



TeenHelp.org presents...

# Avatar

TeenHelp.org's eZine  
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## In this issue...

### i Table of contents and Letter from the Editors

- 1 News by Vessol
- 2 **Bulimia Nervosa** by her\_beautiful\_mistake
- 3 **Depression tips** by Gidig
- 5 **A review of "A relentless hope: Surviving the storm of teenage depression"** by Rob
- 6 **Games consoles** by Chazzz
7. "14" By 03tellis
- 7 **Self expression**
- 8 **Horoscopes for April**

## Letter from the Editors

Hello everyone, and welcome to this edition of Avatar.

We'd firstly like to start off this issue off with a custom-made cover! Different from our past covers, we have a great sketch designed by Louise ( Cut\_up\_angel ).

As for this month's content, firstly we're going to start off with a March time line article written by Ryan. It explains some of the events that have occurred around the world this past March. So in case you've missed anything, check it out! Followed by that we have an article on bulimia nervosa by her\_beautiful\_mistake. We also have a helpful article written by Maria explaining different ways of coping with depression and other disorders. Following that is a book review on the book "A Relentless Hope" by Rob, and an article by Charlotte on game consoles. As always, we will be finishing off this issue with some wonderful self-expression and a horoscope.

We hope that you enjoy this edition, and we hope that you've all had a happy Easter.

-The Avatar Team:

Editor-in-Chief: Rob (Rob)  
Content Editor: Mel (.Infinity.)  
Graphics Editor: Steve (23:11)  
Sub-Editor of News and Debates: Ryan (Vessol)  
Sub-Editor of Mind and Body: Maria (Gidig)  
Sub-Editor of Entertainment: Charlotte (Chazzz)

# News and events during March

by Vessol

## March 2

Dmitry Medvedev of the United Russia party is elected President of Russia, he will succeed the current President Vladimir Putin who will step down on May 7, 2008.

## March 5

A man-made flood is created in the Grand Canyon in Arizona to replenish the ecosystem there.

## March 10

Governor of New York State, Eliot Spitzer, is linked to a prostitution ring. Two days later he resigns.

## March 11

Chinese police fire tear gas on Tibetan protesters in the 2nd day of protests that demand the independence of the region from China. Over the next week the protests escalate and the Chinese government cracks down. The unrest spreads. The estimated death toll varies by source, with the Chinese stating it is as low as 14, with Tibetan sources saying it is over 100.

## March 13

Leaders of the European Union meet in Brussels, Belgium with global warming and energy security on the top of the agenda.

## March 14

Queen Elizabeth officially opens Terminal 5 of London's Heathrow Airport.

An EF2 tornado tears through downtown Atlanta, Georgia damaging many buildings but causing no deaths.

## March 17

World stock markets plummet as rumors circulate that the investment bank Bear Stearns is to be sold to its rival JPMorgan Chase. The U.S dollar reaches a record low compared to the rising Euro.

# News and events during March

by Vessol

## March 19

The leader of Al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, releases a new audio tape criticizing the European Union for allowing the publication of comics that insult the Prophet Muhammad, he threatens strong reaction.

## March 21

A 7.2 magnitude earthquake strikes Western China, there are no reported deaths.

## March 22

Ma Ying-jeou is elected President of the Republic of China(Taiwan) with 58% of the votes.

## March 23

U.S Military casualties in the Iraq War reaches 4,000. The civilian death toll is estimated at 733,158 to 1,446,063 deaths according to the ORB(Opinion Research Business)

## March 24

The 2008 Olympic Torch is lit amidst protesters from Reporters Without Borders.

## March 25

Battle of Basra rages on for days between Iraqi Security Forces and Militants.

## March 26

A 160 sq. mile chunk of ice breaks off the Wilkins Ice Sheet

## March 28

North Korea fires a volley of missiles into the sea in warning that they will stop their Nuclear disarmament if the U.S continues to press details on their arsenal. 11 South Korean diplomats are expelled from N.K DMZ side. Threatens to cut ties with S.K.

## March 29

Numerous people and cities across the world participate in Earth Hour, an international event that asks households and businesses to turn off their lights and non-essential electrical appliances between 8-9pm local time.



# Bulimia Nervosa

by her\_beautiful\_mistake

**Note: This article is possibly triggering for users.**

When asked to write this article, I leapt at the challenge. There are so many myths and misconceptions regarding bulimia, which I hope to dispel. However, I sit here now looking at the research I've done this past week; the people I've interviewed, the knowledge that I have of this disorder - and I'm lost. How is it possible to sum up such an entirely complicated disorder into an article suitable for "Avatar"? Remind yourself as you read this, that what I write is only the surface. This disorder is not easy to comprehend, it's not easy to simplify for the average teenage reader, it is such a deep disorder that it would be impossible to write everything one knows about bulimia down. No one person will completely understand this mental illness, as I would guess is true of every illness of the mind. Keep that in mind.

The textbook term for bulimia is bulimia nervosa, and the source of the word 'bulimia' comes from the Latin word, *bŭlĭmia*, which itself originated from the Greek word βουλή? μῖα, meaning 'ravenous hunger' - an appropriate way in which to sum up the disorder.

