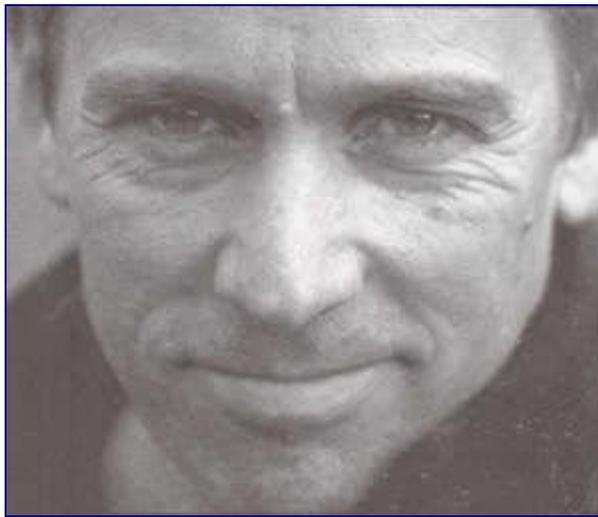


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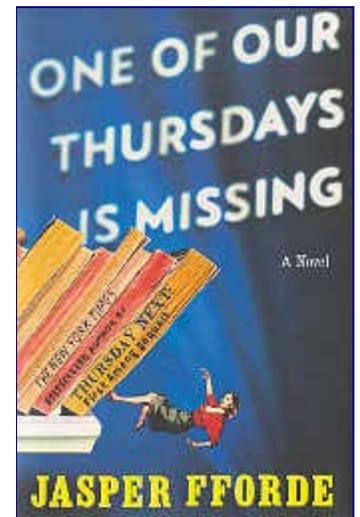
A READER'S JOURNAL

**One of Our Thursdays is
Missing
A Thursday Next Novel, No. 6
by
Jasper Fforde**

ARJ2 Chapter: Reading for
Enjoyment

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A Book Review by Bobby
Matherne ©2011



It seems like the author was also missing Thursday Next as I was. Having read the first five novels, I had about given up hope of another Thursday Next adventure when this one popped out of BookWorld into my hands. As I opened it to read I discovered that Thursday Next was missing and presumed dead! What a bummer! Who in the world was I going to be reading about if not Thursday Next? Some pretender, some wannabe Thursday? I didn't want last Thursday or next Thursday, I wanted the *real* Thursday. How can one of our Thursdays be missing? you ask. That's a good question, which to answer involves details of the BookWorld, namely Fiction Island, and its inhabitants.

Let's start at the beginning. Not at the beginning of this book but the very first Thursday Next novel, [The Eyre Affair](#), which is topical, with a new movie of the *Jane Eyre* novel just arriving in theaters. In *The Eyre Affair*, Thursday Next makes her appearance in fiction as a Literary Detective for Jurisdiction. Through her adventures in that novel, a written Thursday Next appeared on Fiction Island, and with the succeeding four books (before this one), there were already five novels in which she appeared. Inside BookWorld the places of Thursday's adventures are built out of text on Fiction Island. When an alarm goes off that a reader somewhere is reading a Thursday Next novel the cast of characters come together to create the scene and read the parts to the waiting reader. This kept all the written Thursday Next's rather busy at first, but now the books hover on the brink of the abyss of RemainderWorld, the characters are not busy, but inside left with ample time for crocheting, badminton, and croquet, especially croquet, which is like World Cup Soccer in BookWorld. And our written Thursday Next finds her with time for, what else, detecting!

Our written Thursday Next arranges for a character named Carmine to take her place in the mostly idle Next novels while she goes hunting for the real Thursday Next — the one whose father's face could stop a clock(1). The McGuffin for this novel is our original Thursday Next, and everyone is searching for her.

Whitby Jett, a wannabe boy-friend, is not interested in the ersatz Next's intentions except as they affect him. She's looking for an understudy to replace her so she could do detective work, and he's only interested in getting her to have drinks with him at the Bar Humbug or a romantic dinner at the quaint but suggestive Inn Uendo. Then a random event occurred, which as you might imagine, is an unheard of thing in BookWorld where everything that can happen is written out in advance.

