

# Vanish With the Rose #58

from Nicki Lynch, P.O. Box 3120, Gaithersburg, MD 20885. Internet address: [lynch@access.digex.net](mailto:lynch@access.digex.net)  
To see issues of our fanzine, *Mimosa*, and other stuff, check out our website at [www.smithway.org/mimosa](http://www.smithway.org/mimosa) Eurodiary site: <http://www.smithway.org/eurodiary> Russia 94 site: <http://www.smithway.org/russia94> This is written solely for the members of the 97th mailing of KAPA.

1/1/99

White Eagle Press #352

Well, I suppose everyone heard that there will not be a 1999 Disclave. For the second year in a row, there will be no local SF con. We weren't at the meeting, but from what people said, the decision was made by the chairman, who said he couldn't find a hotel.

So, will there be a Disclave in 2000? Stay tuned.

We're getting our second snow storm of the season (it's 1/8) and this one has more snow than the storm on the eve of Christmas Eve. It started snowing early in the morning and continued though most of the day. It's currently sleeting. In typical fashion, since it was predicted to turn to rain in the afternoon, Maryland road crews just put down a little sand and waited for the rain to melt the snow. And waited. And the snow continued into the afternoon, while road crews scrambled to catch up. Most schools were closed making travel a bit easier and giving the kids a chance to play in the snow.

I hope everyone had a good holiday season. We put up the artificial tree we bought last year. We decorated it with lights and the bells Rich brought back from Eastern Europe, as well as some of the other ornaments we've collected over the years. (Rich was there for a month, returning on Dec. 11. He has his adventures on the website.) My quilt guild has an ornament exchange each year - to participate one must bring a handmade one. I made a pair of ornaments and received a beautiful snowflake made of thin strips of wood. It was just the right size to be the star on the top.

We had a quiet Christmas and New Years Day, then it was back to work.

We also attended one of our favorite holiday parties, the Glogg Buffet at the Finish Embassy. Usually, it's held early December and we thought we'd missed it, since Rich was away. However, the hostess was out of town until Christmas, so the buffet was delayed until after New Years. And we were there.

Finland's Embassy is a wonderful building located on Massachusetts Ave. opposite the Naval Observatory. It's very modern with details in copper with a wooden spiral staircase in the center. It's always a pleasure to attend a function there. This year, the event was held on the oldest night of the season so far. We were late and had to park way up on 34th St. It wasn't a long walk, but in just stockings in 10 degree weather wasn't fun. As we approached the embassy, I heard this strange repeating noise. When we turned the corner on to Mass Ave. we saw the source of the noise, a protester walking up and down in front of the building next to the Finland Embassy. He hadn't been there when we drove by.

Inside, the Embassy we were greeted by some aids who asked us how we liked the Finnish weather they

## Vanish with the Rose #58

imported for the party. We ran into Rich's friend in the embassy when we descended the stairs who lead us over to the Glogg. Glogg is a mixture of red wine and vodka with a pinch of spice, served hot with slivered almonds and raisins served on the side. Served in a demitasse cup, one places a few pieces of almond and raisins in before drinking. After the liqueur is drunk, one spoons out the nuts and raisins. Wonderful stuff!

I got to meet Rich's contractor who works with him on energy projects and his girl friend, who were very interesting. Being at a different time of year, they had a different caterer and the food was wonderful. We were especially taken with the dessert, which was a chocolate mouse cake.

When we left, the contractor said the Vatican Embassy was next door and some guy pickets it every night. We told him we had seen the guy when we came in, but was gone when we left. It was a very Washington sort of night, with the glitz of an Embassy party and the reality of a pickettor.

I hope everyone is enjoying the latest Washington circus. This city is never dull and this is just the beginning, as was pointed out in the *Post* recently. You may not remember this, but Ken Starr was originally hired to investigate Whitewater and has yet to give the final disposition on that. So stay tuned!

On to the comments on KAPA 96.

OO Pat

Great cover for this mailing. Another by Naomi, I assume. \*\* Sorry that Joel dropped out. The apa gets a little smaller again.

