



The Dune Sea Express

Issue #2, March 1990

Posy, Attempt 1: The Castle*



By Joni Kouvelis



Everyone who has ever tried to write a story knows how difficult it can be to get everything just right. Imagine what would happen if one of the characters got assertive and basically told the author that the story was all wrong! That's exactly what happened to Clairese Baker, best selling author of formula romance novels (you know the type, the no imagination, no plot kind.) Claire sat down at the computer to write and strange things began to happen. A graphic she had drawn of one of her characters appeared in the right margin excess area, and their conversation went something like this.

Once upon a time there was a knight and his horse. The knight was a fair and perfect one, and his horse was swift and sure. Together they roamed the countryside and had many wonderful adventures.

Wonderful adventures? Wonderful??! My great aunt's fanny! That's a good one sister! I don't know what I've done to deserve this abuse! I must have really sinned in another life!

Uh, I'm trying to write a story here Mr..?

The name he gave me is Posy. Actually he let some stupid dame name me. My real name is Thunderhoof. I think I deserve to have my story told right. No one asks the horse about these "knights in gleaming chain mail."

Shouldn't that be "shining armor" Thunderhoof?

What's the diff, lady? They're both heavy as hell. Add to that this six foot bozo and you have my master.

Oh, really? Am I right in assuming this "master" is tall, dark and handsome?

Of course. I couldn't get some short ugly dude. I have to get this evergrown dolly-boy who draws women to him in droves, and who gives them all free rides on his "fantastically strong steed." Add to this my armor, this hideous crap he picked up at a garage sale, and you are talking serious heavy! Check out my pink plume! Couldn't you just gag? Another one of his groupies probably got it for me.

So, how is it that a horse supposedly from the middle ages talks so modern?

* Characters and story copyrighted by author, 1990

My dear misguided woman, I am a character actor. If thou shouldst desire me to speak in the tongue of those oft forgotten times, it wouldst be my honor to serve thy wishes.

I don't think so, thanks anyway.

I thought you'd see it my way. Shall we begin? I was born...

In a flood of ignorance? (Smiles sweetly.)

Do you want me to tell my story or don't you?

Actually I was doing fine until you butted in.

Yeah, sure. Look Miss Know-It-All, if you want this story published you have to go for the original, the untried, the unique! You know how many romances are sitting gathering dust? I'll tell you! A lot!

Not necessarily Thunderhoof, I...

Don't interrupt. The world doesn't need another 150-page sheaf of mushy drivel. There are too many now!

And you think your way is better?

Hey sister, they don't talk about horse sense for nothing you know.

I wonder. And my name isn't "sister."

Shall I callst thou 'my little buttercup' instead?

Sarcasm isn't becoming to you, Posy.

Ouch. That smarts. Okay, touche. I'll be good if you just won't call me that!

Agreed. My name is Clairese Baker.

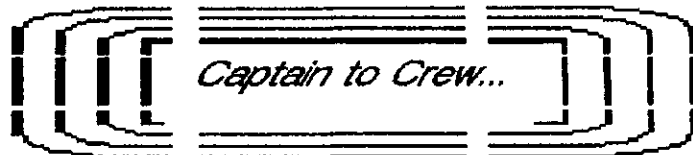
(Groans.) You sound like one of those muck-spouting authors all right. It's going to be a job keeping you in line, but I guess someone has to do it.

(Icity) I'm soooo glad. Posy.

Okay, fine. Write the damn thing your way. I could've saved it from gathering dust, but nooo, you wouldn't listen! I hope you aren't depending on this for your livelihood, sister, cause you'll starve!

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Orbital Eccentricities



J.K.: Da-da-da, DAI Da-da-da DAI DAI (Dancing around in small circles.)

P.G.: I'll start the column again, Joni is too busy singing (??) the Star Wars theme, gazing at her new Star Wars calendar, and celebrating the return of the Jedi (pun intended) to SF conventions in general.

J.K.: yes! That's right! After seven years of sitting on his duff, George Lucas has allegedly seen fit to MAKE ANOTHER STAR WARS MOVIE!! YAAAAY!! AND WE MADE IT TO THE SECOND ISSUE OF THE DUNE SEA EXPRESS!!