[page 4] And that was when the doorbell rang. This was unusual, as random things rarely occur in the mostly predetermined BookWorld. I opened the door to find three Dostoyevskivites staring at me from within a dense cloud of moral relativism.

"May we come in?" said the first, who had the look of someone weighed heavily down with the burden of conscience. "We were on our way home from a redemption-through-suffering training course. Something big's going down at Text Grand Central, and everyone's been grounded until further notice."

If none of the above passage sounds remotely funny to you, perhaps you should also avoid reading [*The Adventures of Captain Underpants*](#) or the first issue of *Mad Comics* c1953. Unfortunately I read both and I still recall as a boy of 13 reading the 10 cent *Mad* comic book which was passed around by my peers as if it were a joint in a police station instead of a comic book on a sidewalk. "Here, take a look at this," he said. What I looked at didn't seem funny, but when I read it, my world dramatically opened to the vast vista of satire! Here was a comic book that wasn't portraying the world as it is, like *Batman* or *Superman* or *Blackhawks*, but a world filled with maddeningly silly inconsistencies. The *Mad* comic book tugged on Batman's mask, pulled Superman's red drawers down, and made paper airplanes of the Blackhawks' fighter planes! It might paint a Hilterian mustache on FDR, show Eleanor smoking a stogey, or Babe Ruth sitting on a wall like Humpty Dumpty — no icon of politics, industry, or sports was immune to being poked fun at, and the more striking and bitter the satire, the more I laughed. I knew immediately that after that day, the world would never be the same for me — I had been indelibly changed. I had taken a quantum leap into manhood even before my *pubes* were fully *scent*.

If the above passage sounds funny to you, read on. I swear upon the ancient *Mad* comic book, that you will find many a spot in this book with as many as three or four funny things in one sentence! But back to the *Dostoyevskivites* — what a noun! Don't you just love that sesquipedalian polysyllabic meringue?

[page 5] "Welcome to my home, Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov."

"Oh!" said Raskolnikov, impressed that I knew who he was. "How did you know it was me? Could it have been the subtle way in which I project the dubious moral notion that murder might somehow be rationalized, or was it the way in which I move from denying my guilt to eventually coming to terms with an absolute sense of justice and submitting myself to the rule of law?"

"Neither," I said. "It's because you're holding an ax covered in blood and human hair."

"Yes, it is a bit of a giveaway," he admitted, staring at the ax,

Since *Mad* comic book, I have found few authors who could evoke the wonderful nonsense of satire so profoundly for me as Jasper Fforde does in his Thursday Next books. Add to the satire an ultra-imaginative conjuring of all of BookWorld into existence, aspects of which few of us outside of BookWorld had ever given any thought to, up until now.

[page 7] Whitby got up and looked out the window. There was nothing to see, quite naturally, as the area between books had no precise definition or meaning. My front door opened to, well, not very much at all. Stray too far from the boundaries of a book and you'd be lost forever in the interbook Nothing. It was confusing, but then so were *Tristram Shandy*, *The Magus* and Russian novels, and people had been enjoying them for decades.

Aspects like there being *nothing* in the space not written about in books, e. g., toilets. Since no characters even go to a toilet in a Jane Austen novel, there are no toilets in *Northanger Abbey*. Who knew? Like when I read *Mad* as a kid of 13: I was learning about things I didn't know existed because no adults had ever written satire in a comic book before, and comic books were responsible for forming my early moral judgments!

But suddenly, in this very book, *One of our Thursdays is Missing*, the outside spaces between books were written about and the Classics had to be shutdown to build up those spaces. This put the written Thursday into Lala Land and when she woke up a miracle had happened, there was *something* in place of the *nothing!* I reckon this as similar to the way a PC must feel after it has had a new upgrade installed and it re-awakens after the subsequent bootstrapping operation to discover that the upgrade has added something into spaces where there was nothing, only minutes before!

[page 12] "Thursday?"

I opened my eyes and blinked. I was lying on the sofa staring up at Whitby, who had a concerned expression on his face.

"Are you okay?" I sat up and rubbed my head. "How long was I out?"

"Eleven minutes,"

I looked around. "And the Russians?"

"Outside."

"There is no outside."

