



SEASON 12: Multiversal

Our Season 12 flash fiction contest features a *character prompt*. We challenge you to take the character of the month — each designed by one of our stellar featured authors — and work it into your story in some way. And by “some way” we’re tapping into the theories of the fictional multiverse. Your interpretation of the character and how you write them to fit our five genres will be unique!

- 🌀 **Do not violate the core traits** listed in the character profile, but everything else is up for grabs. Take the character and make him/her your own.
- 🌀 **The character must *appear* in your story, but does not have to be the protagonist.** They could be a side character, an antagonist, or even just appear as a cameo. But keep in mind that your portrayal of the character does impact our selection of contest winners.
- 🌀 **We need contest submissions for all five Havok genres:** mystery, science fiction, humor, thriller, and fantasy. Ask yourself:
 - In what capacity could this character appear in a mystery story?
 - If they existed in a sci-fi or fantasy universe, what would that look like?
 - In what sort of thriller or suspense plot did they get caught up?
 - What’s the funniest scenario you can imagine for them?

Tip: Mystery, thriller, and humor categories tend to have less competition. Integrating those elements into a science fiction or fantasy story will enable your story to be considered for acceptance by more than one genre team.

🌀 **ATTENTION! SUBMISSION DEADLINES:**

Jan 17, 2025 - “Zaivar Witz” (*publishes in April 2025*)

Feb 21, 2025 - “Phezznibbet Maplebark” (*publishes in May 2025*)

Mar 21, 2025 - “Ethel Grieves” (*publishes in June 2025*)

Apr 18, 2025 - “Miriel Takkenridge” (*publishes in July 2025*)

Always check our [Season Themes page](#) for the latest info!

**SUBMISSION
DEADLINE JAN 17, 2025**

**STORIES PUBLISH
IN APR 2025**

JILL WILLIAMSON'S

ZAIVAR 'ZAI' WITZ

(sounds like "SIGHvar", like bar)

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Zaivar stands at just over 5'5", his short build compact but sturdy. His dark, slightly wavy hair falls just past his ears, framing a face that defies easy categorization. His skin is a warm, olive tone, somewhere between golden and bronze, lending him an almost sun-kissed glow regardless of the season. His brown eyes are deep, observant, with a glimmer of mischief, revealing little of his inner thoughts but much of his quick wit. He's not exactly handsome, nor is he considered ugly. He's rather plain, a look which he uses to his advantage.

What makes Zai truly unique is his chameleon-like appearance. With a rich heritage—one quarter Kinsman, one quarter Otherling, one quarter Chuman, and one quarter Poroo—his features carry a subtle amalgamation of his diverse ancestry. His dark hair and eyes along with his warm skin tone could easily be attributed to any number of ethnic backgrounds. His heritage will be hard for people to guess, no matter what world he wanders into.

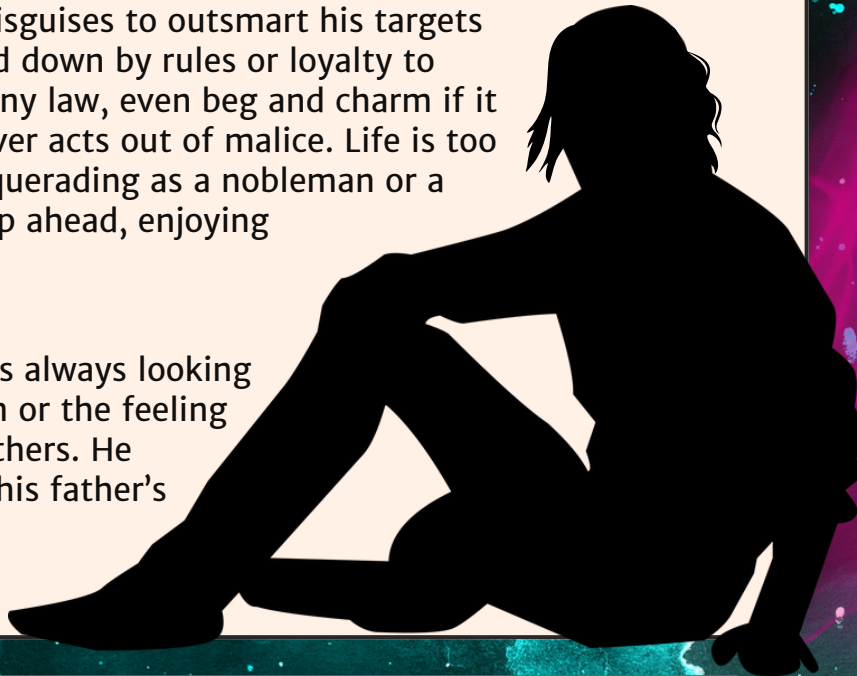
PERSONALITY / TRAITS:

Zai is a free-spirit who thrives on unpredictability and adventure. He's a self-employed warrant chaser, which is the Er'Retian version of a bounty hunter. (Some people call them huntsmen.) Due to his diminutive stature, he takes an unorthodox approach to warrant chasing. His Enneagram 7 personality has him always chasing the next thrill, using his quick wit, charm, and flair for disguises to outsmart his targets rather than overpower them. He's not tied down by rules or loyalty to anyone but himself. He'll bend or break any law, even beg and charm if it gets him closer to his goal, though he never acts out of malice. Life is too short to hold grudges. Whether he's masquerading as a nobleman or a humble merchant, Zai is always a one step ahead, enjoying the game as much as the catch.

CORE VALUES:

Zai's core values are freedom and joy. He's always looking for the next adventure. He hates boredom or the feeling of being trapped. He loves outsmarting others. He likes his independence and often refuses his father's gifts of money.

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WEBSITE: GOHAVOK.COM

Zaivar Witz character copyright ©2024 Jill Williamson. Jill is a chocolate-loving, daydreaming, creator of kingdoms and the award-winning author of several teen novels including *By Darkness Hid* (fantasy) and *Captives* (dystopian). Website: jillwilliamson.com. This character [released with permission to create derivative works for Havok Season 12.](#)

**SUBMISSION
DEADLINE JAN 17, 2025**

**STORIES PUBLISH
IN APR 2025**

JILL WILLIAMSON'S ZAIVAR 'ZAI' WITZ

...CONTINUED...

DEEPEST DESIRE / MOTIVATION:

To be content, satisfied, and self-sufficient. To not need to depend on others.

GREATEST WEAKNESS:

Being trapped or imprisoned. He's also claustrophobic. And he hates pain—is kind of a baby when sick or wounded.

WORST HABIT:

Zai hates negative emotions. He avoids conflict and commitment and has many superficial relationships. He also has an odd quirk of keeping a memento from each of his arrests, which has resulted in a bizarre collection of random objects that clutter his living space.

MAGIC:

Zaivar possesses a minor ability to bloodvoice, which is a form of telepathy. He uses this magic to read the thoughts of those he's tracking, which helps him capture his targets more easily. Although it's frowned upon to invade others' thoughts without revealing oneself, Zai has kept his ability a secret—even from his family. His magic isn't particularly strong. He cannot bloodvoice from a distance and must be within eyesight of anyone he wishes to spy on. He allows everyone to believe that his success as a warrant chaser relies solely on his wit, but in reality, his magic is a significant asset to his achievements.

BACKSTORY:

Zaivar is from the medieval fantasy world of Er'Rets, specifically the capital city of Armonguard. His father is a diplomat, traveling around the nation on behalf of Prince Oren Hadar. Zaivar has one brother named Rynley (Ryn), who was recently promoted to chamberlain to Prince Oren. Ryn offered to get Zai a job in the prince's household, but Zai finds the idea of such day-to-day tasks mundane.

Growing up, Zai craved adventure and excitement but also wanted to make a difference. Becoming a warrant chaser seemed like the perfect way to escape the dullness of everyday life while still doing something meaningful. For him, the constant action, problem-solving, and unpredictability of the job is an antidote to the boredom of his childhood. As a way to poke fun at his serious brother, each time he makes an arrest, he says something like, "This one's for Ryn."