Indeed, bulimia nervosa is an eating disorder in which the sufferer binge eats, after which the sufferer will rid themselves of the food they have eaten or burn of the energy consumed. This cycle is commonly referred to as the bulimic cycle. It is important to note that although one does have to binge eat to be considered bulimic, a sufferer may use many methods to compensate for their binges. These different methods are divided into two groups, and Purging Bulimia and Non-Purging Bulimia. The former is the group that most people will imagine when they think of bulimia, where the sufferer will rid themselves of food by self-induced vomiting, abusing certain medication to induce vomiting, abusing laxatives (or occasionally enemas), abusing diuretics, or in some cases all four. These behaviours are referred to as purging. The non-purging bulimic will not partake in any of the behaviours listed above, and instead will compensate for their binge by over-exercising or fasting. Often, non-purging bulimics do not class themselves as bulimic because they don't purge; sometimes the sufferer won't even realise that they're bulimic. Non-purging bulimia is much less common; only 6-8% of bulimics suffers this type of bulimia. Many purging bulimics will also use the behaviours listed as non-purging, but as a secondary measure. A complete list of the diagnosis criteria for bulimia nervosa can be found here.

Initial research that I have conducted has shown that typically, the surveyed users of TeenHelp.org have a similar understanding of the two types of bulimia as non-users of TeenHelp.org surveyed within the same age range. 8% of TeenHelp.org users knew that not all bulimics purged, whilst 5% of which is a figure only slightly higher than the 5% of non-users of TeenHelp.org.

# Bulimia Nervosa

by her\_beautiful\_mistake

One of the myths surrounding bulimia is that it helps you lose weight. I say myth, as this is untrue. In fact, in most cases it makes the sufferer gain. If a sufferer became underweight, they would be classified as purging anorexic. As the sufferer's weight ordinarily remains within a reasonable range, bulimia often goes unnoticed for months or even years. Many bulimics feel shame at their disorder and feel unwilling to disclose it to those around them.

Further initial research that I have conducted has suggested that TeenHelp.org users surveyed typically have more knowledge of bulimia than non-users of TeenHelp.org surveyed within the same age range. 28% of TeenHelp.org users' surveyed believed bulimia contributed to weight loss compared to 62% of non-TeenHelp.org users within the same age range. I believe that if the general population were more aware of facts such as this surrounding bulimia, the on-set of adolescent bulimia would decrease.

The bingeing aspect of bulimia can be both disturbing and distressing for the sufferer. People I've talked to when researching for this article have described their bingeing as "out of control", "unstoppable" and "humiliating". The sufferer will often feel frantic during their bingeing episode, experience a burning desire to eat and eat and eat. The binge will often only stop once the sufferer is interrupted by another person, runs out of food, or is simply too full to continue. Bingeing will typically bring on a barrage of emotions; guilt, self-loathing, shame, desperation, humiliation and many others. It is these emotions that will drive the sufferer to rid themselves of the food they've eaten, through the methods listed above. It is the bingeing, and the lack of control that the sufferer experiences, that often leads to a feeling of shame. Bulimics often look at anorexics, seeing themselves as "pathetic" in comparison. "I used to think that anorexia represents control, and that bulimia showed a lack of it. I felt that 'if only I could become anorexic, I would have it all'. So many bulimics think this way. It's so sad to look back and see how wrong I was. Anorexics and bulimics are sick, both groups of people are very sick. Neither is better or more worthy than the other. Both need help. Anorexics are just as out of control as bulimics, just in another way. They're very similar disorders and very different at the same time, you cannot compare the two."

Bulimia occurs more frequently than anorexia, with 2-3% of young women developing bulimia, with boundaries of any age, class or race. However, the majority of bulimics tend to come from chaotic families, a vast difference to anorexics, who typically come from well-structured, ordered families. Many doctors have compared the ordered nature of anorexia and the chaotic nature of bulimia to the sufferer's upbringing, and it is true there is an apparent link, although there is too little research to provide a conclusion. Bulimia tends to be more common among Caucasians (people with white skin), however, social class has little bearing

# Bulimia Nervosa

by her\_beautiful\_mistake

Another myth regarding bulimia (and indeed anorexia) is that it affects only females. Although the rate of bulimia is much higher in females, around 2-8% of sufferers are male. When questioning both groups of teenagers I surveyed, TeenHelp.org users and non-users of TeenHelp.org, I found that 78% of TeenHelp.org users were aware of that bulimia also occurred in men, a great difference to the 46% of non-users of TeenHelp.org surveyed who correctly answered the same question. The results of this particular question suggest that users of TeenHelp.org are supplied with correct and accurate information on bulimia, and are able to understand why myths such as this, and others I have listed, are inaccurate. However, earlier research, which I have specified, has proven that TeenHelp.org users are not completely informed on bulimia. I sincerely hope that articles such as this one will enable a greater understanding of not only bulimia, but also other mental illnesses that affect a great number of teenagers worldwide. Many sufferers of disorders such as bulimia do not speak out, as they fear condemnation and judgement, the only thing that can put a stop to such things is increased understanding. I believe that should the general population be more aware of the facts such as this surrounding bulimia, the on-set of adolescent bulimia would decrease and more sufferers would feel able to approach friends, family and doctors for help.

There are groups of people that are more at risk of developing bulimia. These groups include people that are involved in activities for which a particular body type is desired, such as dance and gymnastics, people who are given a heavy work or study load and people who tend to be more impulsive than their peers, and high achievers.

The physical consequences of bulimia are lengthy, ranging from stained teeth to death. It is notable that the longer a sufferer continues with the bulimic cycle without careful monitoring, the harsher the effects of bulimia on the body will be. A complete list of the physical consequences can be found [here](#).