He smiled. "There is now. Come and have a look"

I stood up and noticed for the first time that my living room seemed that little bit more realistic. The colors were subtler, and the walls had an increased level of texture. More interestingly, the room seemed to be brighter, and there was light coming in through the windows. It was real light, too, the sort that casts shadows and not the pretend stuff we were used to. I grasped the handle, opened the front door and stepped outside.

The empty interbook Nothing that had separated the novels and genres had been replaced by fields, hills, rivers, trees and forests, and all around me the countryside opened out into a series of expansive vistas with the welcome novelty of distance. We were now in the southeast corner of an island perhaps a hundred miles by fifty and bounded on all sides by the Text Sea, which had been elevated to "Grade IV Picturesque" status by the addition of an azure hue and a soft, billowing motion that made the text shimmer in the breeze.

The landscape of Fiction Island had been formed into the inside of a sphere, and adjacent areas of fictional genres could be viewed from anywhere. Thursday could see the Dismal Woods way above, Fantasy to east, Crime to the left, and Adventure behind. There were various small islands like Lies, Excuses and Fibs, and a rather large and burgeoning island call Vanity right offshore. It was now possible to catch a TransGenre Taxi from one Genre to another. Our novice literary detective, the written Thursday Next, is soon going on adventures all over BookWorld, hitchhiking on books flying overhead, excavating the text scattered on the ground from a crashed book for ISBN identifiers, etc.

I worked with a *Mister Malaprop* for ten years in an office and compiled the funny ways he butchered the English language into [The Book of Calvin](#). I noticed that after reading these stories some readers suffered a syndrome which caused them to no longer remember the proper way to say something. For example, this sentence, "This is the kind of apple that Cinderella had when she was crucified!" was actually spoken by Calvin one day. Readers might try to recall when Cinderella ate an apple or when she was crucified, in vain. Another expression of Calvin's was, "I'm as busy as two Little Beavers and a Bee!" and people who read the comic strip *Red Ryder and Little Beaver* might be confused and wonder how many Little Beavers there were. Or some might wonder what "a bad case of diuretics", "my splash poop things", or the "Nifty Ditty Girt Band" referred to, so I wrote a [Glossary](#) to help them return to normal. Now thanks Fforde's creative perspicacity I know that this syndrome has a name, *Postsyntax Stress Disorder* (Page 21). This horrible disease severely shortened the working life of BookWorld characters in the play, *The Rivals*, by Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

[page 21, 22] **The average working life of a Mrs. Malaprop in The Rivals was barely fifty**

readings. The unrelenting comedic misuse of words eventually caused them to suffer postsyntax stress disorder, and once their speech became irreversibly abstruse, they were simply replaced. Most "retired" Mrs. Malaprops were released into the BookWorld, where they turned ferrule. . .

By turning *ferrule* instead of *feral*, they learned under intensive therapy to at least come up with a replacement word which sounded correct while being as far apart in meaning as *ferrule* (a metal ring) and *feral* (running wild). Rightly understood, Calvin and Mrs. Malaprop ran wild within the panoramic confines of English.

There are several red herrings in this novel, not the least of which are the eponymous red herrings, one male, one female, and one book. The male is English, the female is Irish, and the book is French, *hint, hint*. The female I found only during the course of writing this review and I've already given as many hints to their names as I can without spoiling your own fun. If you missed, by the misfortune of being born too late, the first *Mad* comic books, reading Fforde can provide an able modern-day substitute.

Through the imaginative genius of Fforde, no not in the way he came up with a last name beginning with two "ff", but in the Snooze Button reserved for BookWorld emergencies! If a book character was utterly unavailable to play their parts for a live reader, one could always push the Snooze Button and the following fun thing happened:

[page 25] The Snooze Button was reserved only for dire emergencies. Once it was utilized, a reverse throughput capacitor on the imaginotransference engines would cause the reader instantaneous yawning, drowsiness and then sleep. Quick, simple — and the readers suspected nothing.

We suspected nothing, Blabbermouth Fforde, up until now. Well, I guess your invention of the BookWorld Snooze Alarm gives me a ready explanation for those times when I have been reading books, usually not by Fforde, when I have suddenly, in the middle of a riveting scene, even though it was only 2:37 pm, nodded off to sleep. The power transmitted through books have been greatly underestimated over the years and centuries.