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**SUBMISSION
DEADLINE
FEB 21, 2025**

**STORIES PUBLISH
IN MAY 2025**

REBECCA P. MINOR'S

PHEZZNIBBET MAPLEBARK

"PHEZZ" - PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

2' 7" tall, red-coated, fluffy-tailed creature who is just shy of middle-aged for his kind. (Picture an oversized red squirrel who operates mostly on his hind legs, unless extreme speed is called for.) He typically wears a soft leather vest of light tan buckskin and a leather and steel helmet with holes for his ears to poke through. He's never seen without a bandolier of knives carved from antler around his chest, but most of the time also carries a bow and quiver of arrows. He has large, expressive brown eyes. A dark scar runs from his right brow across his snout. His smile comes rarely, but conveys heartwarming depth, laced with sorrow, when he offers it.

PERSONALITY / TRAITS:

Lawful good, bearing in mind the law of his kind is "Survive, first and foremost." Phezz is a protector at heart. Belonging to the diminutive race of the Xintixa, he's spent his whole life far too acquainted with the heartless side of the world's larger races. He champions the underdog, but never gives his loyalty blindly. He's seen his share of adventure and has developed a seasoned skepticism of young firebrands who want to change the world. Yet at the same time, he can't help but get sucked into their enthusiasm, having once been one of them.

CORE VALUES:

Stability and respect. Anyone who underestimates him learns quickly a Xintixa's speed isn't to be trifled with, especially after he finds Phezz clinging to his back with a knife at his throat. He'll stand between forces bent on destruction and the common folk of his kind without hesitation.

DEEPEST DESIRE / MOTIVATION:

To set aside derring-do for a quiet life running a treetop inn, if only the threats and dangers of life would stop plaguing him all the darn time.

GREATEST WEAKNESS:

Bullying. He gets himself into scrapes that weren't technically his problem far too often because he can't just walk away. Also cheese.

WORST HABIT:

Making morally complicated situations difficult with his rigidity.

Phezznibbet Maplebark character copyright ©2024 Rebecca P. Minor. Becky is the co-founder of the Realm Makers writing conference and author of the Windrider Saga and Risen Age Archives books series. Website: rebeccapminor.com. This character [released with permission to create derivative works for Havok Season 12](#).

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE
MAR 21, 2025**

**STORIES PUBLISH
IN JUNE 2025**

KARA SWANSON'S

ETHEL GRIEVES

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

She's just five feet tall and a little curvy, face sprinkled with freckles and long chestnut hair always braided and tossed over a shoulder. Her green eyes flicker a little gray, hidden behind large, half-inch thick glasses. She's always dressed in dark colors and business attire—a pinstripe vest, a pair of dark slacks, and a heavy coat thrown over the ensemble. She's the type you'd expect to see behind the secretary desk, or with her nose in a book. Walks with a limp, thanks to one leg being longer than the other.

PERSONALITY / TRAITS:

Because of her limp she's easily missed, easily pitied, easily picked on—and easily underestimated. Ethel rarely makes full eye contact but is always taking in her surroundings with an instinct for uncovering a good mystery. She doesn't speak much, but when she does, there's a rasp to her voice and a very methodical way of placing her words. She may keep her head down around those larger and seemingly more important than her—but when she lifts those determined eyes to pierce you, Ethel is able to bring down even the tallest man with just a few cutting words. Because this small woman who no one sees as a threat has a way of finding just the right threads to unravel even the most hardened criminal or politician. After all, she's a Grieves.

CORE VALUES:

She's immensely loyal to her family, particularly her parents. Her three older siblings sometimes speak down to her or ignore her— but underneath, they are also a little terrified of her, and glad that Ethel's attention is trained to aid their criminal dynasty, not to take their places. Ethel believes in logic and strategy. In the psychological rather than getting her hands dirty. Why simply cut a man down when you can make him pay by dismantling everything he's ever cared for?

She thrives on the chase, the mystery. She's become addicted to the feeling of being overlooked and underestimated, only to flip the tables on those who mistreat her. Everyone is a pawn to be maneuvered—even her family, although they are the pawns she is trying to maneuver to end out on top. Even her ragdoll cat, Fresco, can be used to further a ploy on occasion. She's lonely, if she stops to think about it, but doesn't trust others—or herself—enough to ever be that vulnerable. But she does have friends. Very specific friends. People she chose who would never have the chance to betray her. Those she's helped off the streets who owe her. Those who can at least give her a good game of chess when she wants to sit in the park and look busy while staking out her next prey.

