

D17: Days of Forums Past

[Slow fade in on a dilapidated boarded up old building in a rough part of town.]

Paul.Power

Fascist surveillance states, death camps ruled over by pitiless machines, biological weapons killing most of the world's population. (beat) Science fiction writers used to imagine grim futures of things to come but surely, none of them could have imagined a world as bleak as this.

[The sign falls down, revealing the words 'Open Discussion'. We pan in through the door. Paul.Power, Zeor and AndrewTaylor are sat at a grimy old table.]

Zeor

Er, Paul... It's just a pub.

Paul.Power

Just a pub? Just a pub?! Was William Shakespeare just a playwright? Was the alien from Alien just an alien? (beat) No! We're not talking about just a pub. We're talking about the *Open Discussion Pub*. The greatest pub the world – no, the multiverse – has ever seen. And it's being torn down for yet another Facebooks! Unthinkable.

Zeor

Times change.

Paul.Power

Yes, yes, but what if we could change time?

[Zeor looks confused]

Paul.Power

Pubs used to be unique – they had character. Now the only choice available is to drink at horrible bland chain pub-restaurant-café hybrids like Facebooks and McTwitter. The system is broken and it's up to us to fix it.

AndrewTaylor

And it's up to me to sit here and laugh when you fail spectacularly.

Paul.Power

You're a very cynical individual, you know that?

AndrewTaylor

(sarcastic) No, surely not. I'm a glass half full kind of guy, with magic in my heart, and laughter in my lungs. To me, every day is an adventure, a constant cavalcade of endless wonder. I frolic through life, singing the song of joy that bubbles up from...

Paul.Power

Enough!

[Blinx runs in with SupSuper.]

Blinx

Paul! The Facebooks demolition crew – they're almost here!

Paul.Power

Blinx, SupSuper, can I count on you to hold them off for a few minutes more?

Blinx

Don't worry! We won't let you down!

SupSuper

Well, he won't. I might. (they all look at him) What? I'm a computer programmer, not a fighter. (they continue to stare) Oh fine, let's go.

[They exit.]

Paul.Power

Now, Zeor, we must hurry.

Zeor

Hurry? Hurry with what? I have no idea what's going on.

Paul.Power

It's all perfectly simple. I'm going to send you back in time using this device (he holds up a sombrero)

Zeor

That's a sombrero.

Paul.Power

At first glance, maybe, but look a little closer and you'll see that...

Zeor

(interrupting) It's still a sombrero.

Paul.Power

No, it's a *time travel hat*. With this baby, I can send you back in time to your old body, before this nightmare began.

Zeor

With a magic sombrero?

Paul.Power

Please don't call it that.

Zeor

Fine. (beat) Why'd you choose me for this, anyway?

Paul.Power

Your slayer DNA is stronger than ours. It makes you the only one of us capable of withstanding the horrific soul-tearing agony of time travel.

Zeor

What? Are you kidding? I stopped being a slayer, years ago, remember?

Paul.Power

Oh...shit. (putting the sombrero on Zero's head) Well, this'll probably kill you then.

Zeor

WHAT?!

Paul.Power

Look, don't worry about that now. When you arrive in the past, you have to stop the rise of the chain pubs. Find my past self. He won't be as cool and debonair as I am now but he'll know what to do.

Zeor

No. No, I'm not doing it. You can't make me.

[Andrew quickly rams a button on the side of the sombrero.]

Zeor

(as he vanishes in a flash of blue light) NOOOOOOooooooooo!

[Paul gives Andrew a dirty look.]

AndrewTaylor

What? He said we couldn't make him. (beat) I was proving a point!

Paul.Power

You're a terrible human being.

[Andrew shrugs. A demolition ball crashes through the room, killing them both. Cut to:]

[Outside the Open Discussion pub. It is shining and new. The song 'Those were the Days' begins to play in the background. As the camera pans in through the door, we cut to Zero72 waking up in a chair with a nose bleed. He looks around to see all the old pub goers living it up in grand style – drinking, dancing, arm wrestling, having fun. APJ waves at him from the bar, Zero72 waves back hesitatingly – bewildered to be back.]

AndrewTaylor

(from another table) I know how you feel. This pub, these people... they're maniacs.

Zero72

(grinning) Yes. Yes we are. (standing up, yelling) Drinks are on me!