With a new book in BookWorld being constructed next to our Next's books, she decided that having neighbors might be useful — for example, "you might need to borrow a cupful of irony." The construction site was full of signs which led to one of Fforde's sentences with three funny things in them, "Notices were posted everywhere that contained useful directions such as THIS WAY TO THE DENOUEMENT or NO BOOTS TO BE WORN IN THE BACKSTORY and even DO NOT FEED THE AMBIGUITY. (Page 30)

Seated on a train next to red-haired gentleman, Thursday is awakened from a reverie when he turns and asks her "What do you think?" Their conversation sheds light on what's it like to live in BookWorld. Sure, we all think sometime we'd like to live in BookWorld, as I did at age 12 when I read Robert Lawson's [*Fabulous Flight of Peter and Gus*](#). I wanted to be Peter who got tiny and rode to Europe on the back of Gus the seagull to have adventures. I never considered there to be a downside to going on so marvelous an adventure.

[page 40] "What do I think about what?"

"This," he said, waving a hairy hand in the direction of the new BookWorld.

"Not enough pianos," I said after a moment's reflection, "and we could do with some more ducks — and fewer baobabs."

"I'd prefer it to be more like the RealWorld," said the red-haired gentleman with a sigh. "Our existence in here is very much life at second hand. I'd love to know what a *mistral* felt like, how the swing and drift of fabric might look and what precisely it is about a sunset or the Humming Chorus(2) that makes them so astonishing."

This was a sentiment I could agree with. "For me it would be to hear the rattle of rain on a tin roof or see the vapor rise from a warm lake in the chill morning air."

Would we want to give philosophical discussions just because we happened to be a character in a vampire novel? Thursday's next comments took me aback as I eavesdropped on her conversation with her Red Fellow Traveler.

[page 40] We fell silent for a moment as the tram rumbled on. I didn't tell him what I yearned for above all, the most underappreciated luxury of the human race: free will. My life was by definition preordained. I had to do what I was written to do, say what I was written to say, without variance, all day every day, whenever someone read me. Despite conversations like this, where I could think philosophically rather than narratively, I could never shrug off the peculiar feeling that someone was controlling my movements and eavesdropping on my every thought.

At least within a novel, even the letter on the desk mentioned in first chapter turns out to be meaningful in the last chapter. But in real life the letter on my desk will just sit there until someday we're having company and Del asks me to clean up the clutter on my desk when said letter will be simply discarded. Much of our RealWorld experiences seem to have no meaning(3). Or are we living in a big book in an even larger Library?

[page 41, 42] "I'm sure it's not all hot buttered crumpets out there in the breathing world of asphalt and heartbeats," I said by way of balance.

"Oh, I agree," replied the red-haired gentleman, who had, I noticed, nut-brown hands with fingers that were folded tight along the knuckle. "For all its boundless color, depth, boldness, passion and humor, the RealWorld doesn't appear to have any clearly discernible function."

"Not that better minds than ours haven't tried to find one."

The jury had been out on this matter for some time. Some felt that the RealWorld was there only to give life to us, while others insisted that it did have a function, to which no one was yet party. There was a small group who suggested that the RealWorld was not real at all and was just another book in an even bigger library. Not to be outdone, the nihilists over in Philosophy insisted that reality was as utterly meaningless as it appeared.

Suddenly we have the long-awaited eponymous-dropping! When Thursday asks him, "Why are you telling me this?" The red-haired guy answers, "I don't have much time. I think they saw us talking. Heed this and heed it well: *One of our Thursdays is missing!*" Now that the book title has been duly established, the plot can move one inexorably to the denouement.

Suddenly a Man in Plaid appears. Well, actually he was insulted to be said to be wearing plaid, he said, "It's not plaid. It's tartan." With that, we are expected to identify the Men in Plaid appropriately as some BookWorld wide enforcement agency. Nowhere does Fforde mention if their clothes were made from a yard of plaid or where the plaid material was designed.

Suddenly we run directly into the three-funny-things in one sentence pattern again:

[page 45] I took a left turn at the Lone Gunman pub, and walked past a hangar full of advanced flying machines that all displayed a swastika, then entered a shantytown that was home to theories that lived right on the edge of Conspiracy due to a sense of overtired outrageousness.

