

Hub

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About Hub

Every week we will be publishing a piece of short fiction, along with at least one review (book, DVD, film, audio, or TV series) and we'll also have the occasional feature, too. We can afford to do this largely due to the generosity of the people over at Orbit, who have sponsored this electronic version of the magazine, and partly by the generosity displayed by your good selves. If you like what you read here, please consider making a donation over at www.hub-mag.co.uk.



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Someone Else's Paradise

by Igor Teper



Leon Mould had already put down the salt shaker, water pitcher, glass, and spoon, and was turning to his dish rack for a bowl, when a movement caught his eye, and he glanced over, past the unwashed blue curtains that framed his kitchen window, to see a stranger walk out of the Arizona desert and into his backyard.

The stranger was tall and sinewy, with long black hair and a thick beard that hid most of his face. He wore a loose-fitting knee-length garment cinched at the waist, and, as he walked, he swayed

slightly under the weight of a large bag slung over his left shoulder. He crossed the line, marked out by sparse shrubs, that set off Leon's backyard from the expanse of the desert beyond, and then just stood there, looking at Leon's house with awed bewilderment.

Leon went out to meet him. Dirt traced the lines life and time had etched into the man's face, his hair and beard hung in matted strands, his skin and clothing were soaked with sweat and grime, and the smell of the desert hovered thick about him. He looked to be a few years younger than Leon's forty-eight.

"How're you doing," Leon said.

The man started when he heard Leon speak, then, little by little, relaxed and regarded Leon with narrowed eyes.

"Is this... paradise?"

The man's voice was deep, dry, and tired, and he spoke slowly, with a strange inflection.

"Actually, it's Sunset Spring, but it's an easy mistake to make."

Confusion carved deeper into the man's face, and he straightened up and looked past Leon at his house and the town beyond.

"Can I help you with something?"

"This must be paradise," the man said, with more desperation than conviction.

Leon's eyebrows rose, then quickly relaxed.

"Well, I guess you can judge for yourself. I'm Leon."

The stranger's gaze returned to him.

"I am Abek."

"Good to meet you, Abek."

Leon paused, glanced back at his house and then at Abek's face, distorted in turn by waves of fatigue and flashes of anxiety.

"I take it you're new in town, and you must be hungry, so why don't you join me for dinner?"

Abek's eyes briefly grew wide, and he swallowed.

"Yes," he said, and Leon saw his jaw muscles contract.

"All right then."

Abek silently followed Leon into his house.

"Pardon the mess," Leon said when they came inside. "I don't really notice it anymore and I rarely have guests."

He set another place with a spoon and a glass, got his bowl from the dish rack, then took another bowl down from a cupboard, frowned at the layer of dust that had accumulated on it, rinsed it out, and set it down in front of Abek.

"Hope you like chili," he said, took the pot off the stove, and ladled out a generous amount into Abek's bowl and then his own.

Abek studied the chili in his bowl for a moment, bent his head down and smelled it, and looked up at Leon expectantly. Leon sat down and tasted his chili; it was pretty good, though not his best, and it needed salt. The shaker was clogged up, so it took some effort to get the salt out; when he put the shaker down he saw that Abek's expression hadn't changed.

"Go ahead, it's not bad."

Abek cautiously picked up his spoon, dipped its edge in his chili, brought it up to his mouth, tasted it, paused for a moment, and pounced on the chili, hungrily devouring spoonful after spoonful after spoonful.

They ate in silence, punctuated by Leon's occasional offers of seconds or more bread or water. Once or twice Leon tried to make conversation, but stopped when he saw there was no distracting Abek from eating. The chili was to have been Leon's dinner for the next few days, but Abek's appetite kindled Leon's own, and the pot was empty by the time they were done.

"So what brings you to these parts, Abek?" Leon asked when he had cleared the table and stacked the dishes in the sink.

"Like all men, I look for paradise," Abek said, the fatigue nearly gone from his voice.

