up *A Glimpse of the Unknown* if it ever happened, right?

I've been pushing for it since seeing the film, because we didn't include much Holtzmann or Patty in *Ghosts from Our Past*. Suddenly, I had all sorts of ideas for how to incorporate them into the next book. I don't think anybody expected those two actresses to basically upstage the "leads" (Erin and Abby). Thankfully, the characters are getting a second life in the IDW comics, so that's nice to see.

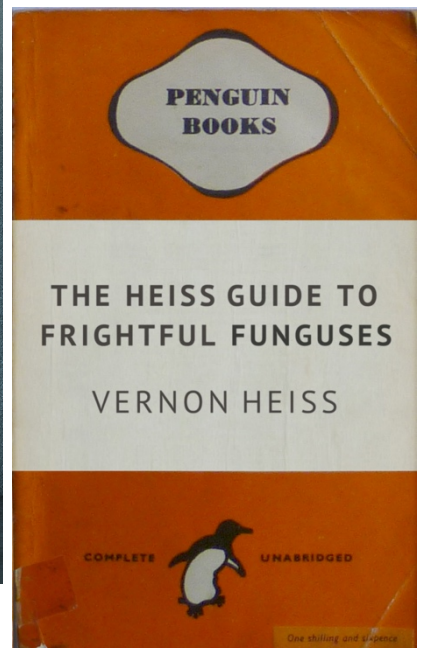
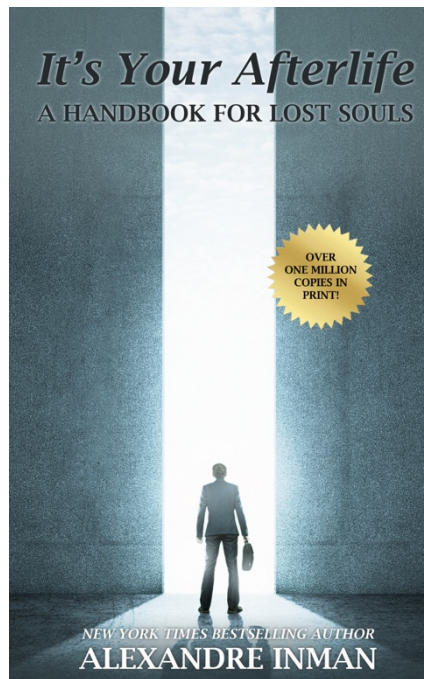
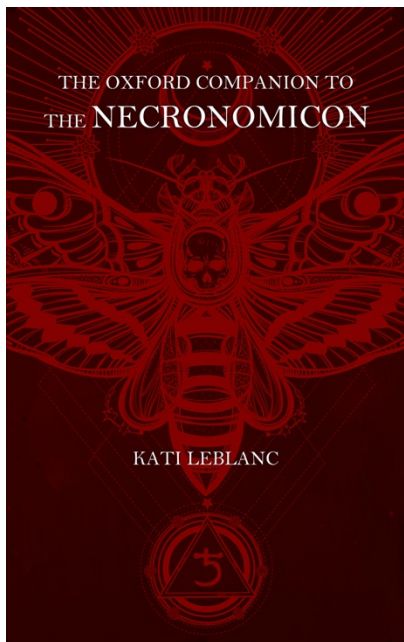
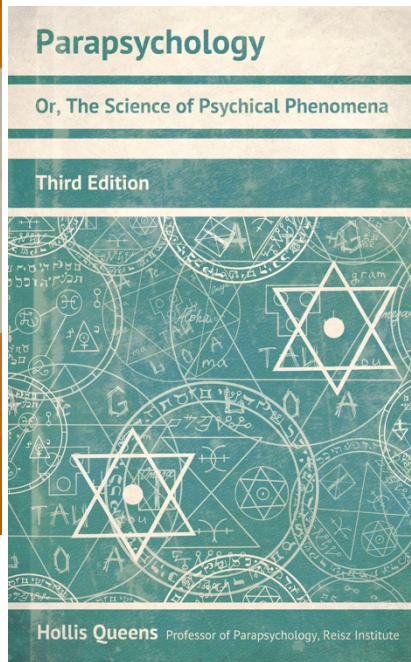
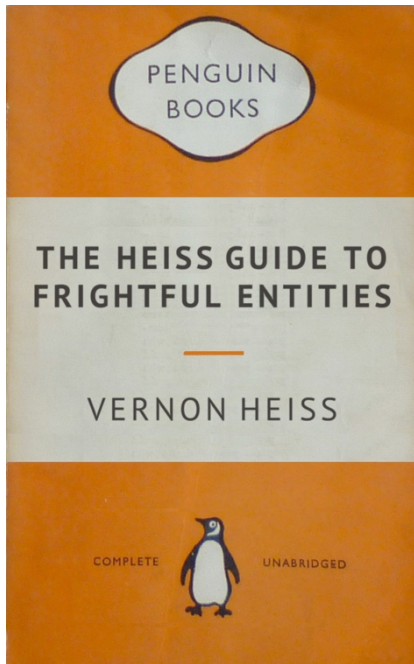
Not a real question, but another fan wanted me to ask you: since your Trump novel came true, what's your time frame on *Ghosts From Our Past* becoming nonfiction?

I wrote the satire *The Day of the Donald* in spring 2016, and it was published before Donald Trump was the Republican candidate for president. Imagine a world where a reality-TV show host becomes

president! Nobody else believed it would happen, including, allegedly, Trump himself. I vowed never to use my "powers" for evil again. As far as *Ghosts from Our Past* goes...who's to say it's not nonfiction in an alternate reality right now?

My new book is *Hope Never Dies: An Obama Biden Mystery*. It imagines a world where Joe Biden and President Obama are amateur sleuths, on the trail of a killer on the streets of Wilmington, Delaware. I've already had some readers who don't know what "fiction" is question why Obama and Biden are wasting their time investigating murders. We used to have this thing called "objective truth," but nowadays it seems everyone has their own version of the truth. The world could only be a better place, though, if Joe Biden was chasing down criminals on top of Amtrak trains.





Cover designs by Andrew Shaffer



Artist: Sun

YATESMANN

Pieheda

When I first started writing Ghostbusters fanfic, my interest, like so many others, focused on Holtzmann.

But at the time, I didn't ship her with any of the other Ghostbusters just based on the movie. I read her flirting with Erin as a hazing of the newbie (the newbie who broke Abby's heart, to put a finer point on it—revenge taken for Holtzmann's best and only friend), so Holtzbert didn't work for me.

Thinking about who I'd find it interesting for Holtzmann to be with, I decided what would be really unique is a big woman who is not surprised that Holtzmann is into her. Someone who might see Holtzmann and think "she's hot; I'm into it" but would not think "she would never like someone like me" or "I'm so lucky to have a woman like her!" Someone unembarrassed at her own body the first time they have sex together. Someone who relishes sensual experiences unselfconsciously.

I realized quickly that that person, obviously, is Abby.

Abby is a rare character on the screen—a fat woman whose body is not remarked upon. A fat woman who we never see stepping on scales in a panic, or obsessing over what she eats—or rather, she does obsess over her soup, but that's just her quest for a reasonable ratio of wontons to broth. And of course, that only adds to the awesomeness of Abby. She eats, like any normal human being does. She wants a decent order of soup, dammit. I kept expecting the joke where the punchline is "she's fat!" and it never came. Instead I got a well-rounded and very human character who is smart, feisty, and able to go toe-to-toe with ghosts in fight scenes.

I wrote Holtzmann and Abby an origin story in which Abby is calm and confident against Holtzmann's kinetic nervous excitement. She accepts what appears to be a date, and then a one-night stand, and then more emotional drama than she bargained for. She rolls with all of it, and responds with compassion and acceptance, which are Abby's hallmark traits.

I came to the Ghostbusters fan fiction fandom for Holtzmann, I stayed because I fell in love with writing Abby.

I love writing a sensual Abby. I love writing erotic situations for her so that she can enjoy her own body. She challenges my own discomfort with my similar body; at some point I realized I was omitting details of her shape from my stories. I began making an effort to include elements of her size that would not go unnoted by a lover during sex: her full breasts, the curve of her belly. These are the things I set out to challenge. If I'm writing a Holtzmann who loves her because and not in spite of exactly who she is, if I'm writing an Abby that does not feel like anything about her appearance needs to change, then I need to write about her body honestly. It's an effort. I'm still working on it.

The deliberate effort of writing her body into the story reminds me of a past girlfriend who is large like me, whose hips and ass I always found incredibly sexy. While we were together I told her so, eagerly and often.

She told me I was crazy, and then she told me to stop making her think about her body.

I wonder how she pictured herself when we were intimate without thinking about her body. I wonder if she simply tried not to.