Oh, and let me introduce you to Thursday's domestic robot whose primary training is in mixing and serving cocktails and whose motive force is a wind-up spring. Sprockett's emotions are displayed on his

stolid metal face by a fanned array of settings and a needle pointer over his eyebrow indicates which emotion he should be displaying. His eyebrow pointer may indicate an emotion but that doesn't mean that he does "truly understand what *emotion* or *feel* actually means." Thursday asks him if he felt danger from the imminent stoning she rescued him from.

[page 52] "But surely you felt danger when you were about to be stoned and relief when rescued?"

"Yes, but only in the context that to be destroyed would deny me the opportunity to serve cocktails — and that would contravene the second law of domestic robots."

Even when giving descriptions, Fforde can be funny. Take the short paragraphs from *Bradshaw's BookWorld Companion* which grace the beginning of each chapter. Here's an example from "6. The Bed-Sitting Room" describing what happens when thieves steal and trade sections of out-of-print books.

[page 56] Entire books were stripped of all nouns, and in the very worst cases large sections of dramatic irony were hacked from the books and boiled down to extract the raw metaphor, rendering once-fine novels mere husks suitable only for scrapping.

To my mind with its delicate sense of paradox, the concept of "raw metaphor" seems to be a rather *refined* metaphor.

Have you ever read a book before it was made into a movie? You know what happens: you develop your own image of how the main characters look and then suddenly it's made into a movie and Rhett Butler turns into Clark Gable forever in "Gone with the Wind." The most recent character in fiction this has happened to is Harry Potter.

[page 69] Harry Potter was seriously pissed off that he'd have to spend the rest of his life looking like Daniel Radcliffe.

What is so droll about this comment is that usually we think of the actors like Radcliffe who can't get jobs after doing some Potter because he has become so identified with Harry Potter. Fforde forces us to consider the feelings of the fictional characters in his all-too-real BookWorld.

When Thursday introduces Sprockett to her old pal Bowden, she tells him the story which spirals down into farce.

[page 81, 82] "I didn't know you needed a butler," said Bowden.

"Everyone needs a butler. He was going to be stoned, so I took him with me."

"What do cog-based life-forms get stoned with?" asked Bowden in an impertinent manner. "Vegetable oil?"

"Actually, sire," intoned Sprockett, "it's sewing machine lubricant for a mild tipple. Many fee that the exuberant effects of 3-in-One are worth pursuing, although I have never partaken myself. For those that hit have rock bottom, where life has become nothing more than a semi-conscious slide from one partial winding to the next, it's WD-40."

Nothing is more troublesome than orphaned prefixless positives. Thursday chose to release some of these that the Lady of Shalott had given her — it seems the Lady has soft spot for these words, What are these words, you ask? Fforde gives them to you in three sentences. These words are like speed bumps or deep potholes, so be ready for them:

[page 84] I let the defatigable scamps out of their box. They were kempt and sheveled but their behavior was peccable if not mildly grunted. They started acting petuously and ran around in circles in a very toward manner.

The two terrorists of this novel are Speedy Muffler and Racy Novel. They are planned to explode a dirty bomb and create havoc in BookWorld. How might they do this?

[page 86] When Muffler claimed to possess a dirty bomb capable of hurling scenes of a gratuitously sexual nature far into Women's Fiction, the BookWorld finally took notice and the peace talks were set. Thursday Next would be the chief negotiator, and she had good form When Scandinavian Detectives threatened to cede from Crime, it was she who brought them back.

The problem is the real Thursday is missing and might be dead, so our hero, the written Thursday Next, is the only one who can save BookWorld from the dastardly plan of Muffler and Novel. And the Men in Plaid are dogging her every move, even trying to run her off the road and kill her. Perhaps Men in Plaid will remind you a bit of Men in Black, the famous alien hunters in the movie of that title. Our Thursday's adventures have the same tone of laughter-producing seriousness as the Men in Black series of movies. Their staid demeanor led Thursday to opine, "They probably didn't do well at singles bars but would doubtless be able to play poker at tournament level." (Page 89)

Alfred Hitchcock explained once about how the item which everyone is searching for in a movie, especially his movies, is known in the business as the McGuffin. Not surprising that Thursday reveals that Book Data Recorders were made by James McGuffin Co in the Suspense genre, "so they have a tendency to go missing until dramatically being found right at the end of an investigation." (Page 91)

When a dodo (Pickwick) and a cog-based windup life-form (Sprockett) have a discussion, one might want to say, "Horror! Horror! Horror!" as they discovered the intense use of *epizeuxis* in the whispering emanating from the damaged Triumph motorcycle, leading them to think that the book which contained the Triumph had been destroyed by a rhetorical worm whose specialty was the rhetorical device of word repetition for fun and profit called epizeuxis. I can just now hear Gomer Pyle saying, "Golly, golly, golly!"

