

My Immortal

Tara Gilesbie as XXXbloodyrists666XXX

a self-published novel by Jercy Dee

[Non-fanfiction content only]

~

Word Count: 4300+ (without fanfiction)

Themes: Fanfiction, fandom, authorship and authenticity

Major Warnings: Discussions of sexism and fandom bigotry/prejudice. Strong language.

~

Dedicated to everyone who wanted me to make this book.

I hope I've made you proud.

~

Foreword

by Jercy Dee

I lived through the days where *My Immortal* was still posted on FF.net. I *read* it when it was up on FF.net. I was barely a tween, and I paid no mind to it because it just didn't suit my taste in stories at the time. I would have never guessed that it would gain infamously notorious status as one of the worst pieces of fanfiction ever created, and here I am publishing this book as a single edition along with a set of multiples as promotional material to commemorate its influence after a decade.

As I was putting together this book, I found myself fondly laughing at the story rather than rudely mocking it. There's a fascinating sort of nostalgia reading how truly awful self-published work could turn out. But that's how people move forward and get better, right? I can't possibly judge something so crudely created when I myself produced similar works during that era of my life, or when crap like the *Fifty Shades* series and *Rough and Ready* are cherished worldwide.

And what of the issue of sexism towards female authors? Regardless if Ebony/Enoby was simply a shameless self-insert of author Tara Gilesbie, works that have gained similar popularity like *My Immortal* receive the same kind of negative feedback, even when they're objectively better. No matter how well written female-driven stories are, many write it off it as simply self-insert, just another Mary Sue narrative. No matter the credentials of the author, as long as she is a woman, she will receive undeserved disapproval. Which consequently left me with layers of misogyny to create a book out of.

It was a fascinating form of catharsis to work through, and a highly entertaining process for myself to create as formal a product as I could. The research involved in dissecting *My Immortal* I hope is as interesting to other readers as it is for me, and my wish for the accompanying multiples for this piece is that they will spread to those outside of the fan community.

So now, feel free enjoy this truly iconic piece of preserved garbage.

~

[FANFICTION TEXT CUT FOR LENGTH.]

~

Selected internet articles regarding the Authenticity of "My Immortal" and the Toxicity of Fan Culture

~

Authorship

From Wikipedia

My Immortal was published under the username "XXXbloodyrists666XXX", and the author identified themselves as Tara Gilesbie. Author's notes identified a friend nicknamed Raven, operating under the username "bloodytearz666", as the work's editor and beta reader. Author's notes claimed that someone hacked into Gilesbie's account and wrote chapters

39 and 40. Since the publication of the final chapter, various individuals have claimed to have written the work in jest or as a hoax.

Due to its “systematically terrible” quality, the work is often believed to be a satire or parody of fan fiction. However, the “exceedingly complicated” details of the speculated hoax, including a series of related online accounts outside of FanFiction.net and effort of writing a work of such length, led to a “consensus” among Encyclopedia Dramatica users that it would be too difficult to fake and that Gilesbie was a genuine person, a sentiment apparently shared by other online communities who mocked the author. Brad Kim, editor of Know Your Meme, supported the work as genuine, citing his experiences with writing workshops on LiveJournal and Xanga where he encountered similar works, as “these were the kinds of things that would be formulated by a high-school teenager in the early 2000s”. Writing for Vulture.com, Abraham Riesman wrote that “[t]he mystery of the authorship of “My Immortal” — even in this privacy-averse age — appears unsolvable.”

(Source: [Wikipedia](#))

~

Trolling Controversy

From My Immortal Wiki

One of the world’s most frequently asked questions and greatest mysteries: Is Tara Gilesbie trolling? This would make the greatest sense for the explanation of *My Immortal* because as many would say, “*My Immortal* is just too bad to be true!” However, many other things would have to be taken into account if Tara Gilesbie was in fact just a young, teenage fangirl who was given access to the internet.

First, to support the troll theory, one must look at Tara’s origins. She supposedly lives (or lived) in Dubai. As previously stated, Dubai is an emirate of the United Arab Emirates. Tara also loves Hot Topic. So unless she or her friends or family are fabulously wealthy, it would be nearly impossible for her to take weekly trips to the States or any other country that has a Hot Topic so she could purchase her goods. Additionally, the United Arab Emirates is a predominantly Muslim nation, and is located in the Middle East, where such attitudes towards Satanism, witchcraft, etc. are seen as acts of blasphemy. In

addition, discrediting the theory that she actually lives in Dubai even further, she says in an author's note: "...oh yah btw ill be in vacation in transilvania 4 da nex 3 dayz so dnot expect updatz." In another author's note, she describes how "transilvania rox hrad". She says that she got to see the castle where 'Dracula' was filmed. However, 'Dracula', though set in Transylvania and England, was filmed only in England and California, USA. In addition, she once referred to

"omfg im leeving dubya pretty soon kant wait!!!"