I don't want that for Abby, because ultimately I don't want that for me or for other women like me. I often say that I relate to her,

but really she's the person I wish I were and the person I come close to being on my very best days. Accepting both herself and others with such ease are aspirational traits.

Can someone learn that level of self-acceptance? I don't know. But I keep writing Abby, because I want to believe that we can.



Artist: LauraM



Artist: Philippa K.

GHOSTBUSTERS: MY THOUGHTS

Joanie Piquette

Science

As a scientist, the incorporation of science into *Ghostbusters* was the first thing that struck me. It was far from being my first science fiction movie, but the angle taken on science in this film was original. In *Ghostbusters*, science is not only there to create technology but is embedded in the environment and has shaped the protagonists throughout their life. The Ghostbusters not only use science to save people, they also see science as a goal in itself. They want to study ghosts using the scientific method to advance science and human knowledge. Building a strong scientific context from the beginning helps to make the movie more credible, even if the paranormal is not real. I hope this movie will motivate more kids to become scientists or at least to be more interested in science.

Physical appearance

Although I'm not a hair or makeup expert, I appreciate the people who worked to make the actors look natural and beautiful but not over-the-top. In the same vein, I'm thankful to the people who decided to dress the four leading ladies in casual clothing. That is, it's cool to be able to relate to characters without the pressure to dress in a classy, sexy, or feminine way. Finally, we have women who are not forced to fight in heels and tight skirts!

Characters

I appreciate all the characters, even the secondary ones. They were all funny, like caricatures of real people that I know. Take for example, the Duke (Ed Mulgrave Jr., played by Ed Begley Jr.). When he says "I just wanted them to like me," it's funny but honest and relatable. I would also name Agent Rorke. He's just trying so hard, but failing big time. I don't want to name all of the secondary characters, but I think they were all a nice addition, and it's fun to recognize some actors from Paul Feig's other movies.

In addition, the way the "villain" was introduced to us was really original. In Patty's first scene, we love her instantly because she's just so nice. While people ignore her, Rowan comes to talk to her. Maybe he relates to her in a way. He just seems like a nice guy—weird, but nice. He made a joke that made Patty laugh before proceeding with his machiavellian plans. He just looks like an intelligent guy who could have done great things but who has lost faith in humanity. In fact, it would have been interesting for this character to have had more time to develop, if the movie were longer. I kind of wish in my heart that instead of talking of soups and salad (which was funny!) the girls could have invited him to join them, because maybe he just needs friends and a big hug.

Now, about the main four characters I will say one thing: I love them all as dearly as I love the actresses. I've been waiting my whole life for characters like these (relatable and badass) to be portrayed on the big screen. I don't want to elaborate more on this subject because I think many people have already shown their love toward them. I just wanted to say that they are important, many minorities feel represented in these characters (e.g. people who are gay, asexual, neurodivergent, etc.). I also wish that these main characters could have had more time to develop, although I'm not

criticizing because I know there are time constraints. It's just that I love this movie a lot and I wish it were longer so that all of the characters could have more time and more interactions—because, damn, the interactions were so truthful and delicious to watch, particularly between the girls. It was almost addictive.

Maybe the chemistry between the actresses and the fact that many parts of the movie were improvised can help explain why the interactions feel so honest, but we can thank Paul Feig and Katie Dippold as well, for centering the story around their friendship. On the other hand, I felt like during the climax (during or before the closing of the portal) there was an emotional scene missing to make us feel even more worried for their lives and engaged emotionally. Fortunately, the deleted scene "So Glad You Came Back" exists and was released for us to see. I love all the deleted/extended scenes, but this one was really emotional and beautiful.

In the end, it was so wonderful to witness these women, who were likely mocked all their lives and who probably had a hard time making friends, finally having a family to count on as well as love and recognition from the entire city.

Score

From the spooky first notes to the heartwarming final measures, Shapiro's score really captures and elevates every moment of this movie. His music has the power to change the atmosphere and emotions so quickly, and to transport you into his world. The theme playing at defining moments for the Ghostbusters (e.g. at the end of "Distinct Human Form" or in "Ghost in a Box"), really makes those women look as fierce and heroic as the Avengers. "Ghost Girl" is like the beginning of something greater, as though

with more time to develop, it could have been an even more touching piece. There is such a good use of choirs, particularly in "Behemoth." But my favorite track really is "Into The Portal", because it's devised in so many beautiful parts (sad, epic and comforting parts) and it really makes me happy, like a mental hug. I love how I can listen to this score and easily picture and feel everything that is happening in the movie, but in parallel the music also speaks for itself and reveals another rich dimension. I think Shapiro is underrated and has proved his versatility again on this movie. I'm looking forward to hear his next work.

Final thoughts

Ghostbusters (2016) has opened a full new world to me. The hate toward the movie was answered by more solidarity between the fans and a will to protect it. I kind of feel I'm part of something bigger now in this fandom. In addition, after watching many bad comedies in the past, I had decided to stop watching this genre for years. But *Ghostbusters* made me want to give comedies another chance. Paul Feig and Katie Dippold make a magnificent team and are feminist heroes. This movie got me watching many of Paul's and Katie's previous works (e.g. *The Heat*, *Spy*), and I can now say that I'm a big fan. So thank you for writing movies that are funny, but at the same time have a deeper moral, have heartwarming friendships, and give women the place they deserve on the screen. In fact, I wish movies like this one had been shown to me when I was a kid, because I don't remember having any female role models. I will never stop loving this movie and being grateful to all of the people who worked on it.



Artist: PhilippaK

JOURNAL OF ASTROPHYSICAL MECHANICS

Clint Ryan

If you've got the extended edition, go to 1:27:32 and check out what Patty is reading. It's the *Journal of Astrophysical Mechanics*, January 2015, No. 1, and unlike the newspaper that Erin and Holtzmann are reading in the same scene, it's 100% real. That's right, Patty is busy reading the *Journal of Astrophysical Mechanics*. She's not just a history wiz: she's chewing through a serious academic journal. I was so excited. Then I looked it up. Here's what the *Journal's* website says:

The Journal of Astrophysical Mechanics, published by Dimiter Bayramov, provides one stop access to theoretical and applied physics articles covering new research in the Flow Theory of Matter and Gravity.

The problem is that there is no evidence that the Flow Theory of Matter and Gravity is anything other than garbage, that Dimiter Bayramov knows anything about physics, or that anyone other than Bayramov writes for the *Journal*. Basically, it's just one person's legitimate-sounding but completely fringe project. You can read some of the "ideas" at

<http://www.bolgarino.com/PhysicalFundamentals.htm>, if you want.

I was disappointed when I found out. I really wanted Patty to be reading something awesome.

Fortunately, the *Journal of Astrophysical Mechanics* turns out to be something awesome in the Ghostbusters universe. See, in addition to believing that stars are living things that eat heat and excrete matter, Bayramov believes in aether. Yeah, I know, your high school physics class probably had a section on aether and

explained how it was pretty thoroughly debunked back in the 19th century. Baryamov doesn't buy that. In fact, he has invented something called the "bolgarino" particle, which he also calls an aether particle.

Why does this matter? Well, if you check *Ghosts from Our Past*, aether is a pretty important component of their theories. In the Ghostbusters universe, Dimiter Baryamov is probably a groundbreaking physics genius. Holtz and Abby may actually have used his work!

Thanks to thegirlsinthefirehouse.tumblr.com for spotting this in the first place.



Artist: Sun

GHOSTBUSTERS SCORE

James Raynor

Hollywood is not known for its originality. This isn't a devastating revelation or anything, but it's clear that when some executive sees something that's popular, they immediately rush to copy it. This is also true of soundtracks. Since the dawn of cinema, full symphonic scores have been the typical accompaniment to movies. With the release of *The Graduate* in 1968, the trend moved towards song scores where the action is tracked with the popular hits of the day. This continued throughout the seventies until *Star Wars* resurrected the full orchestral score.

Which brings us to the Eighties, the peak decade for the quality summer blockbuster. Someone says *Back to the Future*, you think of Alan Silvestri's soaring theme. It's impossible to see Harrison Ford in a fedora and not think of John Williams' "Raiders March." Throw a rock during this decade and you'll hit a movie theme that penetrates pop culture and is instantly recognisable to the masses.

The Nineties is where it all starts getting murky. Sure, composers were still pumping out the memorable melodies, but this was also the rise of Media Ventures (later known as Remote Control), Hans Zimmer's music factory and training ground for a lot (and I mean, a lot) of the major composers working in Hollywood today. The musical philosophy here appeared to be simple motifs, electronics and layers and layers of pounding percussion. The first score I remember hearing from this stable was Mark Mancina's *Speed* in 1994. It has all the hallmarks of the Media Ventures style, but with an orchestral sound and a memorable theme (indeed, Mancina's scores away from MV favour the full symphony more than the electronics). Of course, once one of these is successful, other studios want a piece of it, and eventually all big budget franchises

sound the same, which is where we are now: interchangeable, bland music with no identity. You can hear the difference between Jerry Goldsmith and Danny Elfman, John Williams and Christopher Young; I for one would struggle to tell the difference between Lorne Balfe or Steve Jablonsky.