[They all cheer. AndrewTaylor shakes his head.]

AndrewTaylor

Still... free drinks. (cheering faux-enthusiastically) Hooray! Hooray for this guy!

[Canned laughter. Cut to... the next day. Light comes in through a crack in the window. Everyone is lying around asleep from the night before. BetongÅsna kicks Zero in the shins, waking him.]

Zero72

(coming to) Ugggh.... Betong? (beat) What are you doing here?

BetongÅsna

Nutter said something about a time disturbance. Said it came from here. I'm guessing it came from you.

Zero72

Yeah? What makes you think that?

BetongÅsna

You were yelling "I COME FROM THE FUTURE! I COME FROM THE FUTURE!" in your sleep.

[Canned laughter. Betong throws a knife at a speaker on the wall, hitting it. The speaker explodes in a shower of sparks and the laughter stops.]

Zero72

Aww, man. Who's going to laugh at anything funny we say now?

Pickleworm

(jumping out of nowhere, wearing a cape) I will laugh at you, Zero! Hahahaha..

[Betong punches him out of a window.]

Pickleworm

(O.S) Ha...ha...Ow.

BetongÅsna

(grabbing Zero, shaking him) WHY ARE YOU HERE? WHO SENT YOU?

Zero72

Aaaaah! Calm down, man.

BetongÅsna

Fine. I'll calm down. But then we have to deal with whatever brought you here. (beat) What is it? Is it ants? Do giant ants enslave humanity? Or clowns? Bears? Is it wizards? A nightmarish sentient cloud? Bananas... a talking banana? Is it Captain Birdseye – it's him, isn't it? Or Captain Crunch? Definitely some kind of food-related captain. No, wait... I've got it – illuminati. Monkey men? George W Bush's lesser known brother, George X Bush? Or an underground tribe of game show hosts? Ah, got it – Morgan La Fay and Atilla the Hun team up and they're both robots. Scientologists? The disembodied head of the god Apollo? Or...no...but...yes... Conspiracy Theorists will kill us all!

Zero72

The bar gets closed down.

BetongÅsna

This bar? (Zero nods) You're risking paradoxes, the complete breakdown of causality... for this dump? (Zero nods) Do I have to punch you too?

Zero72

Look, I get how it sounds. I was sceptical too. But I forgot how good this place used to be. (beat) I spent some of the best years of my life here.

BetongÅsna

Ah, oh I see.

Zero72

Great!

BetongÅsna

You're an alcoholic.

Zero72

No! (annoyed) You know what, forget it. I don't why I'm bothering explaining this to you. You'll only use it against me somehow when you die and turn evil.

BetongÅsna

Wait... I die? And turn evil? (Zero nods) And this dumb bar is more important than either of those things?

Zero72

Well, to be fair, I didn't exactly like you. (off his look) Um... I mean... no, you were great but... maybe if we save this bar, you don't die?

BetongÅsna

Hm. Sounds plausible. (beat) So, who are we killing?

Zero72

(raising an eyebrow list) Who are we killing? Wait... are you sure you're not evil already?

BetongÅsna

Well, it is a while since I gave to charity. And I did throw a dog in a lake just because... funny.

Zero72

I...see. (beat) Anyway, we'll need Paul.Power if we want to do this.

[Paul.Power pops up from behind the bar. He is munching a cheese sandwich.]

Paul.Power

Need me for what?

[Applause, clapping. Another knife hits the speaker.]

Zero72

To save the pub! Listen, this may sound farfetched but... I came here in a time machine that you invented.

Paul.Power

(excited) A time....train?

Zero72

A sombrero.

Paul.Power

A time sombrero?

Zero72

(raising an eyebrow) Does adding the word time really improve it in any way?

Paul.Power

Yes! (beat) Anyway, I'll help you save the pub. This place is...special...to me.

BetongÅsna

You too? (beat) It's just a pub!

AndrewTaylor

(crawling out from under a table) That's what I keep telling them. Bunch of losers.

Zero72

Come on, Andrew. I know you want to save the pub really. Beneath that cool, aloof exterior lies a heart of gold.

[Andrew fixes him with the death stare. Zero continues to smile at him. This carries on for a while. Zero becomes increasingly unnerved and the smile drops from his face.]