The majority of people will first think of the consequences bulimia has on the body before considering the affects it has on the mind. Depression, anxiety and substance abuse are the main three psychological impacts of bulimia, with one study finding anxiety disorders in 75% of bulimia patients. Recent studies have shown that bulimia causes depression, through the mental strain of the continuous cycle of bulimia and the deprivation of essential vitamins for mental health, such as vitamin B12. Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness, and the chances of mortality increase with every year that passes in which a sufferer does not get help.

Recovery from bulimia is very possible, although it is often a long process. I strongly believe that a sufferer of bulimia cannot be forced into recovery, and that a sufferer will only change when the advantages for doing so outweigh the advantages for continuing with current behaviour. As I have said, should a sufferer be forced into recovery and/or treatment against their will, the chances of maintaining a long-term recovery is low.

# Bulimia Nervosa

by her\_beautiful\_mistake

Recovering from bulimia involves confronting your behaviours and what caused you to develop them – it is not, I repeat, not, just about food and weight. Change can often be a frightening prospect, and for sufferers, bulimia is their familiar territory, and however horrible it may be to suffer, changing may be even worse. It is important to understand that everyone facing recovery will feel like this. Lapses and relapses often occur with recovery from eating disorders, and bulimia is no different. However, sufferers must remember that attempts at recovery are never in vain. Lessons learnt from relapses are invaluable, and can be put to effective use in the future. As a poster said on an eating disorder recovery support forum, "Recovery is like a stone pathway. As you walk you lay down stones. For every time you eat a meal without bingeing, every time you refuse to purge, every day you don't weigh yourself, every time you don't take laxatives, every time you don't buy those diet pills, and for every thing you learn about how to fight bulimia, you lay down a stone. If you decide to stop walking for a while (stop recovering) the stones you have laid down along the way are still there. They do not disappear if you stop on the path or even if you completely leave it all together. They will always be there for you to come back to whenever you feel ready to start walking again. You don't have to start building the pathway all over again from the beginning. Instead, you can look back, see how far you've come, and hopefully, looking at all the stones you've laid down before will encourage you to keep going and keep building the road."

As with anorexia, the sooner a bulimic enters treatment to aid them with their recovery, the easier they will find it to recover. However, unlike anorexia where the disorder is often discovered fairly quickly by the family and friends of the anorexic, as I have said before, bulimia can go undiscovered for years. This often, though not always, makes the recovery of bulimia harder than that of anorexia, simply because the bulimia has developed deeper roots in the sufferer's life.

Typically, a bulimic will not conquer both the urges to binge and the urges to purge at the same time. This often results in a bulimic gaining weight in the first stages of recovery, as they are able to prevent themselves from purging, but not from bingeing. It is important to remember that although yes weight has been gained, as the sufferer perceives with recovery, the binges will subside and the gained weight will begin to fall off. Often this weight gain will trigger the sufferer to relapse back into the cycle of bulimia as gaining weight is disheartening, as one sufferer knows. "Gaining weight is what you fear; it's why you're puking in the first place. You see the number on the scale go up and you don't know what else to do but start puking again. What you don't realise is that you're half way there when you've stopped puking, more than half. You start again and you take so many steps backwards. You have to be strong. You have to have the guts to take the leap of faith that ultimately recovery requires."



# Bulimia Nervosa

by her\_beautiful\_mistake

Until recently, bulimia was commonly treated in the same way as anorexia, via in-patient treatment. That is, where a sufferer will live in a hospital where they will be assisted with eating, keeping down food, as well as receiving medical care and therapy. This was thought to be the most effective form of treatment as it helped the sufferer to break their bulimic cycle. However, it has become apparent that once the sufferer has left in-patient treatment, they often return to their old behaviours of their bulimic cycle. It is now more common for a sufferer to be supported through therapy and group support whilst they continue their normal life in the community. Sufferers of bulimia often binge as a way to cope with the stresses in their life and it is important that they learn different, healthier ways of dealing with stress. These new ways of coping are best learnt whilst they can be put to practise in normal, every day life, with the support of a therapist. Along with therapy, medication is sometimes offered, usually an anti-depressant in high dosages that is used in the treatment of depression, or an anti-psychotic in lower dosages than is used in the treatment of schizophrenia. Different doctors may also prescribe other medication.

During treatment, whatever kind, the treatment of anorexics and bulimics is often similar, and indeed in support groups you will find the sufferers of the two different disorders mixing. This is because the two are very closely linked and it is not uncommon to find a sufferer who has suffered both disorders at some point during their illness. This is referred to as symptom swapping.

As I have said, recovery from bulimia is a long process, requiring self-belief, strength and perseverance. With these on board, recovery is entirely possible, and ultimately completely worthwhile.

"Recovering from bulimia is the greatest achievement of my life. It has given me my life back. Before recovery there was nothing; there was food and there was the toilet and there was the treadmill. There was misery and darkness. I now have light, I have happiness, and I have life. It has been the hardest thing I've ever done, but it was worth it."

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# Depression Tips

by Gidig

This article mainly focuses on the ways to help lessen the symptoms of depression, and hopefully help you live life a bit easier. Some of these will also help for other mental disorders, or health issues, in which I will specify.