Which brings us to Theodore Shapiro. Shapiro appeared on my radar in 2004 with his score to *Starsky and Hutch*. Not a classic film by any stretch of the imagination, in fact the two things I remember from the whole film are Ben Stiller and Owen Wilson standing in front of a garage door for some reason and Shapiro's kickass "Two Dragons" cue that plays over the climactic chase sequence. After that, we didn't really cross paths again until 2015 when he was announced as the composer for *Ghostbusters*. Looking back at the list of light and fluffy comedies that made up the vast majority of his body of work, I wasn't sure what to expect. *Tropic Thunder* and *Spy* were pretty good, but very much in that Media Ventures vein which I had tired of. I couldn't hum a theme from them afterwards, I'll tell you that much.

Cut to July 2016: The release of *Ghostbusters* is imminent, and I am fucking pumped. I am eating, breathing, living *Ghostbusters*, I'm sweating *Ghostbusters* from every pore. I cannot wait for this movie, but I still know nothing about the music. There's a cool remix of Ray Parker Jr's song on the trailers, but it isn't by Shapiro. A week before the film opens, the score is released digitally and I boot up Spotify at midnight on the release date to see if it's there: It is! But for some reason, none of the tracks have titles, it's literally "Track 1, Track 2," etc. I have the CD pre-ordered and it'll arrive that day so I didn't want to spoil it, but I noticed that several tracks were labelled with Ray Parker Jr. as composer. Delighted that this was confirmation that Shapiro had incorporated the song into the

score, I checked out those tracks. Track 4 (later identified as "Distinct Human Form") opens with a haunting theme performed by a choir, almost a magical quality. Clearly, the first appearance of a ghost. Suddenly a burst of strings turns everything sinister, the pace picks up and we have a quick quote of the song's chorus. This was always my favourite part of the song so I was glad to see it featured. The song was a very late addition to the original film (in the early trailers you can hear a different, much more typical-80s-comedy-sounding song in the background) so Elmer Bernstein couldn't use it in his score, but from his reputation and the fact that he wasn't a fan of using pop songs in the film anyway, I doubt he would have.

The final part of this track introduces the new theme for the Ghostbusters, a very warm and triumphant piece played on the brass, signifying their success at finally seeing a ghost. Shapiro weaves this theme throughout his score, giving it several different iterations. It gets its biggest workout in the final 20 minutes, but I'll get to that shortly.

The next track credited to Parker in my mysterious Spotify playlist is Track 9 ("Ghost in a Box"). Again, we've got the chorus, but in action mode, backed up with almost militaristic percussion as we segue into Shapiro's Ghostbusters theme accompanying their battle with some disgruntled ghoul, building in suspense until the trap is closed. It's only 51 seconds long, but it covers a lot of ground and bridges the old and the new: I like it a lot.

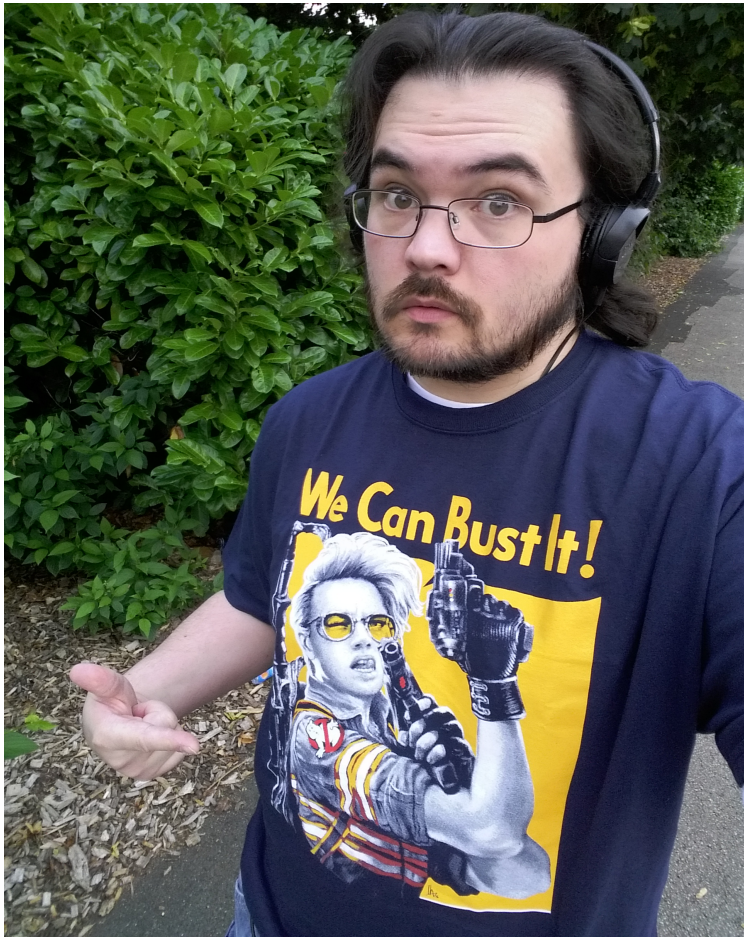
Track 11 ("Ley Lines"): Ethereal choir and building strings layer on the suspense, shit appears to be getting real. It's the same motif from Track 4, this must be the theme for the ghosts. But wait, suddenly, a drum kit comes to life and we are treated to a magnificent, rocked up rendition of Parker's song. The

Ghostbusters are going to kick some ass! I don't know what or whose yet, but I can't wait to see it happen!

All Hell breaks loose in Track 15 ("The Fourth Cataclysm"), with an *Omen*-like choir chanting over orchestral outbursts of action and horror, with Shapiro's theme woven in and out as the Ghostbusters head out to save the world. For some composers, it would've been enough to just layer on the percussion and have the visuals carry it, but there are at least three different themes at work in this cue, all of them distinct from the other. It's at this point I am sure this is not just another forgettable franchise score. Shapiro has knocked this out of the park.

Track 17 opens with another huge choral statement of the Cataclysm theme, before moving into full on action-adventure mode. Based on the trailers, I surmise this must be for the big battle in Times Square (titled, surprisingly enough, "Battle of Times Square"). Again, this isn't generic action music, you've got the choir representing the spirits with their cries and wails, you've got the percussion driving the battle, you've got the Ghostbusters theme and the Cataclysm theme duking it out for supremacy. It's not just an aural mush, it has dynamic range.

Then we reach two minutes and twenty seconds into the cue and... and... it's difficult to describe the sheer exhilaration of hearing Shapiro's magnificent, orchestral/rock/choir-infused rendition of the song. It's just—it's beyond words. It has been my ringtone for the last twelve months and that is not about to change anytime soon. Listening to it first away from the film might have slightly lessened the impact of Holtzmann's triumphant march of spectral destruction when I finally saw the film, but fuck it: this cue rocks balls and that scene is still perhaps my favourite cinematic moment of this century.



James Raynor

Marvel/DC franchises. But even if he doesn't compose anything close to this again, he gets a lifetime pass from me.

I listened to the rest of the score later that day and it very much lived up to the awesomeness of these five tracks. Shapiro composed an epic score of horror, excitement and heroics. I'm shocked he hasn't been attached to a superhero movie at this point, because it's clear the man has the musical chops to craft a memorable soundtrack for any of the



Artist: Sun

TO LOVE IS WHAT YOU HAVE SHOWN ME

Eden Robinson

When I sat in the theater on July 15th and saw that magical little blonde introduce herself for the first time, I had no idea that she was going to change my life. I had no idea that she was going to help me see and embrace the parts of myself I had been most ashamed of. I had no idea that she was going to help me feel more comfortable in my skin than I had ever felt in 27 years of living.

Growing up in a religious environment, as a child I thought “lesbian” was an adult sin I Didn’t Yet Understand. I didn’t know “lesbian” was being a 9-year-old wanting to give a 12-year-old a Valentine’s Day card because she was the most beautiful and captivating girl I’d ever met.

I thought “lesbian” was the slur that ruined Janice’s life in *Mean Girls*. I didn’t know “lesbian” was feeling pure bliss when my high school best friend would braid daisies into my hair.