AndrewTaylor

I'll see you guys later. We'll exchange stories over the rubble of your shattered dreams.

[He walks out.]

Zero72

I looked into his eyes. It was darkness... all the way down.

Paul.Power

(chuckling) That's our Andrew! (beat) Anyway, what was the catalyst that set this pub-closing future about?

Zero72

Marcus Zuckerberg. He starts this fast food chain called FaceBucks which also serves alcohol. Next thing you know, everyone's going there, and this place's out of business.

BetongÅsna

Aha! So **that's** who we've gotta kill!

Paul.Power

(raising an eyebrow) Er, I don't think that'll be necessary.

BetongÅsna

Said Chamberlain about Hitler.

Paul.Power

Well, that escalated quickly.

BetongÅsna

Said Chamberlain, having failed utterly to stop Hitler.

Paul.Power

Stop calling me Chamberlain!

BetongÅsna

Said Churchill to Chamberlain. "We're not inviting Hitler round for cocktails. Next thing you know, he'll be annexing Shropshire."

Zero72

Look, I think we're getting off-topic. (beat) Paul, you had a plan?

Paul.Power

Oh, uh, yes. Go find Zuckerberg and bring him here, I'll sort out the rest.

BetongÅsna

But if this doesn't work...

Paul.Power

You still can't *kill* him!

BetongÅsna

Spoilsport.

[Cut to Bar - later. Zero is showing a spotty teen – Zuckerberg - inside.]

Zuckerborg

So, let me get this straight - I've won an award for being the coolest person on the planet and this pub is the venue for the gala event celebrating my brilliance?

Zero72

That's...definitely what I told you.

Zuckerborg

Wait...were you lying to me? What is this?

[All the pub regulars jump out of their hiding places.]

All

Surprise!

Zuckerborg

Okay. This is getting weird now. Is this some cult thing? Are you going to drink my blood?

MtlAngelus

That depends. Some people like to have their blood drunk. It's strange, perverse maybe, but we don't judge. (showing his fangs) Should I get my straw?

BetongÅsna

Hey! I thought we agreed this – if anyone's killing him, it's me!

Zuckerborg

(moving towards the door) I don't like this. I don't like this at all.

Paul.Power

(stepping in front of him) Stop! We're not here to kill you, Mr Duckberg.

Zuckerborg

Zuckerborg.

Paul.Power

Really? Huh. Anyway, we don't want to kill you. We just want to show you the wonderful community we have here in this pub. Look, vampire slayers and vampires sitting side by side.

[Betong and MtlAngelus put their arms around each other's shoulders and grin uncomfortably.]

Paul.Power

Computer games makers and fans, sharing a drink.

[Spadge and Kjatte clink glasses.]

Paul.Power

And other people...doing things.

[Worm Mad is typing into a computer.]

Worm Mad

Oh, I'm just writing a script. (beat) It's this place – reimagined as an internet forum.

Paul.Power

Hehe. Classic Mad. (to Zuckerborg) You see, Mr Locutus of Borg.

Zuckerborg

ZUCKERBORG!

Paul.Power

You see, Mr Chuckleborg, we're like a family. This place... it's our home. Isn't it wonderful?

Zuckerborg

No.

Paul.Power

Is 'No' code for 'Yes'?

Zuckerborg

No.

Paul.Power

It is? Oh good. I'm so relieved.

Zuckerborg

It isn't! This place is a joke. A warm welcoming community? Don't make me laugh. We had to enter a code at the door, just to get in.

Paul.Power

That's um... not to stop people coming in.

Spadge

Not at all. Anyone's welcome here. (beat) As long as they're invited. (off Zuckerberg's look)
What? Outside people are scary!

Zuckerborg

Well, you can run your pub however you want, but I don't like it. If I had a pub, I'd welcome everyone in. Free drink and food for all. (beat) And yes, I'd expect everyone to hand over their private details to me. Maybe the pubs would have security cameras monitoring everyone at all times. (passionate) But I'd only ever sell that information to people with large wallets!

[Beat]

Zuckerborg

You know, that's actually a really good idea. Thanks, you guys. (under his breath, as he walks out) Dumb fucks.

[He exits]

Blinx

He's rite. This plaice isn't a home. It's an eleetist club for show-offs. Shame! Shame on Yu!
(beat, storming off) THREE PUB FOR ALL! THREE PUB FOR ALL!