"And you think this is it?"

Abek leaned forward and looked at him, unblinking, for several seconds, then sat back in his chair.

"They say that if you walk alone into the desert and keep walking until you can't walk anymore, and then keep walking anyway, you'll find paradise. I walked until my legs were stiff as logs, heavy as gold, and weak as foam, and I kept on walking, and I came here."

"Do a lot of people where you come from walk into the desert looking for paradise?"

Abek shook his head and smiled, a warm, genuine smile that cut through the alienness that surrounded him.

"Most think it is just an old superstition."

Leon nodded and his own features formed into a subdued smile.

"So what are going to do now that you're here?"

"I do not know," Abek said after a pause. "This is not what I was expecting to find."

"Were you expecting endless fields and gardens, that sort of thing?"

Abek frowned.

"Such a place may be your paradise, but I do not think it would be mine."

"I didn't realize there was more than one," Leon said.

"Paradise is the place where one fits in perfectly, so it is different for every man."

Leon leaned his head back and brought his hand up to stroke his chin. After a few seconds of silent thought, he straightened up and regarded Abek.

"So if this is your paradise, does that mean it somehow exists for your benefit?" he said with skepticism.

Abek lifted up his hands, palms outward, warding off Leon's challenge.

"I did not mean that at all. Your world exists for no other reason than that it is possible. If it is my paradise, that is only because some world must be."

"Does everything that is possible have to exist?"

"Yes," Abek said. "In its infinite vastness, the universe makes a reality of every potentiality."

The incredulity in Leon's features gradually relaxed into amused curiosity.

"So does that mean that, for each of us, there is a paradise out there somewhere?"

"Yes, though it is said that only fools and madmen ever go searching for theirs."

"So which are you, Abek, a fool or a madman?"

"Something of both, I think," Abek said with a smile, which was quickly replaced by a look of intense, intent focus directed at once inward and a world away. "I found myself seized by a restlessness, a feeling that, even as I lived my life, I was growing rigid, hollow, as a dead tree that turns to stone on the outside even as it rots from within. When I walked out into the desert, it was as much to escape from my world as to find yours. When I found myself wandering among the sands, nothing but desert in all directions, that was when my spirit seized with single-mindedness upon finding this place."

Abek ran his hand along the tabletop, turned it palm up and studied his fingers. He rubbed his thumb along his fingertips, then slowly turned his gaze back to Leon.

"I still do not fully believe that this place is real, that I have found the paradise our legends promise."

"It is real," Leon said, "but how will you know if it is your paradise?"

"I don't know," Abek said with a shrug of the shoulders. "I had thought I would know as soon as I arrived, would feel something within myself resonating in tune with the world around me, but that has not happened. I think now that perhaps, even if this is my paradise, I will only become aware of that once I find my place in it."

A far-away look slowly crept over Abek's face.

"And if I find that this place is not my paradise after all," he said, "the desert will still be here."

Leon followed Abek's gaze out into the twilight that had settled over the area while they ate. The sky and the desert merged in the distance so that the world was bounded by a single featureless sheet folded upon itself, and Leon felt himself being drawn deeper and deeper into the expanse of emptiness outside of his window. A wave of disorientation swept over him and then he was falling, falling into the abyss of the desert. As he searched with sudden desperation for the line of the horizon, a shiver passed over his body, breaking the hold of whatever it was that had gripped him. With a shudder and a deep breath, he regained his bearings and turned away from the window. Abek was looking at him.

"Tell me about your world, Abek."

Abek opened his mouth, but no sound came out as incomprehension twisted his features.

"I... I can grasp it in my mind, but I cannot bring it into focus," he said, slowly and barely louder than a whisper. "It is like trying to remember a dream I just awoke from -- I know the memory is there, but any detail I try to concentrate on just fades and dissolves, slips through my fingers like sand."

