

LIVE CHAT WITH CHRIS DEE

DEMON'S IN THE DETAILS

MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2009

chris dee: Evening guys. Room is officially open. Will give everyone a chance to get here, and we'll begin a few minutes after 8.

silent miaow: Hi Chris. Ok

chris dee: I guess we can get started. A few announcements to begin.

chris dee: First, in the next few weeks, I'll be consolidating some of the forums we don't use anymore and archiving others.

silent miaow: NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

chris dee: Whoa, whoa whoa. Nothing to scream about, I promise. I'm not shutting down the main CT forum. Only a few of the others like Artists Colony and Writers that are not in use any more. They are a relic of an old board we had called

chris dee: Gotham After Dark, which had a large group of active writers and a few artists. Also there were current comic arcs worth talking about back then. Cat-Tales was only one small niche. Now it is the active niche and those old boards are lying fallow. There's no point in keeping them open when it just confuses newcomers.

chris dee: None of the goodies in there will be lost. Everything worth keeping gets moved to the museum/archive.

chris dee: This also frees up space down the line for me to add new boards or other features that are pertinent to the CT - and more importantly the internet - of today.

silent miaow: ok.

silent miaow: Is the wiki staying?

chris dee: The wiki is something that was provided because readers requested it. As long as you guys work on it, it will stay.

silent miaow: I've been working

chris dee: I saw. Great work too. Good synopses

silent miaow: thanks

chris dee: Okay, so, a forum reorganization is coming. No need to panic. It's not code for anything. It's just cyber housekeeping.

chris dee: Announceent #2

chris dee: I'm not exactly surprised at the small turnout because I have an unprecedented number of emailed questions

chris dee: So this will be the last weekday evening chat we will have for a while. Next time we go back to Saturday and Sunday afternoons. It seems that is best for all the timezones involved.

chris dee: Also because of the large number of write ins from people who can't be here in realtime, we may vary the format a little. You guys have precedence, you're here, but I will be interrupting more often to read in mail questions.

silent miaow: Matilda the cat from chapter seemed like something real. Is she?

chris dee: Yes! Thanks for reminding me about chapter 1 stuff

chris dee: About 6 months ago somebody sent me a clipping on the real Algonquin cat's cat fashion show

chris dee: I have a file of those on my harddrive, people are always sendign me stuff

chris dee: Now and then I have an opening and pop it in. In this case, there were hysterical photos of the cats in their "mouse wear"

chris dee: I was sorry I couldn't post them. Old hard drive. Many files gone bye-bye

The Thundering Monkey: Mousewear for Cats?? Were these cats by any chance imprisoned in Abu Ghirab?

chris dee: Well first, I fully intended to have a Horta joke at the end. Once Selina says where she had been, Tim immediately references the Horta he knows from star trek, once again cementing his trekkiehood. That didn't work out.

chris dee: (Oh no no no - my bad. It was Meow-wear, not mouse-wear.)

chris dee: (Mouse-wear that would just be wrong)

Allaine: hi :)

Allaine: Forgot about this, actually. Been writing for the past hour.

silent miaow: I've been asking all kinds of weird stuff.

chris dee: You're fine, SM. But we should get back to the tale now

chris dee: Allaine, I was saying how I've got a lot more questions emailed this time.

Apparently the regulars all knew they weren't going to be attending

Allaine: okay

chris dee: So you can each ask a question, and then I take one from the mailbag

Allaine: *chuckles* Haven't I already asked you fifty or so? :P

Allaine: When did you decide that Dr. Meadows was a rabid geek out of a Xena episode?

Allaine: that was actually unexpected

chris dee: The "All scientists speak Star Trek" idea came at the start of the chapter where it appeared

chris dee: I like coming into a situation from an oddball angle, and that just jumped up and said "Pick me, Pick me!"

chris dee: With Tim's Trekkie gag already established, it was just one more detail to throw onto his back

Allaine: I was reminded a bit of Galaxy Quest

chris dee: One of my faves. Anything particular about it?