## What is depression?

I think we've all heard of depression. Some may be clinically depressed, while some may just have the kind of depression that comes with life. Whichever you have, it's no fun. Some get it more than others; some barely get it at all. But usually it's part of life. If you'd like to know more about the symptoms of different kinds of depression, you can refer back to the February edition of Avatar, to the article titled Depression on page three. [<http://www.teenhelp.org/avatar/pdf/February08.pdf>].

## How does exercise help?

Exercise helps lessen both the symptoms of depression and anxiety disorders. It also helps with staying fit, high blood pressure, diabetes, and other diseases. Exercise is NOT a cure, though, so you still should keep talking to people and keep on doing what helps you. You should also keep taking medications your doctor has prescribed, exercise does not replace these in any way. The last thing you may be thinking is: "Let me go out and run a little bit." But you can overcome this, and you can get yourself up and moving. You will feel better if you do. Professionals aren't entirely sure what helps with exercising, but some think it may have to do with the increasing levels of mood-enhancing neurotransmitters in the brain, boosts of good endorphins, releases in muscle tension, better sleep, reduction of levels of a stress hormone cortisol, and raises in body temperature which may have a calming effect.

## How much exercise do I need? And what does exercise actually help?

The suggested amount of time of exercise to help improve symptoms is 30 minutes a day, three to five days a week. Just a few minutes everyday whenever you can fit in is good as well. This amount of exercise may help sadness, anxiety, irritability, stress, fatigue, anger, self-doubt and hopelessness, which are all major signs and symptoms of depression. It also works as a confidence booster, as you learn new things and improve at the things you enjoy. Exercise helps you meet new people and build good friendships, it also works as a distraction when you just need to get away. It's can also be a really good coping method, especially to replace something that may not be so good, such as self harming or overeating.



# Depression Tips

by Gidig

## How do I start exercising?

Exercise is usually encouraged by mental health professionals and doctors, so ask for their support. Ask your therapist to ask how your exercising is going each week, or your doctor to give you some tips. Figure out what kind of exercise you really enjoy. It'll be a lot easier to do, if you like doing it. What one person likes, another may not. Note that things are going to try to stop you from exercising in life, such as hectic schedules, the feeling of just not wanting to get up and exercise, weather, and things like that. Be prepared to tackle these and get through these. If you set reasonable goals that you can reach, it will help you reach a sense of accomplishment. Maybe a good goal would be to go for a run three times a week in the evening. Or to sign up for a group sport you like at your local gym. Ask your school what kind of sports and activities are offered.

## Can diet help depression?

Yes, diet can help alleviate some of the symptoms of depression. It has an indirect effect on your mood, your overall health and other mental disorders. If you have good health, the rest of your body is working correctly, so nothing is contributing to your depression or other mental health disorders. When our body feels good, it helps our mind feel good.

## How can I work on eating healthier?

There are so many ways people tell us to eat to be healthy. One day one thing is good, and the next day doctors are saying to stay away from it. You really just need a balance of vitamins, nutrients, fatty acids, minerals and fiber. It's simple when you say it, but how do you pick the right foods or diets? Pick a sensible eating plan that you can stick to. Try to also eat at the same time everyday, have an eating schedule. Have it include lots of fruits and vegetables, and of course you can always have the occasional treat. Stay away from extreme fad diets, most of the time they don't help. You can always talk to your doctor and follow their advice, too. That's what they're there for. Avoid alcohol and drugs, as they don't help anything. Also try to cut back on caffeine, which will also help in the long run. Any major changes in your appetite can be a sign for a number of things, so be sure to watch out for that.

## Are sleep and depression related?

Yes, sleep and depression are related sometimes. People who are depressed normally sleep a lot. Keep a diary of when you're sleeping, how many times you wake up and so forth. It may be interesting to look at. If you oversleep, you'll be tired and not feeling your best. If you don't get enough sleep, though, the same with happen. Sleeping good can help many other problems as well, so always try to sleep properly.

# Depression Tips

by Gidig

## How can I work on getting a better night's sleep?

There are many ways you can work on getting a better night sleep. To start with, exercise during the day, but avoid exercise two hours before bed. This will help you sleep better, and you'll be more awake to properly deal with anything that comes your way. Try not to sleep during the day also, as you'll be less tired at night, but do try to go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day. Avoid disturbing, violent, or scary films, eating large meals before you plan to sleep, and alcohol. Although alcohol is a sedative, it does not help you sort out a sleeping problem, and is best to stay away from. Try to associate your bed strictly with sleeping. Don't do work or watch television while lying on your bed. Then when you lay down, your mind will know it's time for sleep.

## What else can I do to help lessen the symptoms of depression?

Talking to close friends on a regular basis helps to just ease our mind sometimes, it's nice to know we have friends who care about us. Find someone who is willing to listen when you're having a tough day, it helps. If you feel yourself getting too stressed, try to step back from whatever the task at hand is, and take a five minute break, then re-assess the problem when you get back. While you're taking a break, take a few deep breaths and think the most sensible way to go about what you're trying to do, without getting yourself too worked up. Make something to look forward to every day, such as taking a bath before bed or going for a walk with your friend in the morning. It helps set something for you to work towards and look forward to. Also, set reasonable goals. That will make you feel better about yourself and show that you can accomplish things.

### Just a side note:

None of these in any way replace the help medical professionals can give you. There is nothing wrong with asking for help, and there are people around you who do wish to help. Depression is hard to live with, and these are just some ideas to make each day run smoother. It in no way means that you occasionally won't have a bad day. Keep looking forward, and know that people are around and willing to help. Work on looking at it day by day, instead of your life as a whole. It will help things not to overwhelm you.

