

From ASH and FLAME

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DEBATING SNAPE



photo by Genii Grimsley

by Genii Grimsley

ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON, a panel of six fans and scholars debated the most discussed topic since the release of the *Half-Blood Prince*: Snape's loyalty. The discussion started with the panel introducing themselves and their standpoints on the discussion of Snape's status as either a friend or a foe. Meg Belviso stated her opinion that "if Snape was a foe, the gun already went off in book six." Nick Rhein questioned the possibility of Snape's redemption, saying he believed such a move on Rowling's part would "cheapen the books." The panelists discussed four sides to the ongoing debate: Snape is Dumbledore's man; Snape has benevolent streaks but is ultimately out for himself; Snape has evil tendencies and is ultimately out for himself; and Snape is the Dark Lord's man. The panelists also discussed the "Spinner's End" chapter from *Half-Blood Prince*, which was a huge departure for the normal narrative in that it did not follow Harry's actions.

The panel also raised the interesting point that Hogwarts, reportedly the safest place for Harry, has been infiltrated frequently by Death Eaters. However, some panelists defended Snape by saying he made a concentrated effort to expel Harry and return him to the Dursleys', where he is protected. The topic of Unbreakable Vows was also discussed at great length, as was the possibility that Harry's inheritance of Lily's eyes might be significant to Snape's status. An interesting theory was also raised about the ways in which the Harry Potter books resemble the Egyptian myth of Set's dismemberment of Osiris - namely the presence of serpents and gryphons in the myth.

Finally, the panelists discussed the oft-debated question of whether Snape's killing of Dumbledore was done at the headmaster's request. The floor was then opened for questions. The audience asked numerous questions, including the roles of *Felix Felicis*, stereotypes and the forest conversation between Snape and Dumbledore had in the debate.

FANTASY'S REBIRTH: RECONCILING THE HERO'S AND HEROINE'S JOURNEYS

by Maryann Penzvalto

VALERIE ESTELLE FRANKEL,

a creative writing professor from San Jose State University and author of the *Harry Potter* parody *Henry Potty and the Pet Rock*, gave a presentation on Sunday afternoon called "Fantasy's Rebirth: Reconciling the Hero's and Heroine's Journeys." This presentation compared Joseph Campbell's famous "Hero's Journey" (which features in such stories as *Harry Potter*, *Star Wars*, and *The Lord of the Rings*) to what Frankel called the "Heroine's Journey," which she believes is a different journey entirely. Using such books as Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* and *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* as examples, Frankel mentioned the obvious parallels between the stories. She then argued that both the hero's and heroine's journeys are common themes with different outcomes, with the hero ultimately seeking power and the heroine seeking to either find or protect her family.

MASQUERADE BALL



Ice (Erin Pyne) and Swan (Mandala) strike a hot pose. photos by Genii Grimsley

by Maryann Penzvalto

HARRY POTTER CHARACTERS, muggles and assorted magical creatures packed the Grand Ballroom Sunday night, as Phoenix Rising attendees danced the evening away at the Masquerade Ball.

Multicolored lights bathed the dance floor and a live DJ played popular songs and dance classics alike. The floor was crowded with floor-length ball gowns, cocktail dresses and other elaborate costumes including fairies, fauns and, of course, several phoenixes. Aberforth Dumbledore spent the night dancing with an inflatable goat, Severus Snape did the electric slide, and two Lucius Malfoys, one in aristocratic velvet garb and one in a tattered Azkaban uniform, shook it to upbeat disco songs.

Some ball attendees took their costumes in more original directions. Two of the four elements (Fire and Ice) were well-represented, and some people dressed as seasons such as Spring and Winter. Several people came as characters from stories other than Harry Potter; a Star Wars Jedi roamed the hall along with vampires Lestat and Claudia from famed horror author Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles*.

The night wore on, but the dancers didn't wear out even as they discarded masks and shoes and took their hair out of elaborate styles. Glitter, shaken from the incredible number of sparkling, shining dresses, covered the floor, and bright red and orange phoenix feathers floated through the air. Those who were exhausted after hours on the dance floor relaxed at tables around the room, making use of the well-stocked cash bar, and socializing with their masked friends.

The highlight of the night, however, came when the slow song "Come What May" from the movie *Moulin Rouge* began to play. Phoenix Rising attendee Jeremy Thompson dropped to one knee and asked his girlfriend, Hope Driggers, a girl with Tonks-esque bubblegum pink hair, to marry him. She tearfully accepted his proposal, and the happy couple danced until the song ended. The crowd gasped, cheered, applauded, sighed and snapped photographs; many had difficulty holding back tears of their own at the romantic scene.

The event ended at midnight, after the crowd on the dance floor came together for one final group dance.



Eat your heart out, Lupin!: Hope Driggers accepts Jeremy Thompson's proposal.



Mermaid & Faun: A lovely mermaid (Tracy Snell) finds her land legs with help from a convenient faun (Cait Spain)

COSTUME PROFILE:

Merchieftainess Murcus

photo and story by Genii Grimsley

AT SUNDAY'S MASKED BALL, Tracy Snell dressed as the Merchieftainess Murcus, a character who appears briefly in *Goblet of Fire*. Decked head to toe in silver and green robes, complete with a silver tail that made standing almost impossible, she spent most of the night in a wheelchair or standing propped against a friend. When interviewed, Tracy said that she got the idea when trying to think of a costume no one had done before. Her complete outfit took six months to make and buy. Tracy mentioned that fellow attendee Perseus helped her complete her gorgeous costume.