

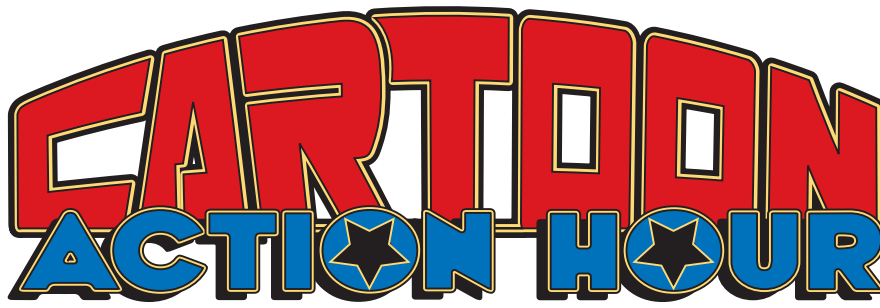
CARTOON ACTION HOUR

Season Two

Valentine's Day Special



Cynthia Celeste Miller



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INTRODUCTION

One of humankind's most profound emotions is love... and what better time to talk about love than on Valentine's Day? In the machismo-filled world of the retro-toons, love wasn't something that was blatantly bandied about on a regular basis. The characters would rather duke it out or shoot at each other with lasers than engage in romantic situations. That having been said, romance wasn't completely absent from the retro-toons. It was just muted and watered down a bit, making it more tolerable for the target audience.

This mini-sourcebook was written with one goal in mind: to help players and GMs introduce romantic elements into *Cartoon Action Hour: Season 2* without violating everything that the retro-toons stood for.

The first section deals with advice for integrating romance into the game, while the second section presents a series that explores romantic themes more than most others.

ROMANCE IN CAH:S2

On the occasions that romance crept its way into the retro-toons, it was kept more or less on the down low. That is, it wasn't something terribly overt in the grand scheme of things. It was hinted at more so than directly depicted.

And when it appeared at all, it was most often a plot device aimed at getting the primary characters involved in the story. Perhaps the villains kidnap the person who has been dating one of the heroes or maybe the love interest turns out to be a spy for the villains and is using the hero to get top-secret information. Situations along these lines are definitely in the spirit of the retro-toons, all the while allowing some romantic role-playing to occur in order to establish a connection between the two love interests.

WHAT CARTOON ROMANCE DIDN'T HAVE

Before we can start discussing how to run romance-themed games of CAH:S2, we have to talk a bit about the things you just didn't see in cartoon romance.

Sex

This is a no-brainer. Retro-toons were targeting the kiddies as their main audience, so there's no way in the world that the depiction of sex would have been allowed. In fact, they didn't even allude to it by way of innuendo. The parent groups would have pitched a fit and had the series pulled from the schedule in a New York minute.

Excessive Mushiness

While many girls enjoyed the action-adventure retro-toons, the execs understood that these shows were going to appeal mostly to boys. This being the case, how many young boys were going to sit through a scene involving lots of lovey-dovey dialogue? Not very many, that's for certain. As soon as the sentimentality would get too thick, they would have bolted immediately. A little bit sprinkled here and there might fly, but anything more just isn't being true to the source material.

Major Displays of Physical Affection

This loosely ties in with sex, as discussed above, but still deserves special mention in its own right. Displays of physical affection were limited to a hug, a kiss on the cheek or the holding of hands, as the execs didn't want to excite young boys or romanticize lewd behavior.

LOVE INTERESTS

Romance almost exclusively revolved around a love interest for one of the characters. These love interests took one of two forms. Both types of love interests are detailed below.

- **The Short-Termer:** This type of love interest is introduced and established early in the episode and is most commonly used simply as a plot device for the episode's story. By the end of the episode, the hero and the love interest cease to be an item, due to various circumstances (the two realize that they can't be together, the love interest moves away, etc.). This ties the plot up, allowing the next episode to start without unnecessary baggage for the hero. The short-termer is always an NPC and might eventually pop up again in the future.
- **The Long-Termer:** This type of love interest appears regularly throughout the series and becomes a recurring character as a result. While this love interest wasn't necessarily inserted just to act as a plot device, she can still be used as one when duty calls, so to speak. The long-termer could be either a PC or NPC. If it's an NPC, the GM should make sure that the two players whose characters are involved are comfortable with it. Otherwise, it could lead to some seriously awkward and uncomfortable moments.

Twists

Love interests in the retro-toons were seldom bland. Rather, the writers usually threw in a curveball that would shake things up a bit. What follows is a quick summary of a few different twists for GMs to use. The list is hardly exhaustive, however, and GMs are encouraged to devise their own twists.

