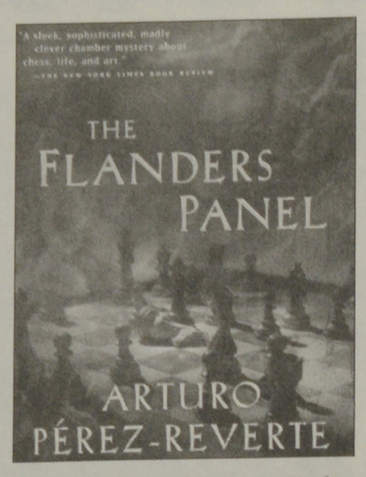
Who killed the knight? Who cares?

The Flanders Panel
Arturo Perez-Reverte
(Harcourt, $19.95)

by Brendan Doyle



I'll be honest with you: I didn't read all of this book.

I didn't even read half of this book.

Of the 295 pages in this underwhelming offering from Spanish author Arturo Perez-Reverte, I managed to plow my way through 115 of some of the most cliched, trite, and groan-inducing text I've ever read.

After reading the first four chapters (of 15) and starting the fifth, I began to suspect that something was amiss.

You see, the first chapter was great.

It introduced a compelling mystery, some interesting characters (in that the third person perspective used by the author puts you in an instantly intimate relationship with the characters, even though you hardly know more than their first names), and a comfortably quick pace.

Who killed the knight?

I, for one, would like to know.

And what does a chess game in a painting have to do with one of the players in the painting being murdered?

Finishing that first chapter, I thought "Wow. This is great. I can't wait to find out what happens next."

Boy was I wrong.

Chapter two was a thorough disappointment, as was the third, lacking any real plot development and instead focusing on drawing out the trite, overly-languid dialogue that seems to be Perez-Reverte's stock in trade.

Though the first chapter had hints of contrived dialogue, plot deficiencies, and came with an overabundant supply of cliches, I was willing to take it at face value and assume these drawbacks were due partly or in whole to poor translation.

Again, was I ever wrong.

Suspecting the worst, I flipped ahead to the final chapter, when the mystery would be solved and the secret players revealed.

At this point, I'll take a moment to introduce the characters (those that were present in the first four chapters, anyway).

Julia is a young, strong-headed yet slightly confused art restorer who stumbles upon a mystery hidden in a painting she's commissioned to work on.

Cesar, both her oldest friend and displaced father figure, works in the art acquisitoin industry and maintains a somewhat obsessive interest in Julia's personal life.

The other characters are merely decoration, and are killed off quickly.

From the back of the book, "Julia is determined to solve the five-hundred year old murder, but as she begins to look for clues, several of her friends in the art world are brutally murdered in quick succession.

"Messages left with the bodies suggest a crucial connection between the chess game in the painting, the knight's murder, the sordid underside of the contemporary art world, and the latest deaths. Just when all of the players in the mystery seem to be pawns themselves, events race toward a shocking conclusion."

Fast forward to the last chapter.

Spoiler: Cesar did it.

Yes, this is when I thought, "Wow. This is a piece of shit. Good thing I didn't read any more of this book, or I would have been really pissed off."

After reading the "Praise for *The Flanders Panel*" page, along with the titles of his other books, I now suspect that Arturo Perez-Reverte may in fact be the Spanish version of John Grisham.

The nicest thing I can say about *The Flanders Panel* is that the first chapter would have made an awesome short story.

Other than that, the most you can expect from this book is terribly frustrating dialogue, the worst ending you've ever read, and a plot that wouldn't strain the deductive skills of a small child.

*

"STOP MAKING ME THINK UP THESE THINGS! JUST JOIN THE BRUNS!"
– MATT REINHART, PROOFREADER

BY 'ME', HE MEANS 'US.'

WE'RE A TEAM.

JOIN US OR SURRENDER DOROTHY.

WEDNESDAYS, 12:30 ... AH, YOU KNOW THE DRILL.