However, all of this can be misleading. When Tara says "dubya" she could be referring to two things. The word dubya is in fact a slang term for the Southern American pronunciation of the letter "W". It is also used to flame and mock former United States president, George W. Bush, by pronouncing his middle initial as "dubya". Dubya also refers to an American organization called Dubya USA. It is based in California and it sells various motocross and wheeling goods. What makes all of this mysterious is that Tara may have misspelled Dubai as "dubya" or she could be implying that she is in fact an American. Or, obviously, if she is not a troll, she's living in Connecticut but pretends to live in Dubai.

Furthermore, *My Immortal* itself, for a lack of a better explanation, does too many things wrong to be written completely seriously. It reads like a list of things a troll writer would do: frequently misspell words in an almost organized manner, text chatting, random/unexplained sex scenes, etc.

On the other hand, to negate the troll theory, one must take into the account of the many things that are a part of *My Immortal*. The trolling author would have to create the personality of Tara Gilesbie, manage her many accounts (she has had other accounts besides the one that is now deleted from fanfiction.net), and her password(s), and not to mention take the time and dedication to write the forty-four long chapter story itself.

Besides Tara Gilesbie, the troll author would also have to remember the persona of Raven, Tara Gilesbie's friend. As in Tara's case, the troll would have to manage Raven's account(s), password(s), and write her stories, unless there was a second troll involved. Raven's stories would have to coincide with Tara's stories, because they had a falling out.

Both writers have chapters in their fan fictions in which they both wrote (or killed) off the avatars in their stories based off the other writer's personalities and vice-versa.

This would be a lot, even for a troll. And if Tara was a troll, she could easily be a very determined and persistent troll to manage those two accounts. Or it could have been a well organized group of people who decided to put *My Immortal* together. The possibilities are endless.

For unknown reasons, many people have come forward and claimed themselves to have written and/or co-written *My Immortal*. Some have taken it further by stating that they are or created the persona of Tara Gilesbie and admitted that they were trolling and writing the stories for laughs. Some have even gone to disturbingly great extremes to claim that they not only were Tara, but were continuing the legacy of *My Immortal* by writing new stories similar to the fashion of the original story by posting such stories on fanfiction.net (although some have subsequently been deleted). Whether these people are lying or telling the truth is another mystery, because anyone could have easily created an account and claimed *My Immortal* as their own. The fact that some of these people have decided to come forward after all these years between now and 2007 is suspicious enough, but it is all up for debate and up to the reader/reviewer to determine the authenticity of the story in their own mind. This is what makes *My Immortal* one of the most mysterious pieces of work the internet has ever seen.

(Source: [My Immortal Wiki](#))

~

Misc. Speculation

Selected comments from Tumblr

[[madqueenalanna](#):]

Given that I think "My Immortal" is a troll (with the reason generally being that author Tara references both Marty McFly and TOM BOMBADIL), I just reread it and I'm astounded by the effort put into it.

The spelling and grammar gets steadily worse over the course of the story, messing up simple words and even the main character's name (variations on Ebony include Enoby, Enony, Eboby, and my favorite Enopby). The author gives frequent shoutouts in the A/N at the beginning of each chapter to someone called Raven, who she considers a friend and apparently functions as a beta. In chapter 16, Tara severs ties with Raven, expels/murders Raven's character Willow, and changes Ebony's full name to Ebony Dark'ness Dementia TARA Way. It's suggested that they fought because Tara stole Raven's poster of Gerard Way. By chapter 17, they appear to have made up and Willow is brought back with no further explanation.

The plot, of course, is just insane, but the story was obviously being read; Tara begins each chapter furiously ranting about "flamerz" leaving bad reviews, terribly misspelled. At one point, Ebony was referred to as a Mary Sue and she immediately tried to shut that down, citing "Satanism" and "depression" as flaws. She held each new chapter hostage, demanding a certain number (usually 5) good reviews before she would update. Assuming the spelling and grammar mistakes were intentional, the natural progression of them getting worse and worse is incredible. The difference between Tara's A/Ns and Raven's edited text is also astounding, although chapter 16, during their supposed rift, is not noticeably more poorly written than the chapters immediately preceding and following it.