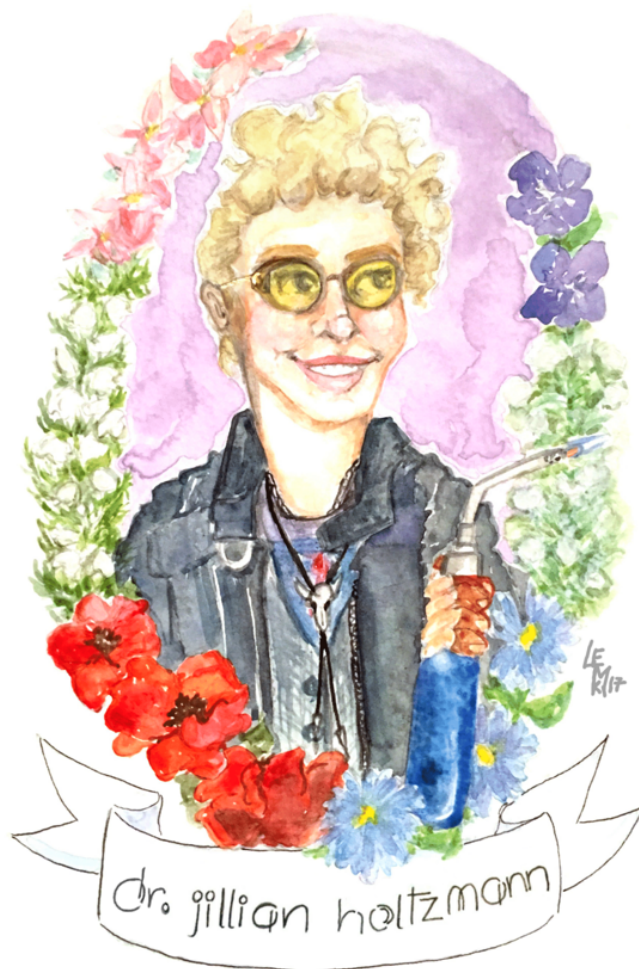
I thought “lesbian” was two drunk girls pawing at each other while their boyfriends watched and another boy filmed it. I didn’t know “lesbian” was feeling my heart flutter every time I saw my college best friend, and wanting more than anything in the world to make her laugh.

I thought “lesbian” was a type of porn, a subcategory of “kinky”. I didn’t know “lesbian” was holding hands and suddenly, finally, feeling at home.

I thought “lesbian” meant seeing every woman as a piece of meat. I didn’t know “lesbian” could mean platonic physical intimacy, hugging a friend when she needs it because she’s a wonderful human and you’re a wonderful human and you care for each other as friends do.

In the last 2 years I've cried and grown a lot. I'm still learning how to comfortably say the word "lesbian" out loud. To paraphrase Amy Poehler, I'm still unlearning a lot of what I've been taught to feel ashamed of. And even as I work on that, I'm so much happier now. I went to pride for the first time and it was magical. Another Ghostbusters fan reached out to me on Tumblr last year, and now we tell each other every day how lucky we feel to call each other "girlfriend". I laugh so much more now. I finally feel at peace.

In this journey, Jillian Holtzmann and Kate McKinnon are the role models I need. Thank you, Kate, from the bottom of my heart. Thank you for being out. Thank you for being proud. Thank you for showing the world that lesbianism is as simple and pure and innocent as love is. Thank you for reminding me that lesbianism is about love.



Artist: LauraM

INTERVIEW WITH KARAN SONI

Clarissa C. S. Ryan

I interviewed Karan Soni, who played Bennie in *Ghostbusters*, in July of 2018. I really appreciate the time and energy that he spent on this. Read on, and get inspired to do a Bennie cosplay!

What was something you really liked about working on *Ghostbusters*?

Working with Kristen, Kate and Melissa. I saw *Bridesmaids* three times in theaters and I couldn't believe I was on a set with them. And it was really exciting to be directed by Paul Feig. I had worked with him previously but he was only a producer on that project. It was a definite dream come true to be directed by him.

Bennie appears in some *Ghostbusters* fanfic and fan art. What would your reaction be to a Bennie cosplayer?

I haven't seen any. That would be dreamy. Anytime anyone takes the time to dress up as a character I played it's hugely flattering.

Two years after the premiere, do you have any further thoughts on the misogyny and racism directed toward *Ghostbusters*?

It still bums me out. From my perspective of being on set, everyone made this movie with nothing but love and admiration for the original two movies. It was one of the kindest and most welcoming working environments I've ever experienced. So seeing it all play out with so much hate when the movie came out was really shocking to me. Over time I've become less surprised by the reaction since a lot of other horrible stuff came to the surface with the 2016 election and it makes the GB stuff pale in comparison. I

also personally have a lot of young girls or their parents who come up to me and say how much they loved the movie so I've seen a really positive side to it too.

You've got some great alternate lines in the extras. Were there any cut scenes or lines that you particularly wish had made it into the film?

Thank you! Well fun fact: I didn't have any lines in the script! The character of Bennie didn't even have a name. He was just a delivery guy who was late. Then Paul cast me and asked me to improvise and essentially said that if any of it was good then it would make it into the movie. I believe it was Kristen who suggested I have the name Bennie. So in a way I'm happy that I got to speak in the movie at all. There was a whole bit I improvised where Bennie is clearly in love with Erin and is not shy about it. I wish that would have made it in but I'm happy some of it exists in the extras.

Did you break Melissa McCarthy (or vice versa!) in any of your wonton delivery scenes?

I don't think so. She is a true champ and hard to break. And I was too nervous to break although there were many times I wanted to.

What do you think Bennie was thinking when he came out to the alley to find his motorbike had been damaged by weapons testing?

I think he was scheming of ways to add the cost of the bike to Abby's next take-out bill. A \$700 wonton soup if you will.

You famously wore a Ghostbusters costume for Halloween. If the Ghostbusters started recruiting, would Bennie apply? What would his specialty be?

I think he would definitely apply! I think his speciality would be unlimited free lunches for the GB's.

Is there anything you've never been asked about your Ghostbusters experience that you'd like to talk about?

Chris Hemsworth is really very nice and handsome.

You were also excellent in Paul Feig's scifi comedy series, *Other Space*. It seems like you know him pretty well. So...Is Paul Feig really as nice as he seems?

Paul is the best! Oh my, he is an actor's dream because he used to be an actor (and still is!) and just loves us. He is always the happiest person on set and there is no greater joy than hearing him try to stifle his giggles at video village in the middle of a scene. There is a reason so many people work with him again and again. A Paul Feig set is the happiest place in Hollywood. You brought up *Other Space* so I will say this, Paul really was the first person to give me a job where I was the lead. That show was a massive opportunity for me because it is very hard for people of color to lead TV shows unless they create them themselves and Paul believed in me enough to give me that opportunity and I will forever be grateful.

If there is one thing I hate about him, it would be that even in a 100 degree heat, he is able to pull off a three piece wool suit without sweating. What a dick.

What should your fans be looking for from you next?

I have a rad new TV show I worked on recently called *Miracle Workers* which comes out next year on TBS. It stars myself, Steve Buscemi and Daniel Radcliffe. Steve plays God and Daniel and I play angels and it was the most fun. I also filmed two movies this summer. One is gonna be on Netflix and is called *Always Be My Maybe* and it's a rom-com starring Ali Wong and Randall Park. The other one is called *Corporate Animals* and it stars Demi Moore, Ed Helms, Jessica Williams and bunch of other very funny people and it's about a corporate team building retreat the goes completely wrong when everyone in the company gets trapped in a cave. And I'm also psyched to be doing one of the voices in the new *Trolls* movie, *Trolls World Tour*.

Do you have anything you'd like to say to the fans?

Thank you for watching the movie and being so passionate about it! I feel very lucky to be a small part of something so iconic. And if you ever see me on the street, feel free to say hello, I am very nice!