BlueGras no. 40 Guy

You couldn't find the Blue Ash Best Western Hotel? Shame on you, Guy, for missing a classic con. It's just off the interstate and very easy to find. \*\* ct Naomi Well, had you asked Lowell, he probably would have told you to mind your own business. However, Rich badgered him and found he got a 5-figure amount for the film and the next one (if any). Not as much as he should have gotten, but I believe Lowell does get a cut of merchandise and the cartoon series. \*\* ct Naomi I can't see anime even making a crack in the dramatic presentation Hugo unless it gets a lot more exposure. The Sci Fi Channel runs some occasionally, but I don't know if it gets over here within the year time limit. \*\* ct Bryan Just because a book is optioned, it doesn't mean anything will happen with it. *Stranger in a Strange Land* has been optioned for years and has yet to be produced. \*\*ct Bryan From all the reviews I've read, forget *Soldier*. How about *Pleasantville*? How about *Babe, Pig in the City*, which made the best picture list of several reviewers. \*\*ct Bryan re you ego scan. I think Lexis-Nexis is not available on a web search as I think it's still a paid service. You're only getting the free for view stuff on a web search. It also depends on which search engine you use. I hope you found your article in *Mimosa*. \*\* ct Pat Actually, no. I suspect people

## Vanish with the Rose #58

remembered what Florida in late August is like and voted accordingly. It was also a long walk from the hotels to the convention center at Magicon, not unlike Bucconeer. \*\* ct Pat re *Contact* Maybe the character isn't so shallow as to be only interesting in the outer surface.

### Sailing The Abnormalcy #28 Bryan

#### Notes from the Club Car 50 Pat

If I ever get to San Diego, the zoo and wild animal park are places I want to see. When Rich was there in the spring with the Slovaks, they got a tour of the harbor, which they enjoyed. \*\* Wow, a fire alarm in a hotel and there wasn't even a convention. When we first moved here, we stayed in a hotel for a few months and there were a rash of middle of the night false fire alarms. \*\*ct me We consider Good for you for getting out of debt. It's an important step towards stability. I hope that you're a participant in your company's retirement plan, as well. It may not seem like it now, but it will be important when you get near retirement age. Be sure to put the max in while you can and urge Beth to join any retirement plan at her next job. If the terms aren't attractive, start your own IRA or Roth. \*\* The *Chung Kuo* series sounds like *Babylon 5*; characters and situations took unexpected turns and it's amazing to look back as where people ended up from when they started. \*\* ct me I'm not sure why cell phones receive fewer unwanted calls. \*\* ct me Without seat belt laws, would cars have seat belts? (Consider that cars did not have seat belts until sometime in the sixties, but accidents happened from the beginning.) What not go further and not require cars to have seat belts? If people want them, they can put them in at their own expense. Of course, that puts any passengers in the position of letting someone else make a decision about their life. You keep forgetting that no matter what the situation is, there can be a lawsuit, which is why we have so many laws, rules, etc. If some rules seem silly, it's probably because someone sued and won. The company, government, etc. is forced to make laws, etc. because of that; they don't sit around thinking up things to make life difficult. They are reactive, not proactive. \*\* ct me How exactly would you hold people accountable for their actions? Aren't people held accountable for their actions now? I don't know of any law that says a person can be held accountable unless they have a good excuse. (It takes a jury to do that.) Unfortunately, you're dealing with people and not machines. \*\* ct me Well, the shelf we keep the Hugos on is full. I don't think we'll win in Australia; there are several really good Aussie fanzines and I can't see them not wining at home. \*\* ct Tony People didn't seem to care that Reagan disregarded the laws by authorizing back door funds for the Iran Contras (if anyone remembers that far back). Bush went as far as claiming to not be at meetings about the Iran Contras; it was discovered later that he was at meetings, took notes, and destroyed them after he said he wasn't there. The Democrats were the majority at that point in time. Being here at the time, this is my take: it was general knowledge in Washington that the Reagan White House was run by Nancy as Reagan was "not all there". (After every speech, his spin doctors would tell us what he meant to say - this is where spin doctors became popular.) Since he was popular and we still had the Cold War to worry about, they didn't want to expose the fact that he was experiencing mental problems. So, the zealots like Ollie North were eager to take over with a little encouragement, since they had the backing of the far right. It worked. The sad thing is that a traitor like