The misspellings of character names and general slipups get worse and worse to the point that once, "Enopby" is referred to as "Tara", and at another point, "TaEnby", further to emphasize that Ebony is, in fact, the most obvious self insert in the history of literature. The reference to Marty McFly (he appears at the end of chapter 35 to spirit Ebony into the future) confounds me; Tara does not seem like she'd been aware of pop culture enough to have seen "Back to the Future", given that she describes "The Nightmare Before Christmas" as this serious, depressing, Adult movie. She's young enough to consider "he put his thingy into my tool" an accurate description of sex. Further, she references Tom Bombadil, a character in "Lord of the Rings" who I believe just shows up and sings for a while and is strongly implied to be God and then disappears, not really relevant to anything. He's not even in the movies. Would Tara Gilesbie have read "Lord of the Rings" when she admits she's never read the Harry Potter books?

Read through that lens (that this was an elaborate hoax), can you believe the rest of it was so organically terrible? Even now, 10+ years after the fact, no one can agree on whether this story is a troll, and until anyone finds out who Tara Gilesbie really is, it's going to be impossible to know for sure. This is just crazy to me.

[roxiethelhalfninja:]

I have done extensive digging on this subject, and there is a lot more to *My Immortal* than meets the eye. Read as a troll, this story is a brilliant piece of satire on fan fiction. It incorporates so many cliches of the genre, especially those from the early to mid 2000's. The obviously self-inserted Mary-Sue (mentioned above) along with unnecessary and unexplained crossovers, nonsensical sex scenes, and allusion to scene culture and pop punk music. Not to mention the story outside the story, Tara and Raven's falling out, critiquing the culture of A/N's and reviews. The tropes and cliches are far too obvious and overplayed to be sincere. I am a true believer that Tara was not only a troll, but a genius of satire. After all, if it was truly so bad, it would not have survived mixed in with ten years of equally terrible fan fiction. The legend of this story is so *ehem* immortal it has sparked heated debate in the online community for years, and was even made into a web series. (<https://vimeo.com/70381882>) Whether you believe it was satire or not, there is something about *My Immortal* that is inherently fascinating. Even if it was not her intention, Tara has created the bad fan fiction. It is a perfect storm of chaotic, nonsensical drama spiraling around the least original character ever written. Story lines are dropped and picked up again seemingly at random, characters and names are inconsistent to the point of being unintelligible, and there is no consistent overarching plot. In a sense, it is the anti-story, because it so decidedly defies every literary rule in the book. Either we are drawn to *My Immortal* as one watches a car wreck in awe, or because it satirizes the worst aspects of every story we have ever read. Regardless, the legacy of *My Immortal* will live on, either as a warning, or a work of pure genius.

[edgebug:]

Not only is *My Immortal* a hilarious satire of fanfiction and fan culture (and Harry Potter), but there's some genuinely funny jokes in there that are even funny outside the context of the narrative. My favorite is the Dogfather Error—at one point, Gilesbie refers to Sirius

Black as Vampire Potter's "dogfather." It's funny not only because it's a typo, but because Sirius is of course a dog animagus.

Funny as hell—too funny to be anything but deliberate. All of the story is like that; too smart, and too layered, to be anything but 100% purposeful.

~

Friendly Reminder

Selected comments by Lis

[[garden-of-succulents](#):]

I am very solidly against the practice of publicly mocking or dragging "badfic" and self-insert or Mary Sue fics. And against sending the authors private unsolicited messages about how awful and unacceptable their fics are. No matter how much they must be parodies, no matter how laughable they are, no matter what.

I mean, I am generally against the practice of slamming and mocking writing generally—the author of *The Eye of Argon* was a sixteen-year-old boy who never wrote again. But when you're hugely likely to be publicly shaming or privately harrasing teenage girls, using a type of mockery that has made generations of fannish women terrified to write about female characters in any capacity?

Get. Fucked.

Go find something else to do instead of making yourself feel very cultured and superior by laughing at someone braver and more vulnerable than you.

[[garden-of-succulents](#), in [response to a reply](#) re: **My Immortal:]**

Let me put it this way.

Shame is a corrosive emotion that makes people feel like they are unworthy to be seen publicly and belong to a community.

Public mockery—even of a target that is completely invulnerable, like if *My Immortal* were written for the lulz by a troll—creates an atmosphere that breeds shame, because writers look at the treatment its writer is receiving and think: Is my writing like that? Do I deserve the same treatment? Do I have to change my behaviour to avoid that?