Allaine: just, you know, the really devoted fans like Justin Long . . .

Allaine: Meadows seemed like the kind of girl who would know where the generator room was because "that's where it would be on the Enterprise".

chris dee: And Allaine, TM, YES! Exactly

chris dee: She's totally that type

The Thundering Monkey: Stampers???? Why the hell would they need these on a starship???

chris dee: I have another star trek question from the mailbag

chris dee: Q: Any particular reason for the Star Trek running gag?

chris dee: Well, there were two big influences behind the Trek stuff. The first - as most CT insiders know - is Thundering Monkey.

The Thundering Monkey: oops

chris dee: Glad he's back to hear this

chris dee: Monkey started "The Trekkie" as a secret identity, like 5 years ago When he first joined the CT message board. You can still find the thread called "You know Tim's starting to get a little older now" with some of the identities Tim could assume - and which I borrowed from extensively for Dick's prank.

chris dee: For the second influence, we also go back a good few years. Viggo Mortensen appeared on the Daily Show. As soon as he sits down, Jon Stewart says how they have this guy on the staff who is the biggest LOTR fan and is having geekgasms all week because Viggo is coming on the show. Jon pulls out a speaker phone, and it's Stephen Colbert, who starts giving the whole genealogy...

chris dee: "Aragorn is the son of Arathorn who is descended from Anarion through Firiel, the daughter of King Ondoher, who married Arvedui, Last King of Arthedain..."

Allaine: lol

chris dee: It's hysterical. And I always thought it would be funny to do in a bat context. Rogues are always pulling out pop culture references in their clues, and let's say tonight's riddle is something like Harry Potter, Tolkien, or Star Trek, where the internet is too polluted with drivel that Oracle can't be any help.

chris dee: It will take time they don't have for her to make the right kind of filter. B needs the information now, and Barbara says "Oh, you know who to ask, TIM!" Five minutes later, Tim in on the com, like Stephen Colbert, enthusiastically giving the whole geek overview. Immune and oblivious to B's repeated attempts to reign him in.

chris dee: That scene never happened, but this was a perfect way to introduce the closet geek aspects of Tim's personality

chris dee: Now, that was the intentional part. I was stuck with some unintentional whiffs of Star Trek because Atlantis is so high tech. When your talking about transporter chambers and holograms, we all have the same images in our head, and those images are all on the Enterprise. I would have preferred not to have those subtext, since I was using Trek elsewhere it did muddying the waters a bit. But it couldn't be helped.

Allaine: anyone who plays Silent Shogee that much? He wasn't that far in the closet.

chris dee: Really? I thought games like that weren't confined to geeks anymore

Allaine: that's right, I forgot that Star Trek wasn't the only pop culture you injected into this story. There was also Harry Potter

chris dee: But I actually have no idea. I was a serious she-geek

chris dee: Strangely, they stop calling you that once you reach D-cup

chris dee: :P

silent miaow: LOL

Allaine: lol, yes, no one could never overlook your lack of complexity.

The Thundering Monkey: Incidentally I'm working on a pic for this one Tim as Kirk and all that that implies

Allaine: (Ivy would appreciate it if Tim never points out that Kirk always nailed the green girl.)

The Thundering Monkey: She should have thought of that before she gave me all the trouble with the cherry blossoms picture

chris dee: (HA, noted. Don't mess with the monkey.)

silent miaow: words to live by

chris dee: Okay while we're still more or less on the subject of computer games

chris dee: Yes, all the minion takedowns in the final chapter are a nod to Arkham Asylum

chris dee: And it's really cool how many of the FFnet reviewers picked up on that.

chris dee: I always like giving a nod to Batman offerings that get it right, and that game really introduces the Detective and Thinker to the PsychoBat crowd in a way they can, possibly, understand. If you approach it like a Double-Y Neanderthal I'm-the-Goddamn-Batman, you're going to die fast. If you rub some synapses together until they make a spark, you get to be Batman and win the game.