[page 95]

*The works that built the cycle worked;
The cycle's labor labored on
And workers sought and workers bought
The managers out and managed 'owt
Until the cycle's cycle cycled round.
But markets moved and markets shifted,
To Eastern trade that Eastern made.
Loans were pleaded, loans were needed,
The workers' workers worked their last.
But ruin didn't do as ruin does,
For Triumph's collapse led to Triumph's triumph.*

The motto during the McCarthy Era was "Better Dead and Red" and the motto shared at the head of Chapter 11 is "Better Dead than Unread". (Page 100)

Fforde's biting satire takes on Coffeeshops with their expensive coffee! That people go to a coffeeshop for something other than coffee was demonstrated to me as I walked into PJ's Coffeeshop one day. As I walked past four ladies who looked as if they had been hard at work for hours, sitting around a table filled with notebooks and strewn papers, I heard one of them say, "Let's take a break!" Since coffeeshops are normally used for people to take a break, I was intrigued to know if they were going to go to a different coffeeshop for their break, or merely go buy another coffee. Thus, said, it would be cheaper for such hard workers if they could not order a coffee as Thursday does at Stubbs.

This next passage takes place after she failed to keep a date Whitby. She called him to apologize and suggested a place whose name suggested ample room for their lunch meeting. Whitby is the opposite of a

McGuffin, everyone knows who he is and he keeps turning up at inconvenient times during the story instead of once at the end.

[page 101] I told him I would *definitely* be free for lunch, suggested the expensive and needlessly spacious Elbow Rooms, then pretended that Pickwick had broken something, so I could end the conversation.

I drew a deep breath, cursed myself for being so stupid, took a pager with me and walked down the road to Stubbs, the outrageously expensive coffee shop on the corner.

"Could I not have a coffee?" I said, meaning I wanted an empty cup. Stubbs had become so expensive that no one could afford the coffee, but since the ambience in the café was so good and the establishment so fashionable, it was always full.

"What would you not like?" asked Paul, who wore a black gown and a wig due to a syntactical head cold that made him unable to differentiate himself between a barista and a barrister.

"Better not give me a latte," I replied, "and better not make it a large one."

The land area on Fiction Island reserved for Comedy was threatened by the imminent war between Women's Fiction and Racy Novel, as Acheron warned Thursday, "I don't think [Comedy] was joking when they said they would defend their land to the last giggle." (Page 102) To a Comedian laughing is no joke; it's an art form. A character named Lockheed warns Thursday, "You can expect a few more incidents heading your way with this kind of flagrant level of inspired disinterest."

Here is a complete passage from the Bradshaw book that made me laugh out loud. U-238 is the most common isotope of Uranium. All I can think to say after reading the passage below is: "Are U-238 Sirius?"

[page 125] Distilling metaphor out of raw euphemism was wasteful and expensive, and the euphemism-producing genres on the island were always squeezing the market. Besides, the by-product of metaphor using the Cracked Euphemism Process liberates irony-238 and dangerous quantities of alliteration, which are associated with downright dangerous disposal difficulties.