- The love interest is secretly a villain and the hero doesn't know it.
- The love interest is secretly a villain, but the hero knows; a classic case of forbidden love.
- The love interest is torn between two loves – the hero and somebody else (perhaps one of the hero's comrades).
- The love interest isn't as perfect as the hero thinks.
- The love interest has a dark secret that could threaten their relationship.
- The love interest doesn't know the hero exists or doesn't care; yet that doesn't stop him from trying to capture her heart.
- The love interest belongs to another social class and it's taboo for them to be together.
- The love interest has a defective personality and nobody else likes her but the hero.
- The love interest has no idea that the hero has feelings for her, as he hasn't told her or demonstrated it to her.

Ladies of Might

"Behold the power of virtue!"

PC Creation Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to all PCs for the *Ladies of Might* series.

Proof of Purchase Points: PCs are created using 30 PoPPs.

Maximum Trait Ratings (Regular Traits): 10

Maximum Trait Ratings (Action Features): 14

Miscellaneous:

- The characters must be females.
- The characters must be members of the Council of Might.
- Each character must have a Trait that represents her own Item of Virtue (a sword, locket, amulet, bracelet, hairbrush, mirror, shield, etc.). This item is a major focal point of the character and should tie into her theme (see below) if she has one. It's up to you to decide what the item does.
- There are no computers in the series. While it does feature robots, gadgets, vehicles, and other technological doodads, actual computers have not been created.
- Thematic characters are appropriate, but aren't required. To theme a character, simply choose an animal, object, material, or whatever else you'd like, and base your character's identity off of it.

Backstory

In 1984, *Warriors of the Cosmos* was ruling the syndicated cartoon market. Boys everywhere were buying merchandise and religiously watching the show every weekday afternoon. Lewis Gretchman of Grabbo Toys (the company behind the *Warriors of the Cosmos* toy line) wanted to move the franchise into a new market. That's right, he sought the girl demographic. He discussed an idea with his staff for a new toy line and cartoon series that would tie into the *Warriors of the Cosmos*. The idea was to attract girls to the product and possibly have crossover potential as well. The name of the series would be *Ladies of Might*.

A year later, the first episode (also produced by Kilamir Studios) debuted to lukewarm ratings, much to the chagrin of everyone involved. Fortunately, the companies invested in a marketing blitz that paid off for them in dividends. The show started to skyrocket (as did the toy line), winning over girls all over the world in the process.

Sadly, the show lost its steam about as rapidly as it gained it. The quality of the show's second season was noticeably poor, causing a drastic lack of interest. From there, things only got worse and the series and toy line were cancelled after the sophomore season wrapped.

The Genre

Ladies of Might can best be described as science-fantasy. High technology exists side by side with all the tropes of classic sword-and-sorcery fantasy. Lasers and swords. Airships and dragons. Cybernetics and castles. Still, the series gravitated a bit more toward the fantasy aspects than *Warriors of the Cosmos* did.

The Series

Hidden away from the rest of Iconia, there exists a continent called Dreama. Dreama is a place of utter utopian beauty, covered with lush forests, snow-capped mountains and rich farmland. High above the land, though, is a magical city in the clouds, a place of kindness and compassion; it is known as Paradise, for that's truly what it is.

For centuries, Dreama has been ruled by the Council of Might, a group of women who wield the legendary Items of Virtue. Each member possesses one such item, bestowing upon her a unique power that reflects her own personality or beliefs. The Council makes Paradise their home and they ride to and from the ground on winged unicorns.

In the past, the realm hadn't required much protection by the Council. That is, until the arrival of Tyranna! This despotic conqueror came by way of the Prysm Sea via her floating fortress. With her thousands of minions in tow, Tyranna is poised to take over Dreama and rule it with an iron fist.

Of course, the Council of Might isn't just sitting back and letting it happen. They

The Player Characters

This series revolves around a small group (between 3 and 5 is about right). As such, there's no need to stat out pre-existing heroes. This allows the characters created by the players to form the entirety of the group.

Factions

The following groups play an important role in the *Ladies of Might*.

Ladies of Might

This is the group the PCs belong to. These women act as Dreama's first line of defense against Tyranna, as they are the realm's mightiest warriors, thanks in part to their Items of Virtue. The wielders of the Items are acknowledged as the rulers of Dreama.

Lords of Valor

The Lords of Valor are the male equivalents to the Ladies of Might. The only exception is that they do not have the mystic Items of Virtue. Still, they are highly skilled and can hold their own against anyone.

The Wretched Legion

This is the army controlled by Tyranna, consisting of a handful of powerful minions and a horde of robots that

she calls the Dreadbots (Battle Rating 2; *Rugged, Specialists [Detect Characters 2]*).

Romantic Aspects

The *Ladies of Might* series featured a decent amount of romance in comparison to other retro-toons. Most of the romance was between the Ladies of Might and the Lords of Valor, as they all shared similar experiences and had similar roles in the series.

If your group has any male players, you could allow them to play Lords of Valor in order to keep them from feeling "icky" about having male love interests.