### Sources

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/dep...ercise/MH00043>  
<http://www.webmd.com/content/article/135/119533.htm>

**A review of  
"A relentless hope: Surviving the storm of teenage depression"**

**by Rob**

When Gary asked me to review his book, I have to say I was a little excited. In all my years on TeenHelp I'd never been approached to do this before, so I viewed the situation optimistically. And sure enough, within a couple of weeks I had Gary's book dropping through my letterbox.

Being true to my academic creed, the first thing I did was flip back to the bibliography. Being a psychologist myself, I was a little disappointed to see the bibliography include the likes of "Metallica" and "George Lucas", and even Albert Einstein's "Brainy Quotes". The only seemingly published journal reference was by Beck, which most "Introduction to Psychology" students have been briefed on. My initial impression was therefore quite poor.

However, after actually read the book, I was pleasantly surprised. I found the book to be thoroughly enjoying to read, and useful both from a personal and professional perspective. I would recommend anyone who's looking to further their knowledge of depression, whether they be a sufferer or not, to read this book.

Anyway, during my time reading the book, I picked out a series of points that I felt were worthwhile mentioning, which I have compiled below into a relatively unstructured review:

### **Good points**

- The book is written in a way that is very simple and easy for the average person who's 'not in the know' to understand. Someone entirely new to depression could pick up this book and learn most of what they needed to know. However, this use of simple language doesn't diminish the quality of the information provided, as the book is widely beneficial to both depression newbies and depression veterans alike.
- The book is very useful in helping depressed people make sense of their World, and to further understand why they are the way they are and why they behave the way they do.
- The book is very emotional, and it is clear that Gary has poured his heart into this book. This is also appropriate because, as the reader, I feel the heightened sense of emotion will be tremendously beneficial to the depressed teen. It shows them that they are not alone and allows the reader to connect with the author on a level that most authors find difficult to achieve.
- The introduction is very inspiring. It suggested that Gary would look at depression from many different sides, and this is clearly achieved as the book progresses.
- The lack of scientific information doesn't limit the book. It is clear that the author is very knowledgeable and has a great amount of experience with depression. The hints Gary gives for how to conquer depression are also explained with anecdotes and analogies so that they are all easy to understand.

**A review of  
"A relentless hope: Surviving the storm of teenage depression"**

**by Rob**

The book provides a critical consideration of different approaches to handling depression. These hints are given in abundance, so there are plenty of options that can be tried, as well as Gary's opinions on and experience with them.

At only 136 pages, the book is also a relatively quick read.

**Bad points**

- The book seemed to have an overly religious focus. Now, I understand that Gary, being a minister, would see the appropriateness of this, and I even see the relevance of a lot of the religious references, but I felt that at times the religious references were being included without good reason, and that generally two thirds (or more) of such references could be removed from the book without detrimental effect. I felt, as an agnostic, that this religious focus served to alienate the non-religious sufferers of depression, of which there are many. The references were generally kept to a minimum, but at times Gary slipped into the habit of mentioning religion dozens of times across a few pages, where I found it more bothersome than the odd reference. In addition to this, chapter 4, which focused specifically on spiritual aspects of depression, is perhaps a bit too religious for some to handle, so while I see the importance of the chapter, I'd advise non-religious people to skip it.
- There was one point I was expecting to arise much sooner, but which seemed to be hidden amongst the spiritual chapter. That point was about teens who hide their depression. I felt this should have been more prominent and early on in the book, since this is how most teens begin their road into depression. I'd even go so far as to argue that perhaps a majority of teens don't ever confront their depression in public. At least from my experience, it is more of a minority who actually tell their parents and friends and family. I found that other points I was expecting also came at unexpected or random times in the book.
- The book had a lot of information that was perhaps difficult to get a grasp of. I only read the book once, so remain confident that if I read it through a couple more times the hints and advice would become internalised so that I could remember it more clearly. This reminds somewhat of the movie Memento, or the Saw movies, or even Donnie Darko, where you have to watch them again because the first time around there were certain parts that you didn't catch; the second time you expect them to be there, and everything becomes much clearer.
- The chapters were too long. When I read novels I usually prefer shorter, more focused chapters, particularly so that I can read just one chapter of about six pages and then put the book away again. Splitting up the chapters more would help the structure of this book tremendously, I feel.
- The grammar wasn't particularly great at times. As many authors do nowadays, Gary used sentence fragments for effect. As a pedant, this is not what I like to see in written material. I would suggest that other pedants might find similar annoyance in reading this book.

A review of  
"A relentless hope: Surviving the storm of teenage depression"

by Rob

- Occasionally the flow of the book isn't the greatest. Parts of the book seem disjointed, with random anecdotes being tossed in unnecessarily. I think my suggestion regarding shorter chapters above would be beneficial to help this, as many of these derailments could have easily been given their own chapters. However, despite this, the book is largely well written.
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About Gary:

Dr. Gary Nelson (DMin.) is a United Methodist minister who currently pastors a church in West Virginia. Gary has worked with teens and their families for thirty years as a pastoral counsellor.

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Where you can find out more or buy Gary's book:

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

Estimated price: \$18 / £7-9 (Amazon).

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# Game Consoles

by Chazzz

There are so many different games consoles around nowadays it can be hard to decide which one is right for you. Whether you like FPS or RPG games, each console has their niche. As technology advances, these games consoles are no longer just 'boy's toys'; anyone and everyone can play.