[Zero turns to Paul]

Zero72

This? This was your plan? (beat) You've changed nothing. No, you've made it worse. (beat)
And there's only one course of action left to me.

Paul.Power

To have a nice cup of tea and a lie down?

Zero72

(smiling) Paul, you read my mind. (beat, holding up a finger) But first-

[Cut to... outside. Zero is repeatedly punching Zuckerberg in the face.]

Zero72

(yelling) WHY... WON'T....YOU...DIE?!

Zuckerborg

Please stop.

Zero72

Why? Why should I spare you? So you can start a series of identical chain pubs with no personality and no soul? So you can tear down a place that meant so much to so many of us and replace it with that? (beat) The Open Discussion Pub deserved better. **We** deserved better. Than you. Than your kind.

[Beat. Zero falls to his knees.]

Zero72

(shouting) You maniacs! You blew it up! God damn you... God damn you all to hell!

[Zuckerborg gets up and runs off. Zero kneels motionless. After a moment, he slowly stands to his feet, and walks back inside the pub. Inside, everyone turns to look at him. He shakes his head.]

Zero72

We can't save the pub.

[Everyone erupts in protest, shouting and arguing.]

Zero72

Stop. It's alright. Listen. (yelling) SHUT UP!

[They all stop and turn back to him.]

Zero72

It's over. For me, that's true. (beat) But it's not for you, not yet. You've got so many adventures ahead. So many days you'll remember all your life. (smiling) I know I do. (beat) I left this place a long time ago. I had a destiny to fulfil. But it shaped me, in small undefinable ways, it made me who I am. (pause) I guess what I'm trying to say is... when you've been part of a community as special as ours... you never really leave.

[There is a flash of light. Zeor wakes in the present day, with a nosebleed. He is sitting at a table in Facebooks, holding a cup of coffee. He takes a taste of it, recoils and throws it in a nearby bin. He is about to go when...]

Voice

Zero... Zero72, is it really you?

[Zeor turns around. Paul.Power is standing there, holding a stack of flyers.]

Zeor

(smiling) It's just Zeor now.

Paul.Power

Of course. So, how have you been, old friend?

Zeor

I...uh...don't know. I have some...gaps...in my memory.

Paul.Power

Ah, so you're **that** one. I always wondered when you'd be back.

Zeor

So, what happened? Zuckerberg still won, I see.

Paul.Power

He did. But your intervention did change some things. We all knew it wouldn't last forever so we were ready, when the end finally came.

Zeor

That's...that's good. (beat) So, what do you guys do now?

Paul.Power

Hm. SupSuper's a programmer, Pooka's a politician, Blinx teaches English to foreign students.

Zeor

Poor bastards.

Paul.Power

Betong and MtlAngelus star in 'Suckers', a popular sitcom about a vampire living next door to a vampire slayer.

Zeor

Wait... they didn't kill each other?

Paul.Power

(laughing) No, but they came pretty close in last week's show! "That's no zombie, that's *my wife!*"

[He continues laughing for several minutes. Zeor is nonplussed.]

Paul.Power

Ehem. Moving on... worMatty has his own electrical shop, Worm Mad.... Haven't heard from him in ages. S2k has a webseries – Pork Centre. (beat) He reviews different types of pork.

Zeor

But he's a robot. He doesn't even have a digestive system.

Paul.Power

(shrugs) Anyway, before he started that, he did make something I think you'll enjoy.

Zeor

What is it? Is it pie? I like pie.

Paul.Power

It's...this.

[He hands Zeor a flyer. Zeor looks at it.]

Zeor

(amazed) This is **better** than pie!

[The camera pans down to the flyer. It shows a picture of a very new and very purple pub with a sign reading 'Dream17' above it. As we zoom into the picture, we find Zeor and Paul standing outside the real pub.]

Paul.Power

Come on. Let me show you around.

[They enter. It looks very nice but is pretty empty. SupSuper is behind the bar.]

SupSuper

Hey, Paul, Zeor.

Zeor

Sup! You run the bar? I thought you were a programmer.

SupSuper

I am. (putting a laptop out on the desk) I'm multi-tasking.

Zeor

This place is amazing. (beat) But kind of dead.