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Ethel Grieves character copyright ©2024 Kara Swanson. Kara writes stories about fairy tales and fiery souls. She spent her childhood a little like a Lost Girl, running barefoot through lush green jungles which inspired her award-winning Peter Pan retellings, *Dust* and *Shadow*. Website: karaswanson.com. This character [released with permission to create derivative works for Havok Season 12](#).

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE
MAR 21, 2025**

**STORIES PUBLISH
IN JUNE 2025**

KARA SWANSON'S

ETHEL GRIEVES

...CONTINUED...

BACKSTORY:

Ethel Grieves was born into a longstanding, wealthy crime family, practically a princess of the underbelly. But due to her limp and her bottle-thick glasses, she's often overlooked. She could have spent her life on the outside looking in — but her parents saw her when others didn't. Her mother gave her a notepad that could transcribe Ethel's thoughts with magical ink (or is it cursed? Or is it highly advanced technology?), allowing her to take in the world and file it away for future reference. Ethel's father gave her a special shoe — one that helped with her limp, but also came equipped with various gadgets she could cycle through—for example, if she tapped the toe just so, a knife would appear. The heel? A small device perfect for picking locks. And more...

And so, to the outside world, Ethel seemed like the youngest of a family of power-hungry crime lords, forgotten and left in the corner. But to that family, Ethel was far more: a super spy. An ace up their sleeve. And when the occasion called for it—Ethel could hunt down those threatening their dynasty, slinking into guarded rooms with a flip of a braid and a sad little thump of her limp. Then, she would reveal the information she'd found on them—the dirt, the thread that if tugged just right, could unravel even the most bulletproof politician or dirty cop. Once she'd gotten the leverage she needed, Ethel could discard any witnesses with a quick slash of her boot knife. Because to the outside world, Ethel was the black sheep—but to the Grieves family, she was their queen, quietly crafting a reign of terror from the shadows.

GREATEST WEAKNESS:

Ethel is afraid of being the weak link. Of being caught in an inescapable situation where her family would have to cut ties, leaving her utterly alone. But she's made some peace with that possibility. After all, she'd have no qualms with slipping some poison into a siblings' meal if it meant protecting the family's secrets. It's just a matter of time until someone slips up, and she'll stay three steps ahead to ensure that it's not her.

DEEPEST DESIRE / MOTIVATION:

To feel in control and to feel valuable. After being looked down upon her whole life, Ethel craves that feeling of power too much to ever truly let it go. She's never met someone who didn't befriend her just to use her. She may secretly wish for someone who would choose her, even if she offers them nothing in return, even if she doesn't deserve it. But that kind of sacrificial love is just a fairytale. But maybe one that could prompt her, even once, to choose something other than the feeling of power—to choose to protect someone else. Someone like her, only not as cynical. Someone who still believes in redemption. Or maybe that's just a fairytale too...

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SUBMISSION DEADLINE APR 18, 2025

**STORIES PUBLISH
IN JULY 2025**

GILLIAN BRONTE ADAMS' **MIRIEL TAKKENRIDGE**

BACKSTORY:

She's old enough to be your grandmother, but she was born to save the world, and she did —only, it turned out, it wasn't her world she was meant to save. Disappearing from her home in her teens, she was missing for five years. During those five years she somehow experienced twenty years away from everything and everyone she'd grown up with. Did she go through a portal? Get caught in a virtual reality simulation? Land on an alien planet while a nearby event horizon warped time? That's up to you, Havok authors. Although she's been "home" now for many years since that amazing experience, the draw to help, to fix, to save never quite goes away. After all, what's a Chosen One to do... Retire?