chris dee: That deserves a shout out

Allaine: So you think I'd like it?

chris dee: I think you probably have other interests besides *deep gravel* **Being Batman**

Allaine: there IS that

chris dee: But I will put in a little advert for the voice talent. Arlene Sorokin voices Harley and Hamill is back yet again as Joker, so for BTAS fans who remember the early days, it IS very nostalgic

chris dee: For that matter, the opening sequence, which you can see on youtube, will take you right back

chris dee: The detail, the camera shots, this is a Gotham built with love, in the virtual world this time instead of traditional animation. But all that sweat and blood is in there

chris dee: Nobody phoned it in, these people really put their shoulders into it. That doesn't happen by accident, when they CARE about giving us a good product, and I think that deserves a shout out too

silent miaow: Amen

The Thundering Monkey: I didn't see Catwoman in it at all from the clips I've seen

chris dee: She isn't. Which also gets big points

chris dee: 1. What would she be doing at Arkham?

The Thundering Monkey: Makes sense since she's never been to Arkham

chris dee: 2. If it's official sanctioned DC product, do we WANT Catwoman in it?

chris dee: Although, as long as I'm pimping non-CT stuff, that Brave and the Bold episode--

chris dee: The one with the classic Catwoman costume & bat/cat interplay, that someone posted in the forum a few months ago

chris dee: I believe is scheduled to air soon in the U.S.

Allaine: oh really. I'll have to look that up. I hadn't heard

chris dee: Another question from the room, or should I delve back into the bag?

chris dee: Mailbag it is.

chris dee: Q: What prompted you to flesh out the DEMON minions in general, and Ubu in particular?

chris dee: As everyone knows, I'm a theatre gal from way back. A staple of live theatre is showing an unexpected POV. I think that works especially well with very familiar stories.

chris dee: High brow, you've got Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, which tells the story of the two characters with the smallest roles in Hamlet.

chris dee: Low brow, Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Babylon 5 did the same thing, where the formula of the weekly crises becomes so familiar, you can omit huge chunks of it and everyone can follow just fine.

chris dee: The B5 episode is actually called "The View from the Cheap Seats", and that pretty much sums up the idea.

chris dee: The first minion to really receive a full personality was Omar way back in Book 1, then Ulstarn came around, and now it's just a part of my shtick.

The Thundering Monkey: Ah, the Zeppo. One of my favorite episodes

chris dee: Yes! That's what it was called

chris dee: I couldn't remember

chris dee: One more, a quick one, and then we can get off these prepared answers of mine. And we'll go back to where I can't type

chris dee: Q: What was the inspiration for Valerina?

chris dee: MyklarCure introduced Valerina in *JLAin't: Reds, Greens, and Holiday Blues*. That was circa Dick & Barbara's engagement, and thought it would be fun to go back and see how she fared.

chris dee: I saw her having come a long way from that meek introduction, and as soon as I had that notion of seeing this meek little aide who's afraid to open her mouth having developed into such a responsible and capable young woman who's practically running the palace, I thought of Charlie Young on West Wing.

chris dee: While her name and position came from *JLAin't*, I'd have to say the rest of her character was inspired by Charlie.

silent miaow: Arthur reacted badly when Batman mentioned trace DNA, and Batman apologized because it was a sore subject. Why?

chris dee: Ooh, another good question from early on

chris dee: That was a toss in from the same Anton Geist story that introduced Sub Diego and the mutated water breathers

chris dee: Geist made the mutation from Aquaman's DNA

chris dee: Arthur was attending some fundraising dinner for some environmental cause or other

The Thundering Monkey: Dammit Bruce, they said what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas!