His hands clutched the air in front of his chest, and he looked down at them. He took a deep breath, relaxed and lowered his hands and looked back at Leon.

"Perhaps that is the price of paradise," he said, as much to himself as to Leon, "perhaps I have to lose my old world before I can truly become part of a new one."

"Maybe you'll get a whole new set of memories about growing up in this world," Leon said. "Heck, maybe some people here will all of a sudden get memories of growing up knowing you."

Maybe a whole new life will spring into existence around you, family, job, everything; maybe that's how it works."

"That had not occurred to me," Abek said, "but it makes sense that paradise would alter itself to accommodate me."

"But if you forget about your old world, how will you know that you came here looking for paradise? How will you even know to ask the question of whether this is your paradise or not?"

Abek shrugged.

"I suppose I won't. But if this place is paradise, I'll be happy whether I'm aware of that or not."

"I hope so," Leon said, and then a sudden, intense awareness illuminated his eyes and feverish excitement crept into his voice. "But, I wonder, if every time you go from one world to another you forget all about the one you just left, then how can you know which world you originally came from? Maybe the world you came from just now wasn't your original world at all, maybe you came there just like you came here, from somewhere else entirely."

"Uh-huh," Abek said, his face blank, incomprehending.

"And if that was the case, if you could never remember that you've come from another world, how could any of us ever know if the world we live in is the one we were born in? How could we ever be sure? And if we couldn't, then each of us, every single one of us, might spend his entire life going from world to world looking for paradise and never even know--"

He was interrupted by a car horn going off outside.

The blankness in Abek's features was abruptly replaced by deep concentration, then disbelief, and, finally, recognition.

"I guess that's my wife," Abek said slowly, with an inflection on the last word that made it sound like a question. He smiled, a smile in which apprehension mingled with relief.

"Your wife," Leon echoed, all energy gone from his voice.

"Yeah, come to pick me up." Abek looked around Leon's kitchen with confusion, as if he wasn't sure how he'd gotten there. Finally, he shrugged, and said, "Well, thanks very much for letting me use your phone, Leon. I'm sorry to have intruded upon your evening like I did."

He got up from the table, picked up his bag, crossed the living room and, after wishing Leon a good night, strode out the front door, leaving behind a faint smell of salt, sweat, and sand.

Leon sat looking out into the desert, silent and still, for a long time.

REVIEWS

Satanic reviewed by Paul Kane

Doctor Who: Frozen Time reviewed by Lee Harris

SATANIC

Directed by Dan Golden

Starring Annie Sorrell, Jeffrey Combs, Angus Scrimm

Momentum DVD

RRP: £39.99

'Hell's Halfway House'

Ever since Rosemary gave birth to her baby way back in the 60s, Satanism has been a popular source material for horror writers and directors. I've lost track of the amount of times I've seen demons conjured



up in strange rituals or Ouija Boards used to communicate with the Devil. Satanic, therefore, is just the latest in a long line of genre films that do pretty much the same thing. Some are good, some are bad, some are extremely ugly. But which category does this movie slot into?

We begin with high hopes. A girl crawls from the wreckage of a crashed car, obviously hurt – though not in as bad a shape as the driver, who has smashed straight through the windscreen and is hanging over the hood. “Why Michelle...” the man whispers with his dying breath, “Why did you do this to me...” Cut to some funky CGI titles involving satanic symbols and what looks like the landscape of Hell. We rejoin Michelle (Annie Sorell) in hospital where doctor Angus Scrimm is treating her (imagine having The Tall Man from Phantasm as your physician; I’d run a mile). She has more bandages round her face than Claude Rains, but he tells her not to worry; although there has been extensive damage to her face, with reconstructive surgery based on photos he can make her into a hot chick again...or words to that effect. But that’s only part of her problem. Michelle can’t remember who she is, nor what she was doing in the car with the man who died – apparently her father, she’s told. Michelle’s also having disturbing dreams where she sees the man as a horribly burned figure, and there’s a hooded woman lurking who might have something to do with the crash.