And overwhelmingly what they do in response is write less bravely, about fewer women, and their women are stripped of “cool” attributes and storylines, because writers have learned to be ashamed of writing anything reminiscent of *My Immortal*.

I have definitely laughed at My Immortal memes, especially the first paragraph being translated into classical Latin and shit like that, but... IDK, I think we benefit when we're very careful about just how much mockery we dispense during the day.

~

The Gloriously Immortal Life of “My Immortal”

Excerpt by Mathilda Gregory

...I was asked to read a piece in a show called Bad Book Club, where performers read extracts from terrible books. Straightaway I thought of reading a piece of *My Immortal*, because of its reputation. When I revisited it for the show, I was amazed by how relentlessly hilarious it was – and how oddly touching.

The story, and the character of Ebony, is an example of “Mary Sue” fan fiction, i.e. a story where the author inserts a thinly veiled version of herself into the text and makes herself the hero. Most authors of fan fiction are women, and Mary Sue fanfic in particular is often written by teenage girls (and in keeping with the grand tradition of pouring scorn on things teenage girls like, it's the target of a lot of bile). *My Immortal* may not be a good piece of work, but it is an important one: A young girl creating a piece of work where she is the hero is a radical act.

Like a lot of great literary epics, we don't have a definitive version of the text. It's like the writing of some ancient culture. In fact, the typos make it seem like it's written in another language sometimes (“c dats basically nut swering and dis time he wuz relly upset n u wil c y”). But I think if *My Immortal* had genuinely been written as a joke and

had reached this level of success and notoriety, the author would have come forward. Maybe I just want to believe. Because *My Immortal* is important to me.

My whole life in fandom is important to me, and that began in the Harry Potter fandom. I can't reread *My Immortal* without being reminded that some of the first people to know I was pregnant were my online fandom friends. Fandom friends I'd never met in real life sent gifts for my daughter when she was born – people I am still friends with now that daughter is 13 and in fandoms of her own. Fandom has gone on to take up a truly shocking amount of my time (I've had to block Tumblr to get this written). People have literally given me writing jobs because I understand fandom; I run a popular live literature night about fan fiction, and I met my girlfriend through running it. Fandom is a huge and important part of my life, and I feel sure it must have been to the author of *My Immortal* too.

Last summer's reading went down so well that to celebrate 10 years of *My Immortal* this year, I'm going to be performing a live reading of the whole thing at Brighton Fringe. I'm a professional writer – I'm not entirely sure what it might do to my ability to make nice sentences if I deliberately put the worst writing in the world into my head. But in the same way that Tara Gilesbie put herself into the story of Harry Potter, I am going to put myself into the story of *My Immortal*. Because stories are powerful. Even stories where the important plotlines are delivered with sentences like: "*U must stab Vrompire*" and "*If u don't then I'll rap Draco!1*".

Stories are most meaningful when we see ourselves in them. The majority of our most famous stories are about straight white men and a lot of fan fiction exists to try to subvert this in some small way. In *My Immortal*, Tara Gilesbie created a version of herself – Ebony Dark'ness Dementia Raven Way – and put her right in the centre of Hogwarts along with all the silly, brilliant, trivial things she cared about. And the fact that this story has come to be acknowledged as the worst, but also one of the most important pieces of fan fiction ever written is utterly heartwarming.

(Source: [Buzzfeed](#))

~

Aftermath, from 2017 onward

by Jercy Dee

Though I “published” *My Immortal: The Book* in 2016, after hours diving deep into the anonymous waters of the web, the author and true intentions of the fanfiction had some light shed upon it in 2017. The following information has been verified as of January 2021.

TL;DR Author Rose Christo came forward claiming she wrote *My Immortal* as a joke, to troll fans who read it in complete seriousness. However, many of Christo’s statements were later proven false. Although multiple people have declared they were the true author of *My Immortal*, Christo is one of the higher profile cases, with coverage of her controversy ranging from Buzzfeed to Wikipedia, and she is the only one to have attempted formally publishing something about it.

The long story is that she was “outed”—as Vox puts it—by a scandal where others speculated someone else was the author of the fanfic, and Christo had to step forward with the truth. In doing so, her own original work came under scrutiny, such as, at the time, an upcoming memoir (which has since been cancelled for publication). The memoir was meant to detail what it was like growing up as a queer Native American in foster care with her brother, while also recounting how the infamous fanfiction came to be.