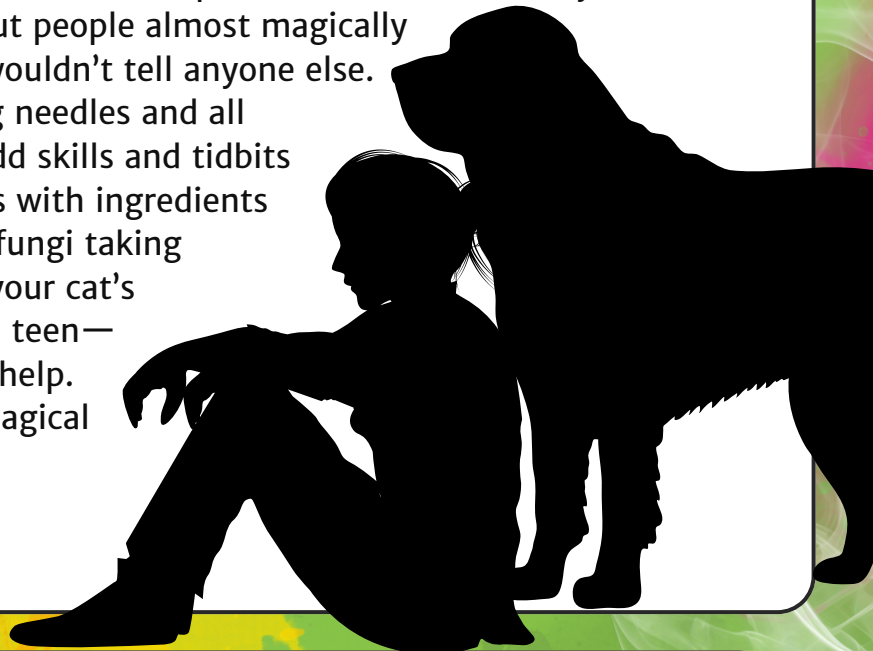
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

She has wispy white hair that gives a sort of gauzy, almost ethereal aura. She is short, but sturdy. Used to rolling up her sleeves and getting things done. She moves with an energy that makes you wonder if she's secretly been training for marathons all her life, or possibly has some fae blood in her. Her ears do look a tad pointy, but that could just be the way her curly hair parts around them. The lines wreathing her gray eyes make her whole face light up when she smiles. She's rarely seen without her enormous Saint Bernard, Matteo.

PERSONALITY / TRAITS:

A born helper, she's warm and friendly. She'll strike up a conversation with anyone even if they clearly don't want to talk at first. But people almost magically find themselves telling her things they wouldn't tell anyone else. She's also madly skilled with her knitting needles and all things sharp, and she's a repository of odd skills and tidbits of knowledge. Whipping up tasty goodies with ingredients you've never heard of, identifying weird fungi taking over your vegetable garden, diagnosing your cat's off appetite, helping with your rebellious teen— if you've got a problem, Miriel is sure to help. Got a bigger problem, particularly of a magical or inexplicable nature? Miriel might just show up at your door!

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Miriel Takkenridge character copyright ©2024 Gillian Bronte Adams. Gillian writes epic fantasy novels that ring with the echoes of eternity, including the award-winning *Of Fire and Ash* and *The Songkeeper Chronicles*. Website: gillianbronteadams.com. This character [released with permission to create derivative works for Havok Season 12](#).

SUBMISSION DEADLINE APR 18, 2025

STORIES PUBLISH
IN JULY 2025

GILLIAN BRONTE ADAMS' MIRIEL TAKKENRIDGE

DEEPEST DESIRE / MOTIVATION:

Being needed gives her a sense of day-to-day purpose, but she secretly hopes that she might do enough to earn the opportunity to return to the world that became her second home.

CORE VALUES:

She was born to help, and she will, no matter the cost to herself. She sees putting others first as the highest ideal, and finds herself baffled, even irritated, when others don't do the same.

GREATEST WEAKNESS:

She cannot simply walk away from a problem. Her compulsion to help borders on obsession, and she struggles with taking no for an answer. She can get into all kinds of trouble when she sees a possible solution and insists on getting involved.

WORST HABIT:

She never believes you if you say you're not hungry. If you go to her house, you can expect to be fed. A lot. Fortunately, her dog likes to park himself beside guests, and she's good at looking the other way when food happens to fall into his mouth. But only if she likes you. If she doesn't, you'll find yourself with five more courses to eat before leaving.

ANIMAL COMPANION:



Matteo sulks if he's not permitted to follow Miriel everywhere. He's a giant, five-year-old, mahogany-and-white Saint Bernard with soulful eyes. Miriel adopted him as a seven months old puppy that outgrew his home. In the winter, he's always sporting some kind of knitted wear made by Miriel—a scarf, doggie sweater, etc.

He's very protective of Miriel, but he's enormous and intimidating enough that he rarely needs to be overtly aggressive. He's a giant, bounding, drooling goofball who can reduce any toy to shreds in a matter of minutes, except for stuffed animals, which he treats with exceptional care, as if they were alive.

He especially loves kittens.



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