Later on, the bandages are removed and lo and behold: a hot chick, the kind that always play the lead in low-budget horror flicks – the kind that always take their clothes off at some point (and yes, she does, for possibly the most unnecessary shower scene I’ve ever witnessed). But “it doesn’t ring a bell,” says Michelle, examining her face in a mirror. Maybe the Ouija Board (told you) that the police found in the car might jog her memory, suggests Scrimm. As if on cue, a janitor is murdered that night and Michelle is questioned by probably the dimmest detective known to man (Jeffrey Combs in a wasted role here). When he gets no answers, Michelle is sent to Harmony House, which is run by pervert Bisson (Rick Dean) and his wife Jackie (Diane Goldner). Here Michelle meets other troubled kids: Larry (Brett Erickson), Dutch (Brian Burnett) and Dalia (Eliza Swenson). The last two seem to view the place as an excuse for clandestine nookie, while Larry – the nice kid – takes a shine to Michelle. But her dreams are intensifying, not helped by the fact that Dalia talks her into using the Ouija Board to communicate with her dead father.

As the mystery grows and more people start to die, it looks as if Michelle has made some sort of pact with an evil force. But all is not as it seems, and there’s a twist to the tale involving Michelle’s plastic surgery and her real identity.

Let’s not kid ourselves here, Satanic is aimed at the teenage crowd who like to put the DVD into the machine, turn the lights down and throw popcorn at the telly. Nothing more, nothing less. With this in mind, can we excuse the shocking acting (and not shocking in a good way), the inconsistencies of plot and character (Jackie confiscates Michelle’s sexy nightwear because she won’t have that kind of filth in the house, but oddly leaves the girl her Ouija Board...), and the dire ending which just seems an excuse for the least entertaining cat fight in history? Probably not. Unlike recent similar films such as *5 Girls*, this one doesn’t even seem to be trying. It’s like a student movie that somehow got a DVD distribution deal, ill conceived and at best a bit of tiresome fluff. The twist is the best part and if you can make it through you might think to yourself ‘ah, that is kind of clever’. But even this doesn’t ring completely true and smacks of a soap opera plot device you might find in *The Bold and the Beautiful* or *Dallas*. What’s more, Satan doesn’t even put in an appearance at all, which makes the title more than a tad misleading.

Re-animator and Phantasm completists might get a kick out of seeing their favourite actors in a different horror scenario, but quite honestly you’d be better off re-watching *Masters of Horror* again...

Doctor Who: Frozen Time - Audio drama

Written by Nicholas Briggs

Directed by Barnaby Edwards

Starring: Sylvester McCoy, Anthony Calf, Maryam D’Abo

Produced by Big Finish

RRP: £14.99

Big Finish have, at long last, revamped their website. Head over to www.bigfinish.com for some of the finest SF audio drama on the market (though remember to keep reading *Hub* for reviews of the new releases).

To put this review into context, McCoy was always my least favourite Doctor, so although I started listening to this tale with the intention of being completely impartial, it was probably going to have to pull something special out of the bag if it was to get anywhere close to a positive review.

Lord Basset set off in 1929 to conquer the Antarctic, but his expedition is never seen again, except for one member of the team, mad, and clutching a document which tells of improbable things.

Fast forward nearly 100 years. Basset's grandson heads another expedition, seemingly to discover the truth about his grandfather's trip. When the new expedition uncovers a strange blue box buried deep in the ice, with a strange little man frozen solid close to it, Basset begins to uncover the horrifying truth about what really happened to his forefather all those years ago, and it's not just the TARDIS that's being thawed out...

In *Frozen Time*, Briggs has crafted a hugely enjoyable drama – one which gives McCoy possibly the best script he has had to work with for *Who* in any medium. McCoy truly is a pleasure to listen to, and he is supported by a strong cast and highly-experienced director in Edwards. The slow build-up to the eventual reveal is effective, and when the adventure really gets going the action barely rests until the end of the two hours.