Crossovers

During the course of the series, the writers conducted several crossovers with *Warriors of the Cosmos*. In the first crossover, the Guardians of Iconia and the Blackskull Empire both discovered Dreama. Nekrottus decided to take it over for himself, but Tyranna wasn't having any of that. The two butted heads initially, but ended up joining forces, requiring the Guardians of Iconia to team up with the Ladies of Might and the Lords of Valor in order to fend them off.

The Adversaries

Most, but not all, of the series' villainy was caused by Tyranna and her band of henchmen.

Below, you will find Tyranna's game stats, as well as stats for a handful of her most notorious minions.

Tyranna

"Heartless Conqueror"

Quick Bio: Nobody knows where Tyranna came from, though it's suspected that she hails from another dimension. Whatever the case may be, she is a being with absolutely no compassion or sense of honor and her hunger for power is fathomless.

Appearance: Tyranna is a tall, slender woman with green-tinted skin and a mane of full black hair that spills down her back. Her red eyes are narrow and filled with hatred, and her lips have never experienced a genuine smile. She wears gray battle armor with dark purple trim that covers most of her body. Her weapon of choice is a long, thin sword that crackles with purple energy.

Factoids: "Has a lust for power"; "Cares nothing for her minions"; "Often touches her fingertips together when hatching an evil scheme"

Subplots: Vow (To conquer Dreama)

Traits: Sword of Conquest 6 [*Enhancer +3, Bonus (Can shoot energy from the sword), Defend, Accessory*] Conniving Mind 7, Commanding Voice 6, Cunning Fighter 5, Leaping 3, Resilient 3, Crafted Battle Armor 4 [*Enhancer +2, Accessory*], Impenetrable Will 6, Keen Eyes 4

Stats: Threshold 12, Battle Rating 6

Enchantra

"Beautiful Controller of Minds"

Quick Bio: Enchantra isn't your average girl next door. She delights in controlling the minds of others and forcing them to do her bidding. This talent has made her an invaluable resource for Tyranna who considers her to be the second-in-command of the Wretched Legion.

Appearance: Enchantra looks like the classic seductress, albeit toned-down for the retro-toon audiences. She has full curly blonde hair and eyes that appear to have heavy eyeliner. She wears a slightly slinky green dress and carries a dagger with her at all times.

Factoids: "Enjoys playing mind games;" "Has a superiority complex;" "Every movement she makes is intended to be sensual (which nearly got her yanked from the show, thanks to parent groups)"

Subplots: Mental Hang-Up (Obsessed With Her Looks)

Traits: Dagger 1 [*Enhancer +1, Situational Boost (+2 to rating when target is under her control), Accessory*], Mind Control 6 [*Has a duration; Extra Duration, Oomph Powered, Disadvantage (Victim can try to shake the effects once per scene by rolling 8+ on a single die)*], Gorgeous 4, Sneaky Combatant 1, Athletically Inclined 4, Manipulative 4, Stealthy Movement 4, Dodge 4

Stats: Threshold 10, Battle Rating 6

Cogwheel

"Clockwork Warrior"

Quick Bio: Cogwheel is a titanic cyborg built by artisans back from wherever it is that Tyranna originated from. His strength is beyond compare, as is his ability to withstand massive amounts of physical damage. He doesn't seem particularly violent or driven. He merely does what he's told without question.

Appearance: Cogwheel stands close to 8 feet in height and is nearly as wide as he is tall. His lower face is the only part of him that looks remotely organic. The rest of his body consists

of copper and silver metal plating, smokestacks, cogs and pipes. Positioned on his right forearm is an oversized steam cannon with tubes that connect it to an even larger device on his back.

Factoids: "Has no passion;" "Blindly obedient;" "Speaks slowly and only uses simple words"

Subplots: Mental Hang-Up (No Mind of His Own)

Traits: Steam Cannon 12 [*Enhancer +6, Area, One-Shot*], Metal Body 8, Aim 2, Cumbersome 2X

Stats: Threshold 10, Battle Rating 12

Lynxia

"Catlike Warrior"

Quick Bio: Lynxia is Tyranna's go-to warrior when she needs a skilled combatant. Lynxia takes commands easily, but voices her opinions when necessary. Normally, this manner of outspokenness would infuriate the would-be conqueror, but she knows that Lynxia never contradicts an order without good reason.

Appearance: Lynxia is a graceful-looking feline-like humanoid. Her head looks mostly human aside from her cat eyes and teeth. Her body, though, is covered in luxurious golden fur and she has a long, nimble tail. She wears light chainmail armor that doesn't reduce her agility. She carries an elaborate silver trident.

Factoids: "Is relatively quiet and contemplative;" "Never brags, but is very self-assured;" "Moves around gracefully"

Subplots: None

Traits: Trident of Ku'gar 5 [*Enhancer +3, Accessory*], Light Chainmail Armor 1 [*Enhancer +1, Accessory*], Master of Close Combat 5 [*Specialty*], Catlike Agility 6, Toughness 3, Vision 3

Stats: Threshold 10, Battle Rating 6