chris dee: Geist had got a job as a waiter or bus boy at the hotel specifically to work at this event

chris dee: He took the glass Arthur had drunk from, bingo, water-man DNA

silent miaow: Thank you. I wondered

chris dee: Just one of those things I'll toss in for anybody that knows. Nothing in the story hinges on knowing what it's about though

chris dee: Last call

chris dee: One question a piece, and one mailbag

chris dee: Nobody?

chris dee: Okay, looks like I can take 2 from the mailbag before we call it a night then

chris dee: Q: Have you ever been to the Azores? And is there a hidden link between the Portuguese influence in the Azores, the Portuguese collector in Madagascar, and the Portuguese goats on Bugio?

chris dee: Nope, never been there myself. Most of what I used in the tale came from an episode of Anthony Bourdain No Reservations

chris dee: Horta, Pete's bar, the fried canaries, the hot spring, it's all from that

The Thundering Monkey: Man, payed to travel. How do you get that job.

chris dee: The Portuguese was not intentional. When you're dealing with that part of the atlantic, the portuguese are just everywhere, historically

chris dee: Bugio was at the right place to be a jumping off point for where Ra's was going.

chris dee: And the Azores are perfectly positioned to be the closest port of call near Atlantis

chris dee: If you're curious, here is the website for Pete's Cafe Sport which has a killer flash map indicating their locatio

chris dee: http://www.petercafesport.com/localizacao_eng.htm

silent miaow: cool

The Thundering Monkey: I thought I detected a bit of Hunt For Red October in the early chapters with the cold war Russian General

The Thundering Monkey: I remember a part about them meticulously mapping the rifts to sneak past the sensor net NATO build to contain them.

chris dee: That's true! Maybe less deliberate and more subconscious than the stuff I stick in intentionally

chris dee: I am a big fan of Red October, but consciously I had some other stuff in mind - oh boy, long explanation time

chris dee: Disney's Epcot Center, they have an attraction called The Living Seas

chris dee: Not the current version but the ORIGINAL attraction had this great movie in the preshow, where they talked about these deep vents in the crust

chris dee: sea water rushes in, and every so often it comes out as a geiser of this superheated mineral-laden fluid

chris dee: which should be poisonous to anything alive, but somehow there are these plants and fish that grow in it

The Thundering Monkey: I saw that! Music by Sting!

chris dee: Wasn't it great! I loved that movie

chris dee: And it rained, and rained, and rained. THE DELUGE

silent miaow: I bet that's on youtube to.

chris dee: anyway, as soon as I started playign with arthur and atlantis ideas, I knew I wanted to work in those vents

chris dee: which you hear about most blatantly when Arthur goes to see Lorena in sub diego

chris dee: at the same time, Myklar was helping with all this Atlantis history, and the shadow deep coming from sea trenches

chris dee: and there was a little helm's deep influence, obviously, in Kapheira

chris dee: deep trenches mean faultline, where you have faults you have mountains as well as valleys, so that's where you run to when the enemy is coming

chris dee: so anyway, that's what I was consciously thinking, but now that you mention it, I'm sure the Red October bit with the russian subs running those trenches figured in also

chris dee: Last question - Q: What was the impetus for putting an "assistant" theme into this Cat-Tales? (sensing another theme here?)

chris dee: I love 'compare and contrast', especially as characterization. The Rashomon opening necessitated a lot of underlings. It requires many points of view, and where Ra's is involved, everyone in DEMON that isn't him is an underling.

chris dee: Because this story also involved Bruce and Arthur, who are both men of importance in their non League lives and therefore on equal footing with Ra's in that they have people under them, it seemed a natural to compare them.

chris dee: We know without "exploring" it that Ra's treats his people like chattel and that Bruce and Arthur would treat their well, but I think it is always worth showing those things rather than just stating them as a given.

chris dee: Whew, I never thought I'd get through that many. The remaining few I can answer in the forums. Thank you both for being so patient

chris dee: Next time we'll go back to weekends and maybe more people can come in person

silent miaow: thank you chris. it was a lot of fun

The Thundering Monkey: alright