If McCoy had scripts like this when he was on the small screen, it's entirely possible that the series would not have been cancelled! If you're a fan of McCoy's Doctor, this is a must-have purchase. If he's never really been your cup of tea, you should still be very, very tempted by this production.

This is audio *Who* at its very best.



Cats Who Like Felix... An Interview with Mike Carey

Following in the successful footsteps of Neil Gaiman, Mike Carey has made the transition from writing comics (his hit list includes *The Fantastic Four*, *X-Men*, *Hellblazer* and *Sandman* spin-off *Lucifer*) to writing full-blown fiction novels based around his freelance exorcist Felix Castor. *The Devil You Know* and *Vicious Circle* have proved to be big favourites with readers, and his new novel *Dead Men's Boots* is about to hit the bookshelves. Here Paul Kane and Marie O'Regan catch up with the man himself to ask a few pertinent questions.

Marie O'Regan: How did you learn to write comics?

Mike Carey: By looking at Alan Moore scripts (laughs), which was probably a mistake. I think his scripts were the first ones to appear. Because they are such beautiful literary works in their own right publishers were quite keen to show them off. The trouble is they're a bad model for other people to follow – its okay if you're Alan Moore, you're writing these novels. But it's A) labour intensive and B) If you're not Alan Moore, it's probably sending you in the wrong direction because most artists have a better visual imagination than most writers. So if you're nailing them down too much on irrelevant detail, then you're preventing them from getting an imaginative feel for the thing, and the important stuff gets lost in the verbiage. When I wrote my first comic script, which was something called *Legions of Hell*, I was literally describing where all the furniture in a room was, if people were drinking coffee I'd describe what was on the mug. It was just bananas, not trusting the artist even to wipe his own nose. That script was offered to Paul Grist, who turned it down. He said, "It's an interesting story, but what do I do? I'm not a machine." So that's how I learned, and then I had to unlearn it and develop a style of my own which is more telegraphic. Not as telegraphic as people like Brian Bendis, whose scripts are incredibly brief and terse, but include everything that needs to be there. That's a great model, I think. I'm somewhere in between those two extremes.



Paul Kane: Were the Alan Moore scripts published in books?

Mike Carey: Yeah. I think there might have been one at the back of *Watchmen*, maybe not a complete script, might only have been a partial one. Then later of course I read some Gaiman scripts in *Dream Country*, they had the script for *Calliope*, which is a masterful, masterful script.

Paul Kane: How did you first start to get published and when did that transition come from teaching to writing?

Mike Carey: It was a very, very slow transition. I don't think it necessarily had to be as slow as it was for me, I'm just naturally cautious. I was doing some work for *Fantasy Advertiser*, I did reviews for them, and then I started writing critical appraisals of people like Morrison and Gaiman, of the work they'd done by that time. The distributor, Neptune, who'd taken over *Fantasy Advertiser*, started doing their own comics line. So I pitched two ideas: *Aquarius* – which was an embarrassing *Watchmen* rip-off, it was just *Watchmen* with the names changed – and *Legions of Hell*, which is a story I'd still like to write at some point. It's about a woman who has multiple personality syndrome, and she thinks she's possessed, but actually what's happening is that she's chopped her personality into chunks and assigned a name of a demon to each of these parts of herself, so that when she wants to be angry, she allows herself to be possessed by the anger demon. This was before *Crazy Jane* by the way. So that one was actually quite an interesting story, and I wrote the first three scripts but the company went bankrupt so the comics never appeared anywhere. The one full issue was drawn by Gary Crutchley and Ben Dilworth, but it never appeared.