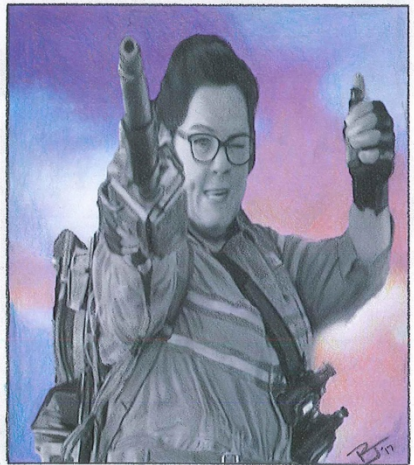
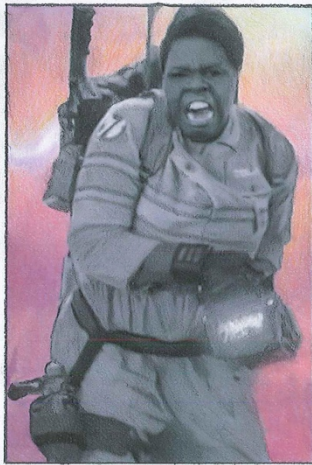
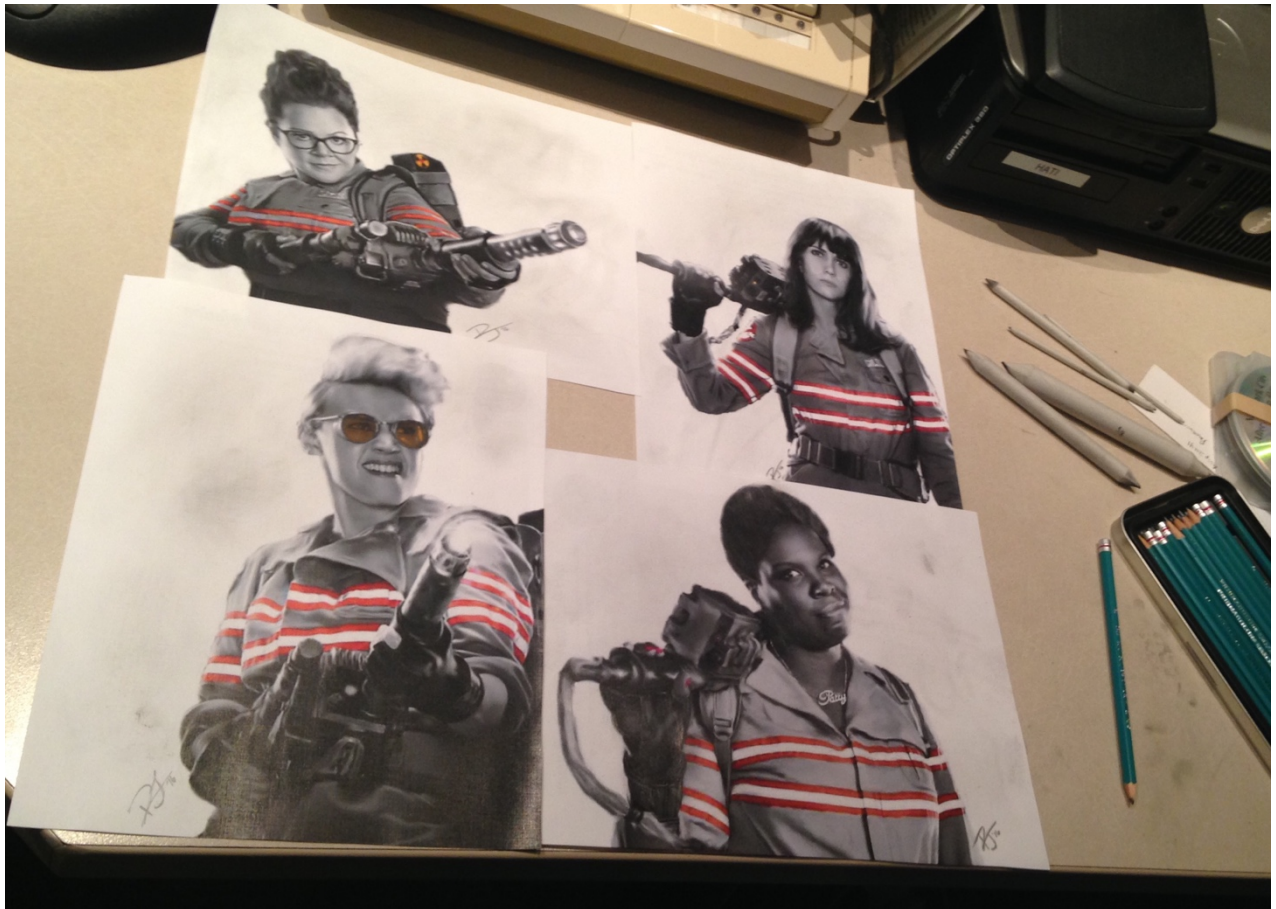


Artist: StHoltzmann

COSPLAY & ART BY RJ RUSSELL

RJ Russell





WHY GHOSTBUSTERS IS IMPORTANT TO ME

Patrick M.

Ghostbusters: Answer the Call is important to me for many different reasons other than the fact that it was a great movie. It has a cast that includes some of the funniest people in Hollywood, amazing acting and directing, and the score is epic. And it is not simply because it's an amazing reboot of a beloved series of movies.

The big reason that Ghostbusters: ATC is important to me is because of how it showed me that the girls can go up there and kick as much ass as the guys and do it with both comedy and class.

I had never really seen a movie quite like this and I loved every minute of it.

My sisters were the ones to introduce me to the movie, and originally I was not really interested in seeing it, but the amount of love they had for this film got me thinking that if they loved it so much, then there must be something special about it.

As I said, when I watched it with them, I saw their love for it. And I also saw *why* they loved it.

I really didn't understand why so many people were so quick to bash it. I still don't. However, I know of at least two people who drew so much inspiration from this film, and that's the true reason why this movie is important to me.

Because it INSPIRES me.

That's why so many people love Ghostbusters: ATC, because they're inspired by the adventures of four women who go out to bust some ghosts. And in this time we live in, both inspiration and heroes are something we need.

Keep busting those ghosts, girls. And don't let the haters get you down. 'Cause, when those haters' ghosts show up, who you gonna call?



Artist: LauraM

MY GHOSTBUSTERS EXPERIENCE

Brad Bosshart

Why *Ghostbusters*? What is the appeal? It's a 30-some-year-old movie, or two years old, depending on the version. It's the essence of *Ghostbusters* (any version): a group of geeks, outcast by society, use their skills and knowhow to combat the supernatural, saving the day.

Let's turn back the clock. In the 80s, we had "Knight Rider", "A-Team", "Rambo", "Airwolf", "Magnum PI". Handsome, macho, gun-toting studs coming in and driving hot cars, tanks, and blowing stuff up. And, then, *Ghostbusters*. Three University professors and an out of work Marine, carrying unlicensed nuclear backpacks shooting proton streams and catching ghosts in little boxes. What? Sounded crazy.

But people liked it. Still do.



Photos courtesy Brad Bosshart

To be Batman, you need to be a billionaire, trained by ninjas, with an arsenal of top secret gear. To be a Ghostbuster, you need a uniform, a proton pack, and a lot of luck.

As Leslie Jones said, "Anyone can be a Ghostbuster." That's always been true. The *Answer the Call* movie just showed us on the big screen, a 21st century version. Now we have 4 more Ghostbusters to, well, *Answer the Call*. And more on the way, if IDW comics or Ivan Reitman have anything to say about it.

Building runs in my family. My dad was an engineer and a carpenter. I went to the University of Pittsburgh and got a Liberal Arts degree, and that's when my interest in comic books and Ghostbusters grew. I went to the Art Institute of Pittsburgh for a few years and learned about building props, industrial design, and special effects. I made a proton pack from a filing cabinet shelf I found in the trash at Pitt, some wires, and a few flashlight bulbs. I remember borrowing a red coverall from a truck-driver neighbor and going out for Halloween. I rigged a kid's phonograph inside the pack to make a fast paced clicking noise, so the pack lit up and made noise. A little boy across the street said, "Mommy, he's a Ghostbuster! They are real!"

I knew there was something to this Ghostbusters phenomenon.

Fast forward a few years to the late nineties. I was with my girlfriend; we dressed up in Tyvek suits, I made a ghost trap from a plastic jewelry box and proton packs from junk.

Got married to the girlfriend, had a son, and so into the 21st century.



I started going to the GB Fans site and talking with people there. Ghostbusters from all over the US, and the world! I made a proton pack for my son and nephew, and I made a few “experimental” packs. Through GBFans, I met Dave Swartz, a fellow Pittsburgher. On my birthday, May 25th, 2008, Dave and I co-founded the Steel City Ghostbusters.

The Steel City

Ghostbusters are still doing

well, getting invited to parades, the Carnegie Science Center, and other local events. I got busy with family things but still built a few props here and there. I created GBSI, Ghostbusters Scientific Investigations, a repair shop affiliated with Steel City Ghostbusters, and I made a few fan films for YouTube. I have sent a few props to the Louisiana Ghostbusters, and they have done some charity work, too.

Through all of these years I’ve kept up with whatever new Ghostbusters media was available to me. Then, in 2014, after a long illness, Harold Ramis (Dr. Egon Spengler) passed away. Sony went forward with plans for another *Ghostbusters* movie, and people were pretty emotional about it.

In 2016, the new movie, *Ghostbusters: Answer the Call* came out. It was a reboot, all new cast, new gear, with cameos from the

original cast. It caused a big stir. Me? Well, I built the new proton pack, the one designed by Jillian Holtzmann. I sent a few tweets, and Paul Feig even retweeted a few of them. I got all four action figures, and made a diorama for them. 2016 also marked the appearance of new classic Ghostbusters merchandise.