Bradshaw's BookWorld Companion (9th edition)

Things get rather dicey for Thursday as she and Sprockett drive through a Mime Field, but they don't attack unless set off. How do you set off a Mime, you ask? Similar to the way you might set off a poet at a poetry reading. "By sighing during a performance, looking away, rolling your eyes — that sort of thing. Mimes hate being ignored or having their performance interrupted. In that respect they're almost as touchy as poets." (Page 138)

Our hero, the written Thursday, is given away, even though she has the real Thursday's official badge, because she doesn't know Jack Schitt! Had to happen as the wonderful ambiguity guy from the first book appears and Thursday doesn't recognize him. She knew him only by reputation whereas the real Thursday would have recognized him. (Page 224)

Thursday meets Tuesday, her cousin, who inherited the genius of Uncle Mycroft the inventor. Tuesday's latest project reminded me of a poster that I mounted prominently on the wall at the foot of the stairs that our youngest teenager son came down each day. It set suitably bold print: HIRE A TEENAGER WHILE HE STILL KNOWS EVERYTHING ! ! ! She explains it to Thursday:

[page 234] She spoke to me of her latest project: a plausible method to crack one of the most intractable problems in modern physics, that of attempting to instill a sense of urgency in teenagers.

After returning from a trip to RealWorld, our written Thursday Next is beginning to feel as if she might be real. She asks Bradshaw to her, and his test is immediate and easy to do. He simply places his finger on

Thursday's nose and asks her what he did. She has no clue, but any real person would immediately know, even a blind person.

[page 420] "But *could* I tell if I were real? Could anyone tell?"

"There are lots of signs," said Bradshaw, "but here's the easiest: What am I doing now?"

"I don't know."

"How about now?"

"As far as I can tell, you're not doing anything at all."

Bradshaw took his finger off my nose and smiled. "I suppressed my action line. The real Thursday could have seen what I was doing, but you had to rely on the description. You're fictional, my dear, through and through."

Finally the written Thursday gets a clue as to the presence of a live Thursday when she uncovers the name Tuesday Laste on the passenger list of Mediocre Gatsby's TransGenre Taxicab. But she encounters some deep epizeuxis in this conversation with Sprockett about Commander Herring, known by all as Red.

[page 282] "What about Red Herring, ma'am?"

"I'm not sure. Is Red Herring a red herring? Or is it the fact that we're meant to *think* Red Herring is a red herring that is actually the red herring?"

"Or perhaps the fact you're meant to think Red Herring isn't a red herring is what makes Red Herring a red herring after all."

"We're talking about serious metaherrings here. Oh, crap, I'm lost again. Who's talking now?"

We're nearing the end of the book and this review. If you have enjoyed neither, then all I can say is, "Why don't you go do a Plot 9 on yourself?" Yes, you will have to read the book to find out what it means, but I assure you if that's the case, you will understand completely how appropriate the expression is. (See page 286 reference, which will only tantalize you.) Perhaps two ladies of negotiable affection will arrive in time to rescue you. I can only leave you with a some pseudo-erudition which the written Thursday Next picked up in HumDram: "You're kind," I replied, "but last Thursday and next Thursday are still a week apart." (Page 302) If you have any questions of me, you can leave me a message on the shortwave colophone which I monitor continuously when I'm not busy thinking. (Page 322)

I must close this immediately as I feel a Emergency Snooze Protocol 7B being initiated. May you be forever safe from the antikern and from Owlcreeking(4).

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----- *Footnotes* -----

Footnote 1. This interesting fact about Thursday's father appeared as the first sentence in [The Eyre Affair](#), namely, [page 1] My father had a face that could stop a clock.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 1.](#)

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**Footnote 2.** While I am not sure what Humming Chorus Fforde refers to, in my review of [Healing](#) Hazrat Inayat Khan talked about the healing effects of a Russian humming chorus. "There used to be a custom in ancient times, that instead of using an organ in churches four or five persons with the lips closed used to

keep one tone, humming that one tone together."

[Return to text directly before Footnote 2.](#)

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Footnote 3. I made this thought into Matherne's Rule No. 8, [It always happens before you know it](#). Knowing the meaning of something must follow the event by some time period, and we have no way of knowing if a discarded letter will turn out to have been valuable 17 years from now.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 3.](#)

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**Footnote 4.** Kerning is a way of adding partial spaces to create a uniform right edge in typesetting. *Antikern* is an imaginary way of removing all blank spaces and reducing the typeset words into ink! *Owlcreeking* is an actual writing technique by which one lives out a scene in which one is already dead. The movies *The Sixth Sense* (1999) and *Lulu on the Bridge* (1998) are two examples of Owlcreeking. A colophon is a publisher's emblem and the basis for the *shortwave colophone*

[Return to text directly before Footnote 4.](#)