Check out this 'zom-rom-com'

Shaun of the Dead is so good it needs its own genre

by Ike M. Ogosi

Shaun of the Dead is a send-up of zombie movies with a wickedly satirical edge; it's a zombie movie for both those who hate zombie movies (I count myself among these) and those who love 'em.

Shaun (co-writer Simon Pegg) is a deadbeat salesman whose life revolves around his best friend Ed (Nick Frost), an even bigger layabout, and their favorite pub, the Winchester. Shaun's girlfriend Liz (Kate Ashfield) feels her life is passing her by and tells Shaun to choose between her and his excuse for life in the Winchester.

Her roommates Di and David are convinced Shaun will go for the Winchester and, after gaffing up their anniversary plans, Liz becomes convinced, too.

At rock bottom, Shaun decides to turn his life around by having dinner with his mom, despite his estrangement with his stepdad (the always lovable Bill Nighy), and win Liz back.

His perfect plan hits a small snafu when all of London is invaded by the reanimated dead and Shaun, toting a cricket bat with Ed by his side, must battle his way through them to save his mom and the woman he loves and seek refuge in – where else – the Winchester.

The premise is only half the fun, and even the clobbering of zombies doesn't cover the other half. The wit, heart, and delightful humor incorporated in every unfolding scene and stitch of dialogue elevates *Shaun* to cult classic status while establishing its own genre, the "zom-rom-com." Picture *28 Days Later* with laughs, less gloom, and better plotting and execution.

In truth, zombies never make very interesting villains, but *Shaun* ducks this by delivering some well-etched characters whose interaction is essentially the heart and soul of the movie, sans flesh-eaters. Shaun's curious but moving ties to Ed, Liz, and his mom and stepdad are at the film's center, alternately providing biting humor, quiet reflection, and some unexpectedly poignant moments.

Shaun is the sort of film only the British could do, with seedy yet bustling London throwing up tons of atmosphere in the process.

They have a quirky sensibility and offbeat humour, evinced by the likes of *The Full Monty* and Guy Ritchie's gangster films, that is completely their own and a refreshing change from the drudgery served up by most Hollywood "comedies" (though, to be fair, last week's comedic release, *Mr. 3000*, was a blast).

This is the funniest movie of the year so far, and one of the most engaging – one that has its heart, funny bone, and head all in the right place.

****



Special to *the Brunswickan*
Shaun of the Dead features lots and lots of zombies. And who doesn't like lots and lots of zombies, really?

MC?'s Ultra Accurate Horoscopes

SPECIAL SEX EDITION!

• *by Mark Cameron*

Libra 9/23 - 10/22
You will have sex with a fine Scorpio, when they are drunk. It will be the best sex of your life.

Scorpio 10/23 - 11/21
A Libra will get into your pants when you are drunk. It will be the best sex of their life. You will struggle to stay conscious.

Sagittarius 11/22 - 12/21
One of your Capricorn friends is madly in love with you. They will try to sleep with you and win your heart via your loins.

Capricorn 12/22 - 1/19
Now is a good time to show that special Sagittarius how you feel. You can win their heart by sleeping with them.

Aquarius 1/20 - 2/18
You will make watery fish-love with a Pisces you barely know. It will be wet and wild fun for everyone.

Pisces 2/19 - 3/20
An amazing Aquarius will ask you into their aquatic abode. It will be moist, mysterious, and magnificent, mostly.

Aries 3/21 - 4/19
You will be rejected by all your lovers and spend the week trying to convince your hand it will be worth the time.

Taurus 4/20 - 5/20
You will brag to an Aries friend about your incredible sexual exploits. When they try to give you a high-five, don't do it.

Gemini 5/21 - 6/21
You will clone yourself and conduct bizarre sexual experiments. You will find the answers you seek within yourself.

Cancer 6/22 - 7/22
You will have kinky crab-lion tantric sex with a lusty Leo. Your spiritual growth will be nearly as great as your pleasure.