So I've continued to collect and create. I dressed as a Ghostbuster for Halloween 2016 to pass out candy at church, and a little girl was dressed as a Ghostbuster. She'd made her own proton pack that lit up! It seems like the cycle of Ghostbusters fandom has gained new strength.

In 2017, IDW released *Ghostbusters 101*, featuring the *Answer the Call* ladies. I'm still building props here and there. I started a new proton pack, and may build a slime blower pack this summer. I have made some custom minis for the Ghostbusters board game, including cards and adventures, and I'm making GBSI patches. I want to send one to Ghost Corps so they will put it in their display case.

I'm not sure where the future of Ghostbusters is headed, but with franchises in every state (and most countries), young kids like my nephew watching *The Real Ghostbusters* on Netflix, and the *Answer the Call* movie, I think there are a lot of ghosts left to catch. Who you gonna call?

THE FIREHOUSE FAMILY PROJECT

By StHoltzmann

In 2016, I made a post on Tumblr called “The Holtzmann Project.” It didn’t go viral or anything, but it started some interesting discussions with other people who were personally inspired by Jillian Holtzmann. The post was a list of things to do to help us get closer to being the kinds of glorious weirdos that we want to be, and maybe rediscover some parts of ourselves that we might have hidden away.

Since then, I’ve been thinking about the other Ghostbusters, too. Each one possesses several qualities or skills that are worth emulating. So I’ve revisited the list and added more entries to reflect all of the Ghostbusters crew. This list includes small things, huge things, silly things, and life-changing things. Pick and choose; YMMV; use at your own risk; nothing in this lab is safe.

In no order whatsoever:

- *Take a science class (there are free ones online!).*
- *Already a scientist? Nice. Read up on a subject that’s not closely related to your field.*
- *Dig into that fringe interest of yours.*
- *Study/practice something that makes you feel more physically balanced, strong, and/or powerful.*
- *Learn to build something.*
- *Apologize less.*
- *Be more open about things that make you different.*
- *Learn some dance moves. Employ them with gusto.*
- *Contact an old friend you’ve lost touch with.*
- *Take up as much space as you need.*
- *Learn to solder.*

- *Find ways to make yourself physically comfortable.*
- *Join a club with people who are different from you.*
- *How would you dress/look/style yourself if you had total freedom? Make changes-big or tiny-in that direction.*
- *Find an old project you abandoned. Revive it or repurpose it.*
- *If you live in an older building, see what you can learn about it.*
- *Show love to your friends. Be as direct about it as you can. If they've become family, tell them.*
- *Got a car? Use it to help someone out (try [voteriders.org!](https://www.voteriders.org/))*
- *Start a book club. (Maybe put on some Stevie Nicks.)*
- *Ask an old-timer to tell you things about your town or neighborhood that aren't on Wikipedia.*
- *Hang out with people who don't talk about your size (or theirs).*
- *Take home a stack of non-fiction books on topics that you're not familiar with from your library.*
- *Be enthusiastic about something you've made or done and show it, without self-deprecation.*
- *Look for people who appreciate your weirdness, not people around whom you have to hide it.*
- *Take a racing/high performance/stunt driving class.*
- *Master winking.*
- *Break up with anyone who's not thrilled to introduce you to new people.*
- *Visit your local museum or historical society.*
- *What's something you like but never get to do enough of? Get some friends and make regular plans.*
- *Talk with your friends about the best ways you can support each other's projects, comfort, and safety.*
- *Flirt with that person you've been wanting to flirt with. (Always flirt responsibly.)*

- *Buy or make something with your name on it and wear it.*
- *Choose a project that will push your current limits and start working on it (without waiting for everything to be perfect first).*

After publishing the original list, I put my money where my mouth was. For one thing, I made an official, wordy, awkward-as-all-hell social media post about my queerness where my family members etc. could see it. I hadn't been hiding it, but people see what they want to see, and now at least it's more difficult for them to pretend they don't know.

I also made wardrobe changes. This started as just a style thing—I love Holtzmann's eclectic fashion sense—but it evolved into some significant realizations about myself and who I want to be in the world. And these two things together have resulted in generally being more intentionally, visibly queer, which has been literally life-changing.

When I walked into that theater on opening night in July of 2016, I didn't expect Ghostbusters to become part of my personal story, but here we are. Yes, I'm still an ongoing project, always on the drawing board. But now I'm so much more comfortable being me than I was before. I ♥ GB.



Artist: RJ Russell

GHOSTBUSTERS PROPBUILDING

J. E. Glass

Being a novice prop builder, I had no idea what I was getting myself into when I decided back in December of 2016 to build two working, movie quality proton packs. After seeing the movie in theaters earlier that July, I was blown away by the new design for the proton packs. They were sleeker, brighter, less industrial but also chaotically wonderful with their red Faraday cage and exposed wires and digital counters.



Justine Glass

So of course this helpless nerd fell in love with not only the movie but the packs and gadgets as well and had to build them for herself. Only problem was I had little information, even less direction, and no one to turn to with questions. Weeks of digging provided a scant few forums to reference, but I was off like a shot without a grasp of 3D printing, no wiring skills, no programming skills, and no idea if this would work. This was a whole new ballgame. But it was a challenge I was eager to accept because this movie meant and still means so much to me. I wanted to do it and

its amazing prop makers justice, so I threw myself into fabrication, learned the basics of 3D printing, and fought through every mile.



Justine Glass and her partner Bethany Glass at Baltimore Comic Con 2017

Now, I am the proud owner of two fully functional, fully lit, and loud as hell 2016 proton packs. My partner of eleven years and I sported them proudly at Con and will continue to do so. I've never felt more at home than I have in these packs, and I've never felt more at home than I do watching the 2016 Ghostbusters. To me, they are the only ones who matter because in them I found not only myself but rediscovered my passion for creating and building.

YOU GOT THIS! GHOSTFIGHTING FRIENDS

A 200-WORD RPG (EXTENDED EDITION)

C. C. S. Ryan

In this game, you and your friends play four female and/or nonbinary friends who fight ghosts in your town. You would do anything for each other.

This game should be played with good friends or prospective friends. It can be played in person or online. It's a short game that represents one scene from the story of these friends. You can expand it by playing multiple events at one time or sequentially.

NOTE: **All rules are optional**, including the number of players. Use group consensus to alter the rules. There is no GM or arbiter; if you say you own a carousel, speak ancient Sumerian, or have a rocket launcher—and the group agrees to this—then you do.



Verbally describe your characters to each other, using this format as a base:

My name is _____. My friends call me _____.

I'm the _____. friend.

(e.g. mom, party, fashion, loud, opinionated, auntie)

People think I'm _____. but my friends know I'm actually _____.

(e.g. quiet but actually loud and foul-mouthed, confident but actually terrified, daydreaming but actually plotting)

When you need _____, I'm there.

(e.g. a Swiss army knife, a glass of wine and a tub of ice cream, an unstable but amazing gadget, cheesesteaks, a terrible pun, a getaway vehicle, a lecture on local history)

Use the above attributes to guide your actions and suggest what kinds of resources you may have.



Roll 1d6 to determine an EVENT.

- 1-4: Ghost encounter
- 5: External mundane event
- 6: Relationship event

Decide who is the FOCUS for this event. That person describes the event with input from their friends. The event doesn't have to be a negative one; it could be a birthday, a ghost wanting to join the team, a group of fans knocking at the door, etc.



Assemble 13 TOKENS (candies, pins, etc.) in one pool.

Your team has 13 ACTIONS to resolve the event. There is no set order; who acts next is determined by consensus.

Spend a token to take an action:

- Support
- Develop
- Invent
- Contribute

(Interpret action types freely.)

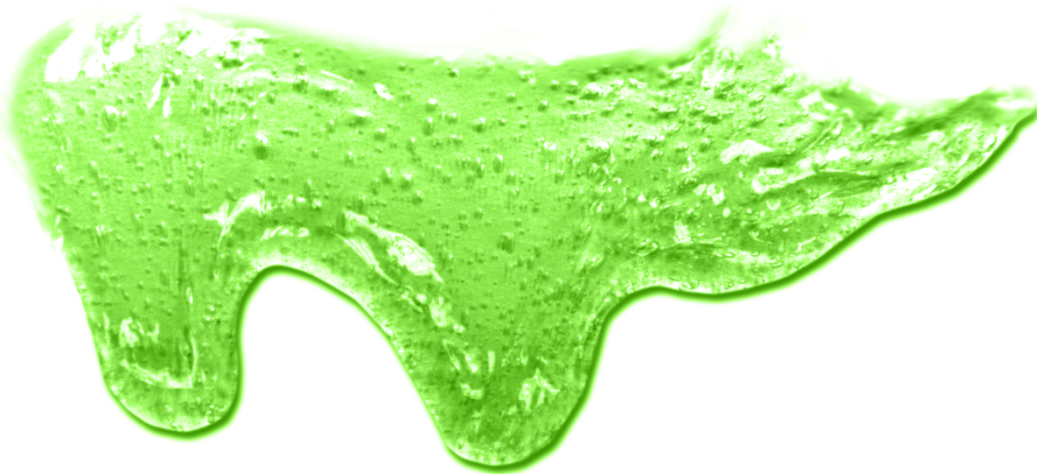
Roll 1d6. 1-4 succeeds, except Support where 1-5 succeeds.