Here is a brief collective guide on the mainstream consoles today to aid you in your decision.

## Nintendo Wii

Nintendo is renowned for releasing the most innovative and diverse consoles, and the Nintendo Wii simply enhances that reputation. The console bases itself around motion sensor technology, allowing the player to interact with the game on an entirely new level. A charming feature of this console being the ability to download old Nintendo 64 games onto the console. When making the Wii, Nintendo made a conscious decision to keep the price down... This means the console does not come with any HD functionality or DVD playback capabilities. But all the same, the Wii is a console for the whole family with many fun little games to play as a team or individually.

Recommended games: Mario Kart, Battle of the Bands, Fire Emblem, Super Smash Brothers – Brawl, Tiger Woods PGA Tour, CSI: Hard Evidence.

Rough Cost\*:

US: \$499.94 (Bundle pack).

UK: £219.99 (Bundle pack).

## Xbox 360 / (Elite)

The Xbox 360 is Microsoft's latest contribution to the games console scene. Microsoft has recently released an upgrade of the original 360, called Elite. The Elite now comes with a hard drive allowing you to use your old Xbox games on the 360 (software download is required for this) and also has a HDMI port for High Definition playing (up to 1080p) and multichannel surround sound. The 360 is one of the best consoles for online gaming. You can hook up to Xbox LIVE, which connects you to players worldwide. Not all 360 games have the ability to be played via Xbox LIVE but a vast majority of the best games do.

Recommended games: Call of Duty 4, Gears of War, Halo Trilogy, Oblivion, Guitar Hero 3.

Rough Cost\*:

US: \$449.99.

UK: £259.99.



# Game Consoles

by Chazzz

## Playstation 3

The Playstation 3 is possibly the most anticipated console of its age, with a super powerful processor, outstanding graphics, and its additional features like Blu-ray playback, that has received countless good reviews claiming that the quality of Blu-ray playback surpasses many high street Blu-ray and HD-DVD standalone players. The Playstation 3 does have some motion sensor capabilities, but these were implemented too late; (rumour has it, this was in response to the Nintendo Wii) and because of this, only one release game takes advantage of the function.

Recommended games: Gran Turismo 5 Prologue, Condemned 2: Bloodshot, Devil May Cry 4, Assassin's Creed, Burnout Paradise.

Rough Cost\*:

US: \$399.99 (40GB).

UK: £299.99 (40GB).

## Nintendo DS

Once again, Nintendo have broken down the barriers when creating the DS. You're drawn into the game with two powerfully lit screens, one of which being a touch screen giving you a personal connection to the game. The console itself is a sleek and compact design to pack away for travelling or on the go use. The DS also comes with wireless Internet functionality, which allows you to connect with anyone in the world and play head to head. You can also play on a local wireless between consoles and challenge your family and friends.

Recommended games: The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass, Pokemon Diamond, Animal Crossing: Wild World, New Super Mario Bros, Brain Training Academy Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates.

Rough Cost\*:

US: \$129.99.

UK: £119.98 (Bundle pack).

## Game Consoles

by Chazzz

### PSP

Sony released the hand held version of the Playstation in May 2004. Since then it has been one of the must have gadgets. It comes packed with fun little features like wireless internet, video and digital music playback. Not forgetting the game power behind the little console. Don't expect to receive a dull experience from the PSP, the graphics are reasonable for the size and range of games is diverse. Sony also released UMD films to be played on the PSP; however, this failed to take off fully and Sony recently stopped producing them. However, you can still buy them here and there – just don't expect to see any new releases.

Recommended games: Patapon, God of War: Chains of Olympus, Syphon Filter: Logan's Shadow, Disgaea: Afternoon of Darkness, FIFA Soccer 08.

Rough Cost\*:

US: \$169.99.

UK: £129.99 (Bundle pack).

\*Prices taken from the UK and US Toys-R-Us Website at time of writing

It was a clear night, with few clouds in the sky. The moon rose above the buildings, settled among the stars as a king among slaves, and the shriek of a single owl sliced through the silence of the night, a knife through water, or butter, or flesh. It was the sort of night where murder most foul seems a breath away, and the blackness of night haunts any who brave the streets, waiting for a chance to strike. But some are not wavered by such apparitions of the mind, and they are brave, stupid, or faithful. Sometimes those who boast the first are revealed to hold the second, and some, like David Blogs, have all three.

David, or perhaps I should say Father Blogs, after all, we must respect the dead, was a priest, and was currently locking up the church door. He was, though no inquisition, Spanish or otherwise, could make him admit it, thankful that Christmas had ended, and now wanted nothing more than to lie down on his soft bed and let time, whoever had really created it, slip him into a new day. His Christmas tree was dropping needles over his expensive carpets, and he feared the worst as to what uses his son would put the money his wife had suggested they should give him. She had done this in the way she had which explained what would happen if he disobeyed, with no additional words. On the whole it was an average Christmas, some peoples first, and some peoples last. It was David Blogs' last!

As the Father turned around and began to pick his way up the path, his train of thought was somewhat disturbed by a figure. At first he assumed it was just a nocturnal drinker on an errand to pick up alcoholic beverages, as people often passed through the graveyard on their way to the shops. But he was sure that walking required the use of legs, yet the silhouette stood perfectly still. His next thought was that it was a complainer. Every year numerous people would complain about something, maybe the mass was not exciting enough, or too boring, or, according to one particular family, not boring enough, though naturally the favourite complaint was about the nativity play. Every parent was shocked by their child's part, naturally assuming that their child would have been given the lead, and even the parents of Marys and Josephs managed to find terrible wrongs to address in their most condescending manner. But if this shadow was here to complain to him why did it not approach. Then, perhaps sensing his thoughts, the figure advanced.