## Vanish with the Rose #58

North might get into Congress. \*\* ct Tony re Glenn The payback you suggest is general knowledge in D.C. \*\* ct Naomi re special prosecutor The special prosecutor is appointed by the Attorney General and “works” for Congress. \*\* ct Naomi Good words about James Randi. Cincinnati a long drive (10 hours), but we do it anyway. It’ll be tighter this year as most of my vacation is going toward going to Australia. \*\* ct me The Constitution and Amendments were perfectly clear to the educated in the 1700s. Over the centuries things and society has changed. “Pursuit of happiness” was clear the common man of the day - it meant owning property. \*\* ct Betsy I prefer a definition I saw on the comics page - SUV = Small Ugly Vehicle.

### Transitional Nattering 1 Naomi

I must admit, I don’t think I would have ever guessed you would sign up for a Tax Prep course. You must remember that the tax code evolved with input from all sort of lobbying groups and pork that could be added by every Congressperson.

### Kentucky Nuggets Jodie

When I was in a book store the other day, I saw one of those “...for Dummies” books. It was *The Royal Family for Dummies*. \*\* “Brain Food” Ick.

Well, that’s it for comments.

NOTE: The times, days and networks are subject to change without notice. Check the local listing for the show if you think it might help.

A new TV season started in September and there have been some good shows introduced as well as some bad ones. Most of the bad ones are gone and some of the good ones are hanging in there. Here are some of my thoughts about the good ones.

The best new show so far is *Cupid* (Thursday, 9 PM, ABC). What, you say, a show that is almost a fantasy and is about romance is the best of the genre so far? Yes!! Starring Jeremy Priven (as the title character) and Paula Marshall, *Cupid* is a romantic comedy about a man who may, or may not be, Cupid who has been made mortal as a punishment by the gods. In order to become a god again, he must pair up 100 couples. It has to be true love as well, as determined by the gods who keep score. Naturally, he was a little disoriented when he first arrived and landed in a mental ward. A celebrity psychologist (Marshall) is appointed to his case by the court and she is intrigued by his obsession. She thinks he suffered a major trauma in his life from a relationship and is suppressing his identity with this delusion of being Cupid. He, of course, is adamant that he is Cupid and works tirelessly to pair up people he meets through the weekly singles sessions the doctor holds.

The writing is sharp and the acting is well done. It reminds me of other romantic comedies, such as

## Vanish with the Rose #58

*Moonlighting* and *Remington Steele*, but without the detective story frame work. The underlying question in the series, which cannot be answered or the series would be over, is whether or not his story is true - is he Cupid, the Roman god of love made mortal? The premier episode had several hints that he's not crazy and some that he was. I'm glad that the question is left open and isn't forced in each episode. He's also a bit of a fish out of water, as he claims to be unaware of many of the consequences of being mortal, such as death or injuries. This isn't the usual fantasy show and it probably appeals more to women than men, but if you're looking for something different on Saturday night, tune in!

*Fantasy Island* was a "dark updating" of the 80's series. It's been cancelled, but the last few episodes are being shown on Saturday nights.

*Mercy Point* was a "hospital in space" series that lasted for three episodes. Was it that bad? Well, it was mediocre at best and poorly written. They could have benefited by watching some of the stories from the *Star Trek* series or *Babylon 5* that were set in the medical facilities. Any of them would have been an education for the writers. Well, it's gone, so let's move on quickly.

In the same category of being stuck with poor writing is *Seven Days* (Wednesday, 8 PM, UPN), a series about a science project that allows a person to travel back in time seven days maximum. (I wonder what would happen if the person kept going back seven days each time?) Starring Jonathan LaPaglia, who has to be the ugliest leading man in a series so far, *Seven Days* also features Justina Vail, Don Franklin, Norman Lloyd, Nick Searcy, Alan Scarfe, and Sam Whipple in the cast. Only several weeks old, this series is in danger of running out of ideas. Already, he's met himself, got stuck in a time loop, and battled a "clone" of himself. There's also the reason he time travels - some place on the globe (usually Washington) has been nuked, so he has to go back to prevent it. (How fortunate that the project is never in the blast zone!) Since *Seven Days* is on UPN, which as a network is suffering in the ratings, its future is in doubt.