But through that I met Ken Meyer jnr, who was doing the art on my superhero story, *Aquarius*, and through Ken Meyer I met Lurene Haines, who was married to Dave Dorman for many years. She did a couple of 'How To' books about getting into comics, one of which was for the writer, one for the artist. Lurene and Dave were trying to set up an agency at that time called Big Time, a comics agency, and they offered to represent me. But because the agency didn't yet exist they basically said, we'll do it for free, and if we get anything formally set up later you can start paying us. She found me work with Malibu and later with Caliber, just because she's a nice person, not for any kind of reward at all. So that's how I broke into the American scene. From Malibu I went to Caliber, from Caliber I went to DC because everything I brought out I was sending to Alisa Kwitney who was the editor on the last issues of *Sandman* and on the first issues of *The Dreaming*, and I was just saying: I want to work for you, I want to work for you, look at this. Which is what you have to do.

Paul Kane: So it was a gradual transition. Were you teaching as well at this point?

Mike Carey: Yes, I was teaching full time all through that. I didn't stop teaching until the year 2000, and even then I only went on a sabbatical – it later turned into a permanent sabbatical. I just wouldn't let go of the salary until I had enough money in the bank to survive a year, because I thought if it all goes really, really badly, then within a year I can definitely get another teaching job. So that's when I cut loose, when I had about 20 grand saved up, and I had a little bit of a buffer.

Marie O'Regan: How did you decide in which direction to take Lucifer initially, and how much of Neil (Gaiman)'s character is in him by the end?

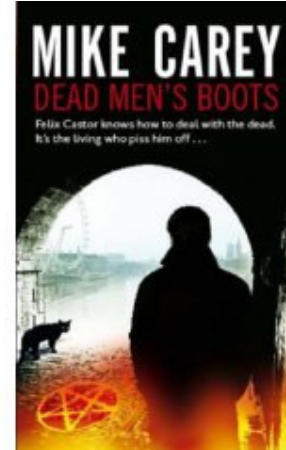
Mike Carey: That's a tough question to answer. I think there's an awful lot of Neil's Lucifer in him to begin with and I think it's really apparent through the first two years of the book, that gradually he morphs into something a little bit different. He starts to become a vessel, a vehicle for me to explore ideas about free will and predestination. But certainly the initial situation, it's as Neil defined it. The fact that Lucifer rebels again, a second time, by resigning from God's plan – by walking out of Hell, is the keynote. And it continues to be the keynote throughout: Lucifer is the character who says no to God; the character who refuses to play the game by somebody else's rules, who would rather not be in the game at all than accept somebody else's rules. He's like a character in a story who wants to be the author of the story, wants to be his own author – or like a child who wants to be his own parent. So I think the seeds of that definitely are there in *Season of Mist* but I put the elements together in a different way, and by the time we get to *The Divine Comedy*, *Paradiso* and *Purgatorio* and *Inferno*, he's something different than he is in *Sandman*. He's become something else. And his style of speech changes as well. Neil's Lucifer is very much a "calling a spade a spade" kind of guy, he refers to God as 'the old bastard' at one point. My Lucifer becomes a bit more austere, a bit more patrician in his language, gradually.

Marie O'Regan: Lucifer, and Sandman before it, is a family drama isn't it? Is there an element of soap opera to it do you think?

Mike Carey: It's a good question – yes, I think there probably is, in the sense that soaps have overlapping and convoluted stories about lives going through spectacular changes. Yeah, I guess there is an element of that. I definitely think the central theme of *Lucifer* – which is restated again and again in every arc – is parents and children. All of the most important relationships are parent and child relationships, including the God/Lucifer relationship.

Paul Kane: What was the inspiration for Felix Castor as a character, because I can see certain parallels with John Constantine?

Mike Carey: It's been said, yes. Yeah, there are elements of John there. But I think it's possible to exaggerate those parallels too much. There are bits of Constantine, and there are bits of Lucifer in there, although they're small bits. And there are bits of me, a lot of his backstory is my backstory, especially in the fourth book which I'm writing at the moment. It's turning out to be hugely autobiographical. It takes Castor back to Liverpool and back to his childhood, investigating something that happened to him and his brother when they were quite young.