Moments ago he was apprehensive because it was standing still, whereas now he was petrified that it was moving. The walk in itself was not the one of anyone he knew. It was bold and sure of itself, and deadly serious, unlike the jaunty skipping of some locals, or the relaxed strolling of others. It was a tall, proud stride fit for an emperor, suggesting great power, even though none was evident. As the powerful walk dragged it closer David swallowed. Every instinct told him to get far away, to escape from whatever was coming, senses he had never known he owned woke from eternal slumbers and screamed at him to take notice.

He turned to run but was repelled by the sight of another one of the nightmares, using the same stride to shorten the distance between them, and as he turned back round, in a slow arc, he noticed more appearing, as if from nowhere, all around him. He counted them. There were 13.

They still closed in, slowly yet surely. He considered running through the gap between two particularly sparse figures, but they gave the air of being fast enough to prevent that, and as the group closed further in, he gave up hope of escape, awaiting his judgement, knowing his god would protect his sole, whatever fate his body had in store. He had nowhere to run, nowhere to hide, yet still they advanced, closer and closer, sweat streamed down David's face, as his fear began to override his reason, and still they kept coming! Then they stopped!

They were now close enough for David to see them, but he was no more knowledgeable for it. They each wore a long cloak which covered their entire bodies, the great hoods creating a perfect shadow, cordoning off their faces from any light. The figures stayed perfectly still for perhaps a minute, with the tension in the priest's mind mounting constantly, his fear breeding, and the feeling of impending death grew inside of him, like a tapeworm. Suddenly, he heard a laugh.

He spun around, frantically looking for the source of the sound, aspiring to warn its owner away from the path, for the voice sounded so beautiful and feminine, he imagined it coming from an angle, surely it could not be sourced from one of the creatures that stained the earth around him with the evil they seemed to radiate. But, of course, it did.

The laugh was emitted from the first hooded figure he had seen, and despite the beautiful tones, now that he listened closer he could identify malicious ones mixed in, as though an angle had found the pain of others, and learned to love it. The laughter intensified as David searched for his salvation, and savoured his expression when he realised the truth, for there was no escape. The other figures began to laugh, as though on cue, and the laughing became louder as the moments passed, up to an unbelievable crescendo. The voices were all different, some high, some low, some in between, but all of them carried a deep dark hint of what David Blogs could only describe as evil. Then, quite suddenly, the laughing stopped.

The first figure, which seemed to be the leader, stepped forward, and slowly lowered its hood. Underneath it was a young woman, with bright blond hair and shining green eyes, and a gleeful expression akin to a child treading on ants. As she stared into him with her cold eyes he felt the last threads of his sanity slipping away, and as he stared at her thin mouth, he realised that she was speaking to him, though it did not open.

"Why are you wandering this late?" her voice said lavishly, "surely you know how dangerous it can be." Her tone was sly and greasy, and painfully slow, as though she had all the time to spare, and David was running out. The words were innocent in themselves, but her voice twisted them, forging them into a weapon, the power of words warped to serve whatever evil this woman would care to manifest.

"I was locking up the church after mass," muttered David, "and why, if I may ask, are you here.

"I see no reason why not, after all," she chuckled, "you'll not tell anyone will you!" David realised that this was a rhetorical statement, and took it as a threat.

"We are here to kill you!"

The single sentence was spoken so softly that at first David failed to notice it, but as it seeped into his mind, like water on a flooded field, he went white.

"Me?"

"Yes, you"

"But why"

"The hunt"

At this David was confused, he could not understand what they meant, or wanted, though he could guess what they were going to do. At his puzzled look the leader spoke again, still keeping her mouth shut.

"Is it not your human time of enjoyment?" she questioned mockingly. "For I think it is, and as the pinnacle of our merriment we shall indulge ourselves in a hunt."

"You will kill me?!" shouted David, forgetting his fear and his timid ness, though he already knew the answer.

"Finally the monkey understands" she cooed, "and it will be slow, and painful, and glorious." She seemed to be savouring the thought.

For the first time another of the hooded figures spoke, this ones voice being hard and masculine, and saturated with contempt.

"We shall remove you to a suitable area, then we shall begin your last run, and quite probably your first." It took a moment for him to realise that the figures were joking with each other, making fun of him, degrading him for amusement, and as adrenaline surged through him he prepared to go down fighting.

"And what if I refuse," he said, fully expecting more threats, but he didn't get any, instead the leading woman slowly smiled, her manic grin revealing two anomalies in her mouth, two very sharp anomalies, gleaming white in the moonlight, and at last he understood. Or at least, he thought he understood.



With a cry he ripped his cross from around his neck, held it out in front of him, and in a loud booming voice decreed "No creature of darkness shall befoul this place again, be gone, for no servant of god shall be harassed by your kind or his wrath shall be unforgiving and merciless, be gone vampires, and never darken my church again!" It was undoubtedly a good powerful speech, but the effect was marred somewhat by the lack of progress this brought to David's position. The vampires watched with mild interest, but at the end the woman merely continued smiling, and in one swipe she struck the cross from his hand.