P.G.: Highlighting this issue, are, Joni's misadventures at her first Trek convention, the beginning of a we-don't-know-how-many-part serial, and William Shatner's book Tek War is reviewed by our own spacefaring insomniac, Sandy.

J.K.: Ignoring, of course, that she promised to do Memory Prime and Double, Double. I guess it's time to get out the old cat o' nine tails.

P.G.: Don't be snide, co-editor. You too can be replaced. Moving along, we still have a submission shortage, but if the hordes of people at the convention, who wrestled the newsletters and flyers from Joni, leaving her a disheveled heap on the floor--

J.K.: That's not exactly what happened.

P.G.: Quiet, I'm on a roll. --are any indication, we may get submissions yet!

J.K.: Please send all care packages to the home for the Mentally Distressed.. Untill next time...

P.G.: Wait! One more thing, henceforth, Star Trek: The Next Generation, given it's-pain-in-the-butt-to-type tendencies, will be referred to as ST-TNG or simply "Next Generation" and the 1966 series will retain the name "Star Trek" or occasionally "Classic".

J.K.: Pam, are you forgetting.....

P.G.: Oh, go sing Star Wars and get out of my face. I'm trying to type. Bye for now. Pam and Joni

Captain to Crew...

With the second newsletter in your hand it is time to consider the direction of Trek and Friends. One of the projects under consideration is a short film with a Star Trek theme. "From the Files of Star Fleet" is the working title. All ideas are welcome and new talents are appreciated.

Role Playing Games have some interest. People who want to get together for a game of Doctor Who or Star Trek please let me know. Game masters are needed. Star Fleet Battles has some interest, too.

I want to see everybody with an interest in science fiction get together and have fun!!!

David M. Craig, Captain, Starfleet

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Intergalactic Giggles

How many Klingons does it take to change a lightbulb?

None. Klingons aren't afraid of the dark.

What do they do to the burnt out bulb?

Execute it for failure.

What do they do to the Klingon who changes the bulb?

Execute him for cowardice.

Why did the Klingons cross the road?

To conquer the other side.

Posy

Are you quite through, or shall I send for the sitter?

(Snorts.) Okay, since you asked so kindly I'll stay, but don't get out of line again or I'll walk.

Don't tempt me horse. I don't like your attitude.

Attitude? Moi? Perish the thought, dear lady. I am the soul of compassion, the epitome of virtue...

Enough.

Aw, come on! One more! The pinnacle of steadfastness...

I said enough! Horse, you are a royal pain in the palootie!

(Disbelievingly) Palootie? Aw, jeeez! Not one of those lily-pure no profanity allowed types! I don't need this aggravation!

Speaking of which, your use of choice four-letter words will not be tolerated in this book.

The hell they won't. Tell me another good one, Clairese.

(Glares at Posy.) Okay, on with the story--with your permission of course.

Granted, my lady. (Crosses legs and gets comfy.) Proceed.

I may have to shoot this horse. As I was saying, there once was a knight and his horse.

A horse and his knight.

Don't sweat the small stuff, Thundy. You're two beings co-existing together, okay? Now, Sir Justin was the king's favored knight. He had won more tournaments, survived more battles, slayed more dragons, and rescued more maidens than any other knight before him.

I notice you're conveniently leaving out his womanizing ways. Don't think he rescued these broads for free, O Naive Wonder. You're making ol' Justy sound like a really righteous dude. The guy's a walking bag of hormones. He's made me quite nervous in the lean times.

(Shocked.) Thunderhoof! There's no place for that in a romance!

Your pardon my lady, but I thought that was exactly what romances were about. Who can do it how many times with whom, where, and in as many pages as possible.

Add some dippy dialogue and you're ready to rock and roll. Plot matter tends to be severely limited in these books.

(Insulted.) Not in this one. I have a plot, thank you.

Oh? (Lays on ground and props head on hooves.) Lay it on me baby. I can't wait to hear it. Pulitzer Prize stuff I'm sure!

You too can be sent to the glue factory, O Insolent Mouth. There once was a knight and his dog.

Hey! Hold the phone! What's this happy horsecrap? You need me! I'm Justin's transportation in case you've forgotten! This is pre-machine era here!