What other strands came together in Felix? I'm interested in good people who do bad things. I think that is a Constantine thing, yeah - that like John, Felix has done appalling things to people who he actually loves, people who love and trust him. But he carries the weight with him, he's not a ruthless amoral bastard, he's just someone who does what's necessary and then can't work it out – he just carries it around and gets more and more screwed up by it. What he did to Rafi and also what he did to his sister: the fact that he exorcised his sister's ghost and he doesn't know what became of it. You realise during the course of the first novel that there is this terrible unanswered question at the heart of his life, which ultimately becomes the question that the books set out to answer. We start to look at the mechanisms: Why are the dead rising? What's happening to the afterlife, to the eschatological framework of the universe that's making this happen?

Marie O'Regan: What separates Felix from other occult PI's like Harry D'Amour and Harry Dresden?

Mike Carey: I don't know...the fact that he's from Liverpool? (laughs) I think he's got a dry wit and a very ironic, acerbic take on life that is kind of distinctive. Beyond that...I don't know, really.

Paul Kane: Do you do a lot of research, and does an interest in the paranormal fuel the books?

Mike Carey: It's very superficial, my research; I do whatever it takes to get by. Again, you look at someone like Alan Moore or Grant Morrison, someone who actually knows about real magic and brings that knowledge into their stories...If I live to be 1000 I could never have written something like *Promethea*, which is a treatise on actual magic. I am interested in the paranormal, I do research it – but most of my research is done on the fly and it's shamelessly superficial.

Paul Kane: Do you want to admit to that in print?

Mike Carey: (laughs) Yeah, I don't mind. Someone's going to find me out one of these days (all laugh) You look at the way I use Navajo mythology in the Morningstar arc and the way I use Norse mythology in the Nagafaro story arc in *Lucifer*, it's really just 'I like that and I like that, that's good' and you weave it together into something that looks really good, and you hope no-one's going to pick you up on the details.

Marie O'Regan: You take Felix out of his natural environment of London for some of the new book, was that a purposeful experiment?

Mike Carey: Yeah, definitely, it was a case of ringing the changes again – to do stuff that people won't expect. I wanted to take, not just Felix but Felix and Juliet into a situation where they wouldn't be in control of what was happening so much. No network of relationships they can call on, Castor can't use his regular informants like Nicky. Juliet is badly damaged, not just in the fight, but also by the process of flying – by losing contact with the earth. So when she has a fight in the Alabama scene, later on in the book she remains far from full strength, which makes some of the things in the climax that happen much more problematic for her and for Castor. The worst thing you can do is establish a formula, and just keep on playing out the formula again and again and again. You want to take the readers to new and interesting places in each story. So the fourth book is going to be different because it's not multiple plotlines, there's

just one thing that Castor is investigating, it's something very personal to him; it's not a case he's taken on for somebody else. And in the fifth one I think we're going to get some interesting revelations about the aetiology of demons, about where demons come from.

Paul Kane: How many books do you see it being, or are you just going to continue until you run out of steam?

Mike Carey: There's definitely something that happens in the sixth book which is huge, which is going to be a climax to everything that has happened so far, and I could stop at that point. Or I could go on. At this point I'd rather go on because I'm still having ideas for stories. But I think we'll sit up and have a look around after book six and see where we are, see what the sales are like and whether Orbit are still happy with me.

Mike Carey's latest Felix Castor novel, *Dead Men's Boots* is published by Orbit on September 6th.

Hub Exclusive

Coming Next Week: Fiction: *Takes a Lot of Hate* by **Mike Carey** – A Felix Castor tale.

If you have enjoyed this week's issue, please consider throwing some of your hard-earned shekles at us. We pay our writers, and your support is appreciated.