"Your god does not exist, of all I have seen there is no heaven, or hell, only this earth and this life."

Then another voice sounded, but it was different to those of the shadows around him, it radiated a power greater than that of the woman, yet it was different, as though it was hidden, it suggested great authority, yet an understanding of what that entails, which most people fail to grasp.

"The sighting of a thousand white swans does not disprove the existence of a black one" it said, in a tone as wise as can be imagined, "yet the sighting of a black swan."

The voice stopped, and David turned around, hoping that such a voice could help him escape, but instead he saw another of the brethren which surrounded him, advancing with that terrible stride. Number 14!

"Are you here to torment me as well?" questioned David, feeling that the dead need not be afraid, and he was as good as dead anyway.

The figure lowered his hood, and smiled, revealing his fangs.

"No, however nor am I here to rescue you" he said, as his long black hair fell to almost cover his blue eyes, glinting in the moonlight, "though now I know you're here I suppose I'll have to do something." Then he appeared to forget David, and spoke to the woman.

"Hello Margaret, long time no see"

"Its Lucy now," came the cold reply, "we need to move with the times to survive, and I intent to survive. What about you?"

"Yes," the man said, almost laughing, "but I can't tell you more, because I don't trust you"

The banter continued for a while longer, like old enemies reunited so much later that the hate has expired, but the rivalry still lasted as an eternal tribute to the past, and its mistakes. Then attention diverted back to David, who was confused beyond belief.

"Can't you let him go?" asked the man lightly.

"Of course not, we need our hunt!" one of the silent brethren replied.

"You realise I'll have to save him anyway."

At this the one apparently called Lucy smiled. "I'm counting on it." ripped herself away and disappeared into the surroundings.



## "14"

by 03tellis

But the upcoming clash never came, for at that moment another voice was heard, and this was definitely one David did know. It was the voice of Mr Green, a plumber in the village, and the husband of one of the worst complainers in the county. At his voice the assortment scattered, he heard Lucy swear, then she lunged at him her fangs piercing his skin on his neck, and he could feel her tearing the blood from his body, then she ripped herself away and disappeared into the surroundings.

Mr Green approached the priest, explaining that his wife was very concerned about the casting of the school play. Father Blogs fell down to the ground, and just before dieing he muttered his last word. "14".

### If By Bloody\_Obsession

If I died,  
would you care?  
If I needed you,  
would you be there?

If I called for you,  
would you come?  
If we let go,  
what would we become?

What if I die,  
and you don't care?  
I would say that I love you,  
with my last breath of air.

What if I need you,  
but you don't need me?  
I would let you know,  
to my heart you always had the key.

What if I called,  
and you never came?  
I would say that I love you,  
all the same.

I don't want to let go,  
but sometimes you don't have a choice.  
I say that I love you,  
with my meek, feeble voice.

Ana

By Blake\_2010

I think this is the ending that I'm looking for,  
so tell me do you want something more?  
I've been riding this train waiting for the future  
to open up and invite us inside...

Remember when we said our time would come?  
The alarms gone off and its singing "shes the one".  
Many others have come before,  
but you should know..  
that I will always love you..

(Chorus)

I'll write this song,  
turn the page on the book..  
we've been writing all along.  
I have no doubts,  
so lets make this one count.  
I mean forever when I say..  
that I will always love you..

A smile so soft and a heart so perfect,  
every lost minute of sleep is worth it.  
I'm starting a new chapter in life,  
but I want you here with me..

I could never imagine anyone but you.  
You're everything to me, yes, its true.  
Many others have come before,  
but you should know..  
that I will always love you..

( Chorus x 2 )

Until the sun sets..  
Until the day's done..  
Until you go to sleep..  
Until this song ends..  
Until the end of time..

I will always love you...

## Horoscopes for April

### Aries Horoscope ( March 21 - April 20 )

Your personal influence and charm skyrocket this month, dear Aries. It's a great time to ask for exactly what you want! Benefits from doing behind-the-scenes work arrive this month, and past efforts are rewarded. Travel, promotion, or publishing could figure in your career and benefit you. You have more faith in your profession and the direction in which you are headed. Support from family is forthcoming. A friendly connection can be made with someone who lives far away. The last week of April brings an intimate revelation and expansive love feelings

#### Aries Zodiac Information

Aries, the ram, is the first sign of the zodiac and symbolizes a new beginning. It is endlessly creative, but never completes a task. It is not very sympathetic, and hates weakness. It is the sign of the eternal warrior. Aries rules the head.

Famous Arians include: Thomas Jefferson, Al Gore, Joseph Haydn, Nikita Khrushchev, David Letterman, Gregory Peck, Colin Powell, Chuck Connors, Jerry Brown, Diana Ross and Clarence Darrow.

- \* Element: Fire
- \* Quality: Cardinal
- \* Ruling Planet: Mars
- \* Key phrase: "I am"

#### Resources:

Horoscope: [www.cafeastrology.com](http://www.cafeastrology.com)

Zodiac Information: [www.astrostarcharts.com](http://www.astrostarcharts.com)

## Thanks and Legal

### Thanks for reading!

Thank you for taking the time to read this issue of Avatar! Any comments, suggestions or criticisms can be directed towards any of the editors. You can also send any submissions you have for Avatar to us, which are a really important part of keeping Avatar alive. We appreciate any submissions that are made to us. We look forward to hearing from you, and hope you enjoy the next edition of Avatar!

The Avatar Editors.

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