For those who love *Buffy*, *the Vampire Slayer* and *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch*, there is another entry in the supernatural series category - *Charmed* (Tuesday, 9 PM, WB). Starring Shannen Doherty, Alyssa Milano, and Holly Marie Combs, *Charmed* follows the adventures of three 20 something sisters who inherit their grandmother's Victorian in San Francisco and discover a Book of Spells in the attic. By opening the Book of Spells, they receive their final inheritance - the knowledge that they are witches and that each has a specific power. Naturally, the powers are new to them and they are learning to control them. They also are now the target of supernatural predators who either want to kill them or steal their book.

While some people may be put off because it's an Aaron Spelling production, so far the stories have been interesting and the acting pretty good. It's not going to knock your socks off with special effects or plot, but *Charmed* is clever at times and fun to watch.

Staying with the supernatural setting, but moving to a much darker setting is *Brimstone* (Friday, 8 PM,

## Vanish with the Rose #58

FOX). This show wasn't suppose to debut until the last week in October, but was moved up and to a different day when the two new comedies scheduled before *Millennium* tanked. It's currently on at 8 PM, which strikes me as too early a time for this show.

*Brimstone*, starring Peter Horton, follows the quest of Ezekiel Stone, a cop who killed his wife's rapist before being killed himself, who is returned to Earth from Hell by the devil (deliciously played by John Glover) to recapture 113 evil souls which escaped into this world. Once the task is complete, he will be rewarded with a new life. The names of each escapee is "tattooed" on his arm and is removed each time the soul is returned to Hell. How does he do that, you might wonder, as they are unable to be injured or killed as they are dead? Since the "eyes are the mirror to the soul", he must destroy their eyes. While this might sound like a weekly eye-gouging, so far it hasn't been graphic (which will disappoint some and relieve others). The show is stylish and beautifully photographed in stark colors, with good acting and (so far) interesting scripts. I find this show is a good fit with *Millennium* and hope that *Millennium's* writing takes a turn for the better to match *Brimstone*.

If *Brimstone* whets your appetite for heroes who return from the dead, tune into *The Crow: Stairway to Heaven* in syndication and on WGN for those with cable.

Based on the comic book and movie of the same name (both of which I've never seen), *The Crow: Stairway to Heaven* begins with the reawakening of Eric Draven (Mark Dacascos), after being dead for a year. He and his girl friend, Shelly, were murdered for unknown reasons and she is unable to move into the next stage of the afterlife without him. He, for unknown reasons, has been returned to life, sort of, and must win redemption in order to move with her into the next. This would be an annoying premise except that Eric doesn't know what's happened to him and we learn along with him about his new state of being. He thinks that he must right wrongs (specifically what happened to them) in order to move them both to the other side. Eric seems like a regular person until he needs to become his supernatural alter ego, The Crow. When that happens, his face goes white and his eyes and mouth are smeared black. His powers are an inability to die, rapid healing, marshal arts skills, and a quick wit which he uses to fight the bad guys, usually not killing because Shelly wouldn't want that.

*The Crow: Stairway to Heaven* is stylishly produced and the stories are interesting when they deal with his state of being and what his possible mission on earth might be. The stories are OK when he gets involved in something out of that story line. The acting is fine and the eeriness of the sets add to the visual interest, as one would expect from a comic book. If they can find a direction to keep the story going, it could be a good series.

Along the same lines as *The Crow: Stairway to Heaven*, but based on a different movie - *Highlander* - is the spin-off from *Highlander: The Series* - *Highlander: The Raven*. This time the hero is a 1200 year old Immortal female thief, Amanda (Elizabeth Gracen). This series is also in syndication, so you'll have to look for it.

## Vanish with the Rose #58

Amanda was introduced in *Highlander: The Series* and was a fairly popular character. In her own show, Amanda is still a thief, but gains an ex-cop (Paul Johansson playing Nick Wolf) as a "partner" when his partner (a woman) dies to save Amanda. Since Amanda cannot die, except when another immortal cuts off her head, she found a mortal dying for her a great revelation. Or so we're told.