Justin can rent a mule. In faaaact, I think you'd make an excellent mule, Thundy. *(Gets mouse and prepares to edit graphic.)*

A jackass? You're going to make me a jackass??!

No, Thundy. You do a good enough job by yourself. All you need is longer ears. *(Edits graphic.) That's better.*

(Kneels.) Please don't do this to me! My poor mother will die of die of shame! I'll be disinherited! Scorned! Alone! Forlorn! (Pauses.) So, I'll tell you what, I'll shut up if you'll return me to my former status. Deal?

Okay, *(bobs Posy's ears)* just remember this *(threatens with mouse.)* Now, Justin was a handsome man with curly black hair, and sparkling blue eyes. His tall, muscular frame was the envy of his peers, and the dream of all the maidens in the land. As we join the story, now already in progress thanks to motormouth here, it was a dark and stormy night.

Can't you get more original? Really! Stealing other people's opening lines! You could get in trouble for that!

Justin and Posy made their tortuous way up a muddy, stone-choked path to a roadside hostel.

A jump. And the name is Thunderhoof.

Laboriously, Justin dismounted and clanked his way into the lobby to register.

They didn't register in those days, stupid. And there wasn't a convenient Holiday Inn every few blocks! Knights usually stayed in castles. There weren't that many hostels.

A Gnome with rythem is a metrognome.

Posy

Justin asked permission to enter the grand palace which loomed in front of him like a demon in the night, and was granted it. Like the fair and perfect knight he had always striven to be, he cared for his horse's needs before his own, placing Posy in the castle stables,

With the leaky roof.

and giving him food and water.

Corn husks and moldy water. Whoopy-do! I want a Cesaer Salad and something to warm my bones...like Cardon Blanc. That silly sap knows I hate corn husks!

Posy graciously accepted what he was given, and gently nudged the knight's hand in thanks. With a contented whicker, he settled down for the night.

I knocked that walking sardine-can on his metal plated a--

Thunderhoof! I said none of that!

I didn't appreciate his choice of diet for me. (Damn leaky roof kept me up all night too. You try to sleep with water dripping on your head, and see how well you do!

Quiet, Horse. Justin then made his weary way up to the main hall.

What's roof didn't leak.

What did he find there? Tune in again next time for the continuing adventures of Sir Justin and his wonder horse, Posy!

That's Thunderhoof!



Interstellar Molecules

> Gates McFadden (Dr. Beverly Crusher) has a part in the movie "The Hunt For Red October" permiering in theaters March 2nd.

> Albert Finny and Johnn Cleese are in the running for the role of The Doctor in a new Doctor Who movie to begin shooting this fall.

> Alien Nation was renewed for the rest of the current season. There will be 22 episodes in the first season. Reportedly Adventure comics is doing an Alien Nation series that is set 4 years further into the future from the Fox Network series.

> Star Trek Annual #1 to be released later this spring will be co-written by Peter David and George Takei and the ST-TNG Annual #1 will be written by John Delancey.

> Quantum Leap has been renewed for the rest of the current season.

> ST-TNG Magazine #12 is due out on March 13th.

> Time Guardian an Australian SF movie starring Carrie Fisher and Dean Stockwell is now out on video.

> New episodes of "The Ray Bradbury Theatre" will begin shooting early in 1990. \$ episodes will be chot in Canada and 8 in New Zealand. Stories included will be: "The Black Ferris (Earlier version of Something Wicked This Way Comes), "Usher II" and "The Earthmen" (Martian Chronicles not included in the movie), "The Day It Rained Forever", and "Here There Be Tygers". They are considering: "There Will Come Soft Rains" and "A Touch of Petulance". Currently the show has been nominated for 5 ACE (cable) awards including: best series and best screenplay. The episode, "To the Chicago Abyss" was ominated for best actor. Best Teleplay, and best direction.

The sequel to Bradbury's latest novel, Death is a Lonely Business, will be published in 1990. It's called A Graveyard For Lunatics and features Ray Harryhausen as a character.



The Night Before Trekcon

by Joni Kouvelis

Twas the day before Trekcon,
And me and my friend,
Had finished our packing,
Loaded down the back end,
And started for Dallas,
In my Chevrolet,
Following Robert and Paul,
Who knew well the way.