Paul.Power

It's here if anyone ever needs it.

[Zeor walks over to a vending machine leaning against the wall]

Zeor

A vending machine in a bar? Isn't that a little... kooky?

SupSuper

It's a cursed vending machine. Xinos brought it back with him from the Amazon rainforest.

Paul.Power

Oh, it's not cursed. It's just some kind of very advanced technology, that's all.

Zeor

Cursed? Advanced Tech? I am all over this.

[He enters a coin. Thousands of Pogs pour out of the slot.]

SupSuper

Oh great. We just finished cleaning up the last lot.

Zeor

(picking one up) Still...Pogs don't seem very cursed.

SupSuper

Last time it was monkeys. And before that, a leprechaun popped out of it.

Paul.Power

I still say that could have been a very small Irish man who'd stowed away inside the machine to avoid customs.

SupSuper

He turned tundraH into a goat!

[A goat walks through the bar, baaing]

Paul.Power

Special Effects Trickery! Camera Angles! Definitely **not** magic!

Zeor

Wait... you don't believe in anything fantastical? How do you explain all the vampires we used to have in here?

Star and Moon

(entering) Ugh, vampires? I hate vampires! So overplayed, don't you think?

MtlAngelus

(walking in from around the corner, emotional) Fine, I'll go then! I'll just go! (he exits)

SupSuper

Well, well, well. Now, I guess we know who the real monster is.

Star and Moon

Yes. (pause) Him. (off their looks) He's a vampire! (off their looks) Oh, fine, I'll go apologise to the blood sucking parasite!

[He exits]

Zeor

Did he come out of the vending machine too?

Paul.Power

No. He's one of our new customers. (beat) No exclusivity, this time around. We learned our lesson.

Freemoneysuperdeals

(grinning, putting his arm around Paul) Come out of the vending machine exclusivity! This time we learned.

Paul.Power

Oh god. Not now... not like this.

Xhotgirlsx1

(tearing through a wall) Believe in anything fantastical. Apologise to the goat!

SupSuper

(screaming) SPAM-BOTS!

[Zeor, Sup, and Paul are backed into a corner by the marauding spam robots]

Paul.Power

Well, it's been nice knowing you, chaps, but I think this is it.

SupSuper

I had a dream once it would end this way.

Zeor

Wait... senses are a little sharper. Feeling a little stronger. (grinning) Oh, hell yes!

Paul.Power

What is it?

Zeor

I don't know how it's possible, with Betong still alive and all, but I'm a Slayer again and I'm not letting another pub fall on my watch.

[He draws a new fancier Zeor sabre with upgraded laser-hilt and slices off the nearest Spam-Bot's head with it. It falls to the ground with a satisfying thump.]

Zeor

Hail to the king, baby! Here we go!

[He launches into action. Freeze frame. Fade to black.]

Caption

THE END

[Cut to Dream17 bar. Zuckerberg is sat drinking, talking to Nutter who sits next to him.]

Zuckerborg

You know, people think that because I'm one of the richest men on the planet, and I have all this power and influence, that I'm happy... but I'm not. I learned a lot when I was building my global empire, yes, but I never learned how to have a truly honest relationship or connect to others like the people in this bar do. (beat) I learned...far too late...that they were right all along. There was a community of people who genuinely cared about each other and, no matter how hard I tried – how successful I became, that was something I could never hope to achieve. (pause) I envy them, I really do.

Nutter

Wow. Really?

Zuckerborg

(laughing) Nah! Hahaha. I really had you going there, didn't I?

[He walks over to the vending machine.]

Zuckerborg

But that's the difference between you people and me. You're fools and I'm the fooler.

Nutter

That's not a word.

Zuckerborg

So I'll pay people until it is. 'cause it's a Marcus Zuckerberg world and you just live in it.

[He puts a coin in the slot. Nothing seems to be happening.]

Zuckerborg

(bending down, looking into it) What the? Isn't this supposed to do something?

[Beat. A giant green tentacle bursts out of the machine and curls around Zuckerberg's throat, dragging him screaming inside.]

Nutter

(yelling) Hey, Paul! The vending machine just ate Marcus Zuckerberg.

Paul.Power

(Off Screen, yelling) Still not magic!

[Nutter smiles. Fade to black.]