Narrate your success or setback. Friends can jump in any time to use an action.

Group consensus determines final satisfactory resolution. If any friend is irrevocably emotionally hurt or dies, the game ends and everyone loses.

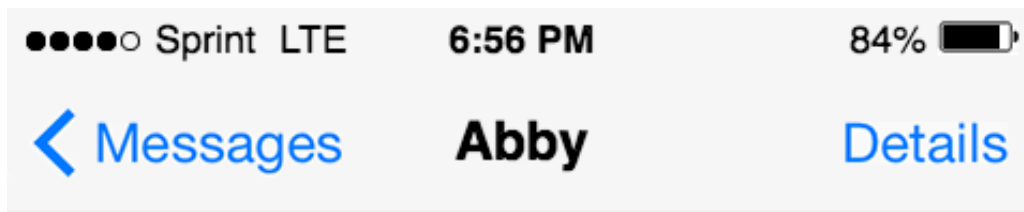


To my vast surprise, this game was a finalist in the 2018 200-Word RPG contest. It was written on a whim on the way back to California from Madison, Wisconsin, where I'd been for Wiscon. Wiscon is the only feminist science fiction and fantasy convention in the US, and 2018 was my first time there. I was a panelist on "Female Friendships in Science Fiction and Fantasy," where (of course!) there was a lot of love for our 2016 Ghostbusters team. That combination led to this tiny little game. I've expanded it a bit here but have left it short to keep it in the spirit of the 200-Word RPG concept. See <https://200wordrpg.github.io/> for more about the contest.



THERE'S ALWAYS SOUP

Jill Baguchinsky



The acknowledgments for *Mammoth*, my upcoming young adult novel, include a thank you to Paul Feig, Katie Dippold, and the four ridiculously talented women who portray the all-female team in *Ghostbusters: Answer the Call*. The main themes in *Mammoth* are body positivity and the need for more women in STEM fields, a surprisingly tough combination to sell. When *ATC* came out in 2016, I had already been fighting to get *Mammoth* published for two years. I parted ways with my first literary agent over this book. I was told repeatedly that the YA market already had enough fat protagonists. I was close either to self-publishing *Mammoth* or giving up on it entirely.

Then I saw *Answer the Call*.

I've been a *Ghostbusters* fan since the original came out—I was five and the taxi driver ghost was the most delightfully terrifying thing I'd ever seen. My childhood favorite fed me the idea that, as a girl, I could be the secretary or the love interest/damsel in distress, so when I was nine I rebelled by building a cardboard-box proton pack for Halloween. My jumpsuit matched Egon's blue-and-pink color scheme from *The Real Ghostbusters*, and everyone thought I was an astronaut. Several decades later, my first book, *Spookygirl* (Dutton 2012), about a female paranormal investigator

dealing with high school hauntings, was so heavily influenced by the Ghostbusters franchise that it included a poltergeist named Buster and a chapter titled "Who Ya Gonna Call?"

So yeah, I was pretty excited about the idea of a female Ghostbusting team. However, I had no idea how much I'd fall in love with the reboot, or how deeply its depiction of women in science would impact me. These capable, brilliant, quirky female characters had to struggle for every opportunity, every bit of recognition, every victory—and they never gave up. "People dump on us pretty much all the time," Abby said when the team confronted Rowan; as a lifelong outsider, I felt that line keenly. As I delved into fandom (the non-toxic parts of it, anyway), I met more and more people who connected with that depiction of women, just as I had. Then there's the fact that although half the team is plus-size, body type is never used as a punchline or made into an issue. In a society that embraces fat jokes and diet culture, that felt astounding.

After seeing ATC way too many times in the theater, I went back to those *Mammoth* rejections that said "eh, there's enough of this out there," and I decided to keep pushing. I wasn't ready to accept that dismissal. There's **not** enough of "this" out there, whether "this" is a depiction of unstoppable women in STEM or fat main characters whose storylines are about accomplishments other than weight loss. Positive representation is so important. Little girls out there look at Holtzmann or Erin as role models the same way I looked at Egon or Ray; those girls see themselves on the screen in a way I never could, and I knew there were readers out there who would feel similarly represented by *Mammoth*. I jumped back into querying agents. And collecting rejections. At least there's always soup, right?

Less than a year later I signed with a fantastic agent. We announced *Mammoth's* acquisition by Turner Publishing Company the following January. In November 2018, *Mammoth* will be published. I'm already hearing from advance-copy readers who are floored to see themselves reflected in a book for the first time. They read *Mammoth* and feel the way I felt the first time I saw ATC. I'm so happy I have the opportunity to pass that along.

The new manuscript I'm working on now includes the sort of queer representation Sony denied existed in ATC. Will this book be another tough sell? Will I hear again that there's already enough of "this" on the market? We'll see.

If that's the case, hey, there's always soup.



Artist: LauraM



Artist: StHoltzmann

"PHYSICS IS THE MOVEMENT OF BODIES IN SPACE..."

Amber Bird

"Physics is the study of the movement of bodies in space..."

I. Mass

Mass is the amount of matter in an object

Mass is not the same as weight

But when they tell me to be smaller

Act smaller

Take up less space

Be lighter in body and tone

What I hear is I should matter less

And for a breath

For fear of the future they threaten for

Women like me

I almost consider it

Almost change my shape, my density

But...

But the gravity...

II. Distance

Distance is...

Everyone knows this one

Knows how far apart we can get from

Everyone

And I was born far apart

Even from the arms that fed me and held me and,

Quickly as was legal, pushed me out the door

Kept apart, held apart

And they told me to stay away and most days
I agree, I concede, I embrace apart
There's more room for my mass apart
Less chance for their cruelty to make me fall apart
I consider permanent distance from it all
But...
But the gravity...

III. Gravity

Gravity is attraction between particles
Influenced by their masses and the distance between them
So...
They would have me make myself too sparse and apart
Too meagre and removed
To attract you
But I held my matter, not my mouth
And used the force of pushing them away
To be my equal and opposite force
My fuel, my accelerator
My distance destroyer
Until I was close enough that all you had to bring was your own mass
Your own matter, your dense and attractive force
Your particles and mine
Pulled by natural phenomena
A consequence of the curvature of spacetime
And the uneven distribution of our matters
The gravity of us

IV. Scalar

A scalar is a measurement without a direction
For instance, we are going 100 miles per hour
But I don't know which way
I don't know where
And I don't think you do either
And if we knew which direction
Would it be the same for both of us?
We say we want that
We streak, directionless, across the landscape
Proclaiming our intent
We speed, and I place all hope
In our gravity

V. Vector

A vector is a measurement with a direction
For instance, my velocity is 100 miles per hour east
And yours most definitely is not
And I cannot stop because my body in motion
Tends to stay in motion
In a straight line
(Just think...me...staying straight for once)
No reverse, no u-turns
No you
Just Doppler redshift
Blueshift, Doppler or gravitational, is the past
Blueshift, if we're talking mood change, is the future
Outside our isolated gravitational field
I'm reduced like I never was
In our gravity

VI. Displacement

Displacement is a vector quantity that tells you
How far out of place an object is
How far and in what direction I moved
Away from you
Away from who I thought I was
My overall change in position
And here is my position now:
If you're moving in an equal and opposite direction
And if the earth is round
(It is! It is! As sure as the sun is a star is a
Body in space and
Inertia is my watchword)
And if my velocity is as constant as our gravity once was
There is hope on the other side of the globe
Collision course
If we maintain matter
If we maintain we matter
We may prove that gravity is renormalisable after all



IN LOVE WITH A GHOSTBUSTER

Laura M. & Philippa K.

When Erin Gilbert is your girlfriend, she proofreads your notes without being asked.

Neat annotations in crisp red pen, small corrections devolve into tiny hearts, scribbled doodles of sketched-out hands, soft lips.

(She only drew boxes before she met you.)

When Abby Yates is your girlfriend, there's someone in your corner every hour of every day.