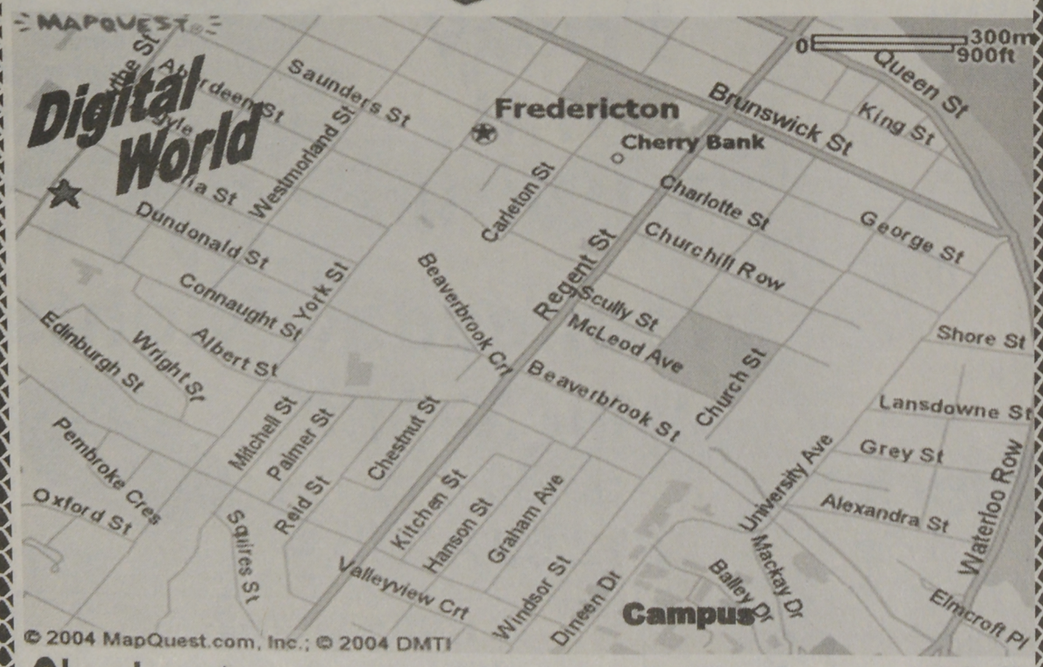
Leo 7/23 - 8/22
You will do some exotic and erotic exercises with a calm and collected Cancer. You will merge into one ecstatic entity.

Virgo 8/23 - 9/22
That strange rash you discovered is not a result of that new activity you tried the other day; it's from the monkey suit you were wearing.