We bucked traffic and faced,
The most terrible fates!
Almost made a wrong turn,
But managed escape,
And I at the wheel,
With my Nav at my side,
Studied maps, and survived,
A four-hour ride!

We arrived, everyone,
No worse for wear,
And trooped in the apartment,
Of the friend who lived there,
In the DFW area, and moved in
our stuff,
The one burning question,
Would there be room enough?

Twas the night before Trekcon,
And all through the flat,
The Trekkies were huddled
On bed, cot or mat.
Tired from their roadtrip,
But all so excited,
About attending the Trekcon
When dawn the sky lighted.

I laid in bed wondering
What the morrow would hold,
Having never been to a Con,
I could not have foretold,
What to expect,
Nor how to react,
Would tomorrow be fun,
Or be a real drag?

Twas the day of the Trekcon,
This thought went through my
head,
As I was quite rudely,
Expelled from my bed.
We have to leave early,
Our hostess professed,
For traffic and Con lines,
Could be a real mess!

I grumbled and groaned,
And with growing dismay,
I listened to my roomies
Plan to spend the whole day
At the Con, never asking
If that was okay,
It was merely assumed,
That things would be this way.

On the way to the Trekcon,
Crammed in the back seat,
Between two other people,
As we drove down the street,
I wondered again
about what lay in store,
Should I have brought a
good book?
Or maybe two, three or four?

At last we arrived,
And with growing surprise,
I took in my surroundings,
I stared with wide eyes,
At the line which extended
A good 30 yards,
From the doors to the Con,
Lots of fans of Picard!

And then my gaze dropped,
to the pitifully small stack,
Of newsletters I'd brought.
The number sure lacked.
It was while I was pondering
This awful disgrace,
That I saw a green slave girl,
We met face to face!

She smiled at my shock,
And she sauntered away,
I turned to my friends,
And to my dismay,
I ran smack into "Vincent",
From Beauty and the Beast,
Who fortunately, did not seem
Upset in the least.

The doors to the Con opened
Without fail,
But the line seemed to move
With the speed of a snail.
Away to the dealer rooms,
I flew like a flash,
Went up to the counter,
And opened my stash.

Suggestions for the Spacefaring Insomniac BY SANDRA PROVENCE STEELE

And what to my wondering eyes
should appear,
But Star Wars merchandise,
Expensive, I fear.
"Trek" and "Beast" items,
Were piled high on the shelf,
With fanzines and Indy,
And Jean-Luc himself!

We listened to Stewart,
And then to the reps,
Of Creation Conventions,
While they updated Trek.
There were auctions, charades,
And a 16mm film,
We laughed while poor Kirk
Went out on a limb.

The day hastened by,
Why it practically flew!
I was having such fun,
That I barely knew,
When the convention was closing,
Grinding to a slow halt,
There was a party afterwards,
But my friends said "no salt."
They were tired, bless their
hearts,
From the activities spent.
There was no point in arguing,
So, back home we went.

I did one more thing,
To celebrate my first Con,
I went to a stand,
And had a caricature drawn.
The artist asked what I'd be,
While he redied his pen,
I said, "A slave from Orion,
Complete with green skin."

Tek War by William Shatner
Ace/Putnam Books, 1989
2 1/2 out of 5 stars.

All right. Cease hostilities.
This book is not that bad.
Shatner's first attempt at
a novel is decidedly a space
opera. His style comes directly
from the golden age of science
fiction. He utilizes an action
adventure type plot with
extensive noun compounding.

Jake Cardigan (our hero)
is a cop gone bad who got an
early parole. He becomes involved
in breaking up a gang of "Tek"
runners. The story has lots of
bad guys, clever androids,
several plot twists and a
relatively simple ending.

What is "Tek"? Tek is
an electronic pleasure chip
which acts like a drug. But,
on page 65 there is a major
Freudian slip. I quote, "Hell,
your Trek-running buddies..."
Personally I would love to
know how that got through proofs.

All in all the novel is the
typical first novel. Entertaining
enough just not spectacular.
NEXT TIME: Nevermind. You'll just
have to wait and see. I'm not
going to commit myself to
read books I'm not in the mood for.