Cat-callers on the street don't stand a chance, and she remembers your favorite cryptid and your birthday, in that order.

(It's Mothman, she knows, she loves you for it.)

When Patty Tolan is your girlfriend, you tell her all the secrets you've ever kept, because she listens like no one ever has.

Builds you bookshelves in her heart to store them, add her own, create a new Alexandria.

(In her arms, you've never felt so safe.)

When Jillian Holtzmann is your girlfriend, her name is never Jillian, and she brings you pieces of her heart like she's constructing something wonderful.

Glow-in-the-dark stars for your ceiling, street vendor hot dogs from a corner in the rain.

(Her kisses taste like pop rocks, like the fireworks in your chest.)

And falling in love feels like sitting in the dark, like looking up for the first time and thinking,

You.

I've been waiting for you my whole life.

CONTRIBUTOR BIOS

Jill Baguchinsky lives in Florida with a couple of strange cats. She spends her time writing about outsiders, pretending she can knit, tweeting too many Kate McKinnon gifs, getting thrown out of Disney's EPCOT (okay, that was just one time), and plotting her escape to a cooler climate. Connect with her on Twitter or Instagram for book updates, senseless fangirling, and cat photos.

<http://www.twitter.com/jillbaguchinsky>

<https://www.instagram.com/jillwritesbooks/>

Amber Bird is a writer, a rockstar, and a scifi simulacrum. She is the author of science fiction book *Peace Fire*, the front of post-punk/post-glam band Varnish, and an unabashed geek. An autistic introvert who found that music, books, and gaming saved her in many ways throughout her life, she writes (books, poems, lyrics, blogs) and makes music in hopes of adding to someone else's escape or rescue. And, yes, she was on that Magic card.

<http://amberbird.com/>

Brad "Spectral Locomotive" Bosshart has made over a dozen GB props, co-founded the Steel City Ghostbusters in 2008, assisted with the Ghostbusters Board Game 1 & 2, and collects what he can with two mortgages. He enjoys tweeting and messaging other Ghostbuster fans around the world. He made his first Ghostbusters outfit in 1989, and has dressed up a few times at cons and made a few short fan films on YouTube (GBSI).

<https://www.youtube.com/user/scgbgbsi>

<http://bradboss12.wixsite.com/gbsi>

GhoulGirly is a *Ghostbusters* music specialist. She lives in a pink slimed toaster.

<http://www.twitter.com/PinkedToaster>

JE Glass began her building career early alongside her father at the tender age of six until fate took her to the East Coast where she has lived since. Growing up, she found a love for disassembly, booby traps, pranks, and robotics. Naturally, *Ghostbusters* was a perfect fit what with its roots in STEM. One can imagine she had quite an interesting childhood. Her primary love, however, has always been writing. Most of her free time is spend outlining novels and writing short stories. If she's not working on build projects in her tiny garage she's writing in equally small, cramped places.

jeglass1988@gmail.com

<http://not-so-secret-nerd.tumblr.com>

Philippa K was born in the UK but now resides in Florida. Don't ask why because she doesn't know herself, although it might have something to do with her American wife whom she loves very much. Our joint adoration of *Ghostbusters* has grown to incomprehensible levels since the 2016 movie was released. We're now locked in for life.

<http://www.thepratandtheidiot.tumblr.com>

Laura M is a lesbian author, artist, and lover of all things *Ghostbusters* 2016. She currently resides in sunny Florida with her beautiful wife, and would die on a battlefield for Patty Tolan.

<http://thepratandtheidiot.tumblr.com>

<https://archiveofourown.org/users/silverhelme>

Pat M. grew up in Florida, but now goes to school in Virginia, where he writes and cosplays Star Wars and Ghostbusters. His two amazing sisters were the ones who showed him Ghostbusters, and he's so grateful to them for it. The best part of the new movie was Kevin, with whom he strongly identifies.

<http://smuggler1138.tumblr.com>

PieHeda grew up in and currently resides in the southern United States, where she enjoys writing fanfic (the sexy kind, you perv), leather working (not the sexy kind, you perv), and not fitting into her surroundings. She has two cats and secretly aspires to arrange a play-date between her tux cat Mike Teavee and Nino Positano.

<http://pieheda.tumblr.com>

Joanie Piquette doesn't know what her life is anymore but finally earned her Master of Science degree. One thing she knows for sure now is that she loves movies with badass women... and she loves women. She's from Quebec and her life was changed forever after watching *Ghostbusters* (2016).

<http://jojoroxye.tumblr.com>

<http://twitter.com/jojoroxye>

James Raynor is the writer/director/music composer of GB-inspired short film STUPERNATURAL. He's still holding out hope for a CD release of Randy Edelman's GHOSTBUSTERS II score.

<http://www.untamedaggression.co.uk>

Eden Robinson is a body-positive feminist and personal trainer in San Francisco. Her proudest accomplishments are shaking P!nk's hand at a concert, being told by a 9-year-old rock-climbing student

"I just love your whole look," and Paul Feig retweeting her Ghostbusters fan video (set to Mary Lambert's "Know Your Name"). Seeing Kate McKinnon's portrayal of a quirky, quiet, passionate gay woman allowed Eden to start accepting and loving herself. Her favorite pasttime is making her girlfriend laugh. By 2019 she hopes to be teaching yoga in K-12 schools.

<http://rowdyholtzy.tumblr.com>

<https://www.instagram.com/fangirlfit/>

RJ Russell is from Arizona and is a member of the Phoenix Ghostbusters 501c3 charity group. She has a background in art and a degree in Film Production. She is a long-time fan of Ghostbusters, but really relates more to the reboot.

<https://www.phoenixghostbusters.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/phoenixghostbusters/>

Clarissa C. S. Ryan is a class IV corporeal free-roaming apparition. If you ask her if she is a god, she will say yes. She writes science fiction and fantasy, and especially likes writing stories in which genres mingle and the girl gets the girl. She once cosplayed as Abby Yates...at a Doctor Who convention.

<http://www.ccsryan.com/>

<http://twitter.com/wintersweet>

Clint Ryan teaches mathematics at Diablo Valley College. He has had a number of experiences which sound strange when deliberately taken out of context. For example, he was thrown out of the University of California for teaching too much, started a successful rebellion in his fourth grade history class, was nicknamed "the fastest footnote in the West" by the chair of

Stanford's Department of Comparative Literature, got engaged during one of the cannibalism episodes of CSI, used a set of jumper cables to intimidate a would-be carjacker, sang with the world's last living shantymen, and set a record for high test scores at the Center for Excellence in Poultry Science that still stands 21 years later. Only one statement in this bio is a lie.

StHoltzmann was six when the original *Ghostbusters* came out, meaning she wasn't exactly a teen fangirl in 2016. But she fell in love with Holtzmann as soon as she saw the movie and has never looked back. Much to her surprise, she now writes fanfic, draws fan art, and occasionally just pines.

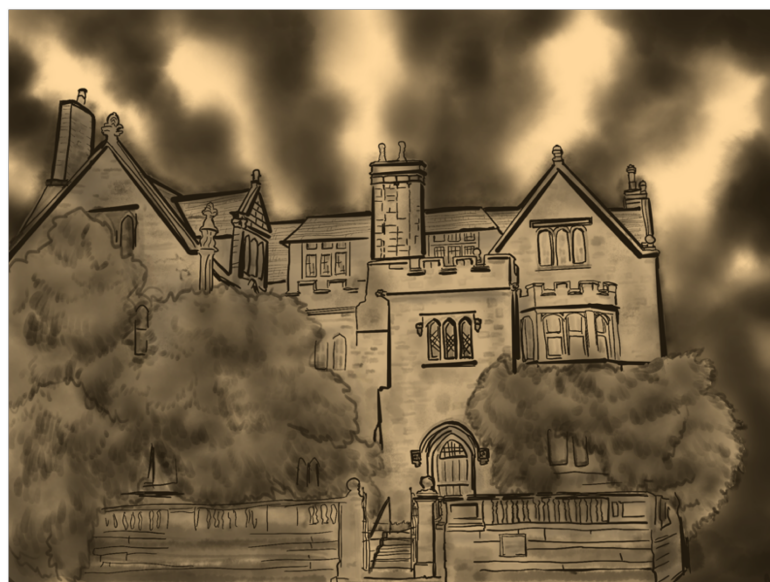
<http://stholtzmann.tumblr.com/>

<http://archiveofourown.org/users/StHoltzmann>

Sun watched *Ghostbusters* for the first time in South Korea in 2016. She is studying English hard to communicate with other fans.

http://twitter.com/jst_gt_hltzmnd

[https://www.instagram.com/sunn_frame /](https://www.instagram.com/sunn_frame/)



Artist: C. C. S. Ryan