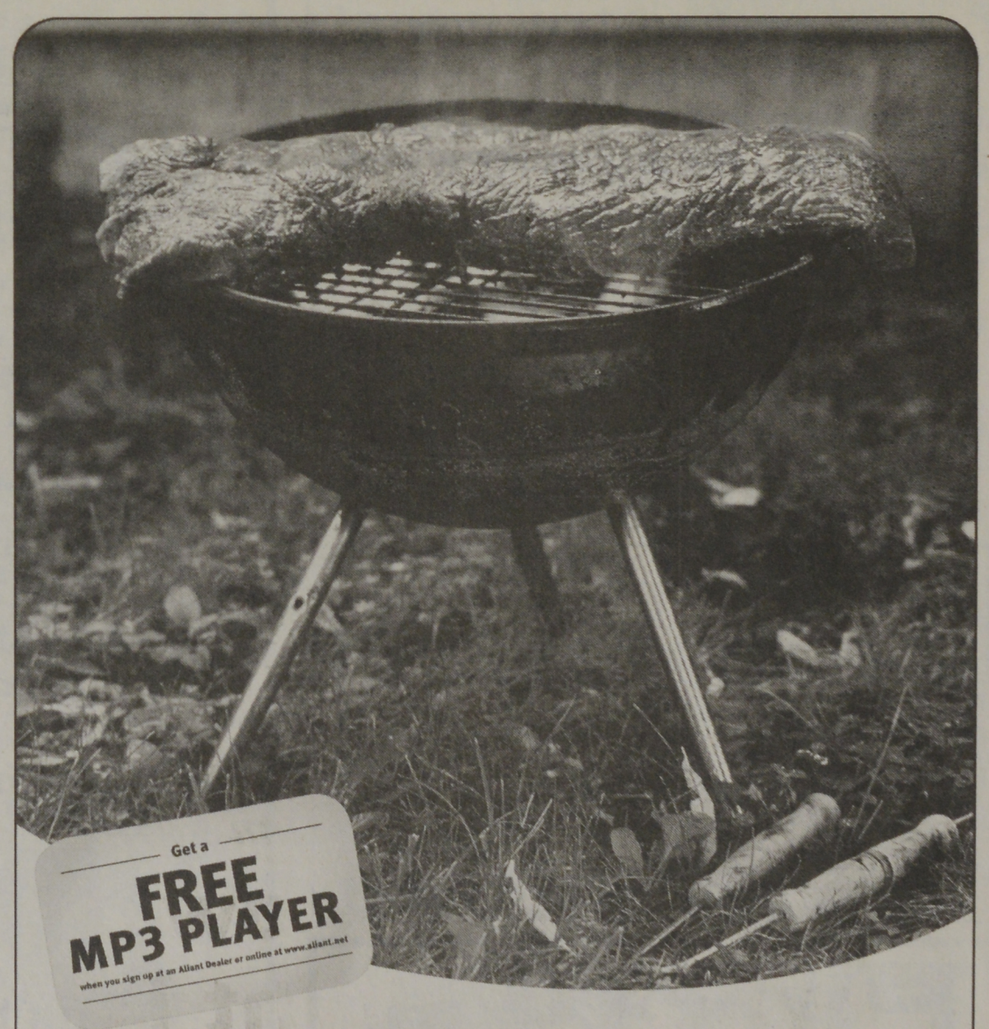
The AfterDark Club
AMARULA
Thursdays – Ladies Nite
$2.50 Beer & Spirits all nite
Door prizes, no cover, prizes for best dancers
377 King St. (Above Jacks Pizza)

Digital World
BUY / SELL / TRADE
455-CASH
NEW & USED
. Computers
. Musical Instruments
. Home Electronics
. Video Games
. CDs & DVDs
. & Much More!





Check out our second location in Fredericton Mall



LIVE A LITTLE LARGER
with huge savings on Aliant High-Speed Ultra
Sign up for High-Speed Ultra and pay just $9.95 a month for the first 3 months, a savings of up to $370/year. Free Express Installation, free Music on My PC and one free enhanced service, like Anti-Virus, are part of the deal too.
Add a cell phone as part of a Value Package and save even more.
Visit a dealer or www.aliant.net.
$9.95/MONTH*
FOR THE FIRST 3 MONTHS
FREE EXPRESS INSTALLATION
FREE MUSIC ON MY PC
FREE CHOICE OF ONE ENHANCED SERVICE
here. for you.™
Aliant
*Certain conditions apply to all offers. Offers are available for a limited time and subject to change without notice. All Aliant products are available only where technology and availability permit. Offers deemed correct at time of print. The $9.95/month for 3 months offer is only available to new high speed customers who agree to a 12-month contract. Special eight month contracts are also available for students. Regular monthly contract rate of $44.95/month begins in the fourth month of service. New subscribers who do not agree to a 12-month contract will receive 2 months of service for $9.95/month with the regular non-contract monthly rate of $54.95/month starting in the third month. Installation fee may apply. Customers that activate a new High-Speed service at an authorized Aliant dealer or on-line at www.aliant.net may qualify for a free MP3 player while quantities last. See dealer or www.aliant.net for details. ™here. for you. is a trademark of Aliant.