I wanted to like this series since I liked *Highlander: The Series* so much. I wasn't thrilled with Amanda as the main character as she wasn't much of a fighter and was perpetually on the run from the law. In the new series, she seems to have settled down and even has a housekeeper who knows about her, while still being a thief. Her cop "partner" (a relationship that has yet to develop) isn't very interesting. So far the episodes have been pretty lackluster and not particularly engaging, sort of *Highlander: The Series* meets *Silk Stalkings*. She seems to have gotten better in her sword fighting, but in an episode where she was going into the final round with another immortal, it cut to a commercial and then we saw her returning home. What a cheat! Even the writers don't have a lot of faith in her abilities. The writers and directors also don't seem too familiar with the *Highlander* cannon build up over six years, which will not help them with the fans. The Highlander newsgroup has talked a lot about the series and come up with the same conclusion I did for improving the series - dump the male lead. If that's not possible, he should either be clean shaven or grow a beard. The scruffy look is so 80's.

Yes, I've skipped a few of the new genre series and all the young adult ones. One has only so much time.

There are also some great non-sf genre TV shows on this season. Among the best of that category is *Sports Night* - a TV show set in the studio of a nightly cable sports-news show (Tues. 9:30 PM ABC). Starring Peter Krause, Felicity Huffman, Josh Charles, Robert Guillaume, Joshua Malina, Sabrina Lloyd, *Sports Night* is an unusual comedy in that the people are all pros and not a fumbler or bumbler in the bunch. The on air talent is smooth and informed and the behind the scenes people are equally competent. The humor comes from the interaction of the people and the situations in the sports events. It's also not just a comedy; each show has some serious things to say about the people there. It's worth spending a half hour with these people.

Another good new show, which is on opposite *Sports Night*, is *Will & Grace* (Tues., 9:30 PM NBC). Another comedy, this one is more toward the screwball variety as Grace (Debra Messing) moved in with her best friend Will (Eric McCormack) after she broke up with her boyfriend. Will is gay. And there lies the comedy. *Will & Grace* are blessed with two terrific friends - played by Sean Hayes and Megan Mullally, who comment on their relationship and add to the fun. Their relationship with their fiends and each other is wonderful and the writing is equally sharp. It may not be everyone's cup of tea, but it might give you a laugh or two.

What would you call a show where one man encounters a person with a seemingly impossible problem, so he puts a plan together with a group of people he knows and solves the problem? Why you'd call it *Vengeance Unlimited* (Thurs. 8 PM, ABC), starring Michael Madsen as Mr. Chappel. Mr. Chappel

## Vanish with the Rose #58

specializes in bringing to justice people who are just beyond the reach, due to their wealth, position, etc. He has help in the form of Kathleen York, whose character works in the police department. In return for helping people, he asks for a fee of one million dollars....or a favor when he asks them some time in the future. Madsen is equally creepy and intriguing as the guy who's always one step ahead of the bad guys. *Vengeance Unlimited* was not given high marks in the new season, but it reminds me of the old *Mission Impossible* in its structure. If you like a clever mystery of the how-will-he-do-it variety, you might enjoy it.

If you love the chop-saki movies made popular currently by Jackie Chan, you'll probably like *Martial Law* (Sat., 9 PM, CBS) and it's large star - Sammo Hung. A major star in Asia, Sammo is becoming that here with this drama light but martial arts heavy cop show. Sammo Law (Hung) came over to L.A. looking for a master Chinese criminal and his best cop student. In several episodes, he captures the master criminal and saves his student (Kelley Wu) who joins the LAPD. Since Law is one of the best cops and people they've seen, the LAPD sends one of their less-than-finest over to China in exchange for him and the adventures continue.

Sammo's English isn't particularly good, so the American's do the "heavy lifting" in that department, while Sammo does all his own stunts that are quite amazing for a man of his size. I suspect that within a year, his English will improve to the point where he won't sound so stilted. Like the martial arts flicks, the show ends with some of the out takes. The first and second episode show people being carted off to the hospital, but now it's more flubbed lines. The stories are so-so, but probably better than the show it's paired with - *Walker, Texas Ranger*. The acting is certainly better. Check out CBS's only hit of the new season and see why Sammo has a following around the world.

So there's the season in a nutshell, or at least a few pages. What do you think?

See you next time. N