What spawned afterwards became just as messy and confusing as *My Immortal* itself. Several investigations began on Tumblr, where Christo was active in 2017. This was followed by a back and forth between Christo and her alleged brother—accusing each other of false claims, one of which was about their Native American ancestry—via official statements and forum posts. This spurred more investigations, leading to the discovery that Christo forged the documents that “proved” her authorship claims, and consequently got her memoir cancelled. Of course, in the midst of all this, discourse thrived regarding the authenticity of any of these claims to begin with.

Because again, Christo wasn’t the first (nor, as time would tell, the last) person to attempt taking ownership of the notorious fanfiction.

In the end, it's up to the reader to decide who to believe, but, at the very least, fans and others fascinated by this *immortal* tale of gothic vampires and wizardry have now been given a point to start from.

~

Further Reading as of 2021

[Vox article on Christo's "coming out"](#)

[Christo's official statement that she is My Immortal's author](#)

[More on Christo's co-authorship claim](#)

[Christo's cancelled memoir](#)

["Demystifying My Immortal" by YouTuber Red Bard](#)

[YouTuber Sarah Z receiving an email from My Immortal's "author"](#)

[r/Myimmortaldrama subreddit](#)

~

Back Cover

Hi my name is Ebony Dark'ness Dementia Raven Way...

Ebony, a self-proclaimed goth and a vampire, falls in love with another vampire who goes by the name of "Satan." However, their relationship is not all its cracked up to be...

The story follows Ebony Way as she forms a romantic attachment to Draco Malfoy (an elegant Goth in this story), in spite of her concern that he has had a relationship with Harry "Vampire" Potter and may still be interested in him. Voldemort, claiming to know of Ebony's relationship with Draco through "telekinesis", commands her to kill Harry. Various people including Hagrid and someone called "Snaketail" confess that they love Ebony, while Snape and Remus are "pedofiles" who take pictures of her. Ebony begins to

have precognitive visions, which are later verified. Prof. Sinister tells Ebony that if Voldemort had ever had people who loved him he would not have become evil, so Ebony's task is to go back in time and seduce him.

This exclusive edition of FanFiction.net's My Immortal contains Ebony's thrilling tale in print form. Also included are several articles regarding the mystery behind the piece (was it genuinely written, or simply satire?), the social implications of Gilesbie's work, and a note from the editor.

~

Colophon

My Immortal is regarded as one of the worst fanfictions ever to exist. It's set in an alternate Harry Potter universe about the main character's time as a gothic, teen vampire at Hogwarts. Ebony (or Enoby) Dark'ness Raven Way encounters many of the original Harry Potter cast including Draco Malfoy, Albus Dumbledore, Harry Potter himself, and several others along with 2000s punk rock icons like My Chemical Romance. With awful punctuation, grammar, spelling, syntax, and continuity issues (of which only refers to the reading experience of the story, much less the story's development itself), many learn about *My Immortal* if they engage with any fan community long enough. It was originally posted on FanFiction.net—a website already notorious for having poorly written, self-published content—before being deleted, though hundreds of posts and fanart devoted to this story still exist. Even a decade later, many still speculate whether the story was written as a genuine piece of work, or if it was created merely to mock other fanfiction works just like it.

This publication was created for the Nano Publishing class of Fall 2016. It is a print copy (now digital edition) of Tara Gilesbie's mid-2000s fanfiction, *My Immortal*, along with several articles related to Gilesbie's work.

My Immortal (ed.2), updated 2021 digital edition.

Author: Tara Gilesbie as XXXbloodyrists666XXX

Original Publisher: FanFiction.net

Book Design and Editor: Jercy Dee

Printer: Self-published at Print & Graphic Depot, Toronto

No infringement intended. Collected and printed with respect to the original authors and publishers. No part of this publication may be reprinted or distributed for profit.

Credits: Typeface: Adobe Caslon Pro; Front cover photography: Pixabay.com; Back cover photography: Harry Potter Wiki; Synopsis: [Good Reads](#); My Immortal story text: [MyImmortalRehost.webs.com](#); "Authorship" text: My Immortal (fan fiction) via Wikipedia; "Trolling Controversy" text: Tara Gilesbie via My Immortal Wiki; "Misc. Speculation" text via Tumblr post, 2016; "Friendly Reminder" text: Lis as garden-of-succulents on Tumblr, 2016; "The Gloriously Immortal Life of 'My Immortal'" by Mathilda Gregory on BuzzFeed, 2016.

Edited (2021/03): The book has now been revised to include links and new content.