



Gerdha

Marie-Grace introduction: why, who, when?

Sun Jan 26 01:25:30 2003

151.26.153.151

Some weeks ago Stephane Dumas introduced in this Forum an interesting topic: was Phenicia originally intended to be included in the story of Grendizer or was she instead a "replacement" of another character, possibly Sayaka? This topic intrigued me very much, so I started a new PLAYFUL investigation of my own - well, some of you would call it over-analysis or even in another way ;-)) but nevermind - :-)))))

Personally speaking, I was fascinated by ep49 at first sight 25 years ago as I found Marie-Grace arrival as a great invention for the story. But later I thought that her introduction raised also lots of problems in the anime:

- 1) why Actarus never talked about her previously?
- 2) how it is possible that her fake grandfather never thought about a connection of Phenicia with Grendizer's driver previously?
- 3) she has special mind powers but she never uses them apart from ep50, so what was the purpose of underlining this ability?
- 4) how and when Gandal & Zuril discover Phenicia's existence? Zuril recognises her in ep57 (in the Italian edition he clearly knows who she is), but how could he get to know this information? Because either in ep50 and ep56 she acts towards Vega people without presenting herself. Of course Gandal & Zuril see Drill Spacer fighting together with the others from ep 51 on so they knew that the Patruille added a new member, but how and when did they discover WHO she was?
- 5) Marie-Grace & Daisuke's relationship is very strange. We see Actarus, who rejected for a long time help from both Alcor and Venusia, suddenly being anxious to let his sister - very young, who he barely knows and who is the last member of his family still alive - fighting with him with the risk to loose again her for good soon. And honestly this fact cannot be explained only with Actarus' personal evolution in the story.

But as I told you in previous mails, my opinion is that Grendizer's scriptwriters were neither mad nor used to design the first thing that spread to their mind waking up in the morning. Of course there can be inaccuracies and inconsistencies in some episodes but the STRATEGY of the anime was not depending from casualties. So I tried to find the right perspective in order to hopefully discover the correct answer to my "why???" questions.

Stephane's hint about the rumour of Phenicia being a replacement of SAYAKA suggested me to do a little web search and I discovered recently on the net another rumour (well, it's given as a granted fact but I prefer to consider it as only a rumour): it was Shingo Araki who "invented" Marie-Grace character in ep49 to solve Toei executives' problem about Drill Spacer's driver as they thought to use BANTA for this purpose but were anyway perplex as they did not want to have a Benkey's clone in Grendizer anime (Benkey is the second pilot of the third module of Getter Robot). As a prize of his idea, Toei gave to Araki the role of Character Designer of the anime. For more, it seems that - contrary to the legend - Grendizer ratings were good even if a bit declining at half serie: kids were not so fond with it but the anime addicted teens and adult viewers instead. Marie-Grace introduction had anyway as a result a new increase of the ratings in a way that they became in some cases comparable with the most successful episodes of MazingerZ and Great Mazinger (<http://www.shinjuku.it/FocusMazingaGenesi07.htm>)

These information, even if colliding with both Stephane's and the legend, anyway confirmed what I wanted to know, which is the STRATEGIC factor: as I already suspected, there was very likely a new struggle about the anime concept between Authors and Toei at half of the serie (after the one that probably had undertaken after the very first eps). And I would say that the situation was probably very complicated and the struggle went on for a while. Here are the pieces of the puzzle I have considered and my PERSONAL theory.

As Stephane has correctly pointed out, a third spacer was already in scriptwriters mind in ep42, as the new Research Centre was built with three hangars since the beginning. The main question is: was Phenicia's arrival already scheduled at that time or only Drill Spacer was in the Authors' mind without a precise idea of its driver's identity? If the latter case, when Marie-Grace entered in the loop then?

Given the collected information, I would say that the third spacer was not originally meant to be driven by

Actarus' sister. If contrary, I think her arrival would have been properly prepared like the other tournament points of the serie, and we'd have seen her in one of Actarus' flashbacks about the death of his family, at least between ep 42 and 49. On the contrary, his last recall about his family on ep32 (his fake mother's episode) still does not mention Phenicia, and as far as I am able to remember, Actarus has no flashbacks at all about his family from ep 32 to ep 49, plus his other recalls about his native planet are limited to the little animal on ep33 and the festivity in ep44. Yet the new Research Centre was forecasted by writers in ep35 at the very latest (the destruction of its tower), but more likely it was planned even back at ep 32: the first appearing of the new weapon for sure was made thinking already to create Double Spacer and probably the new Research Centre too with the whole Patruille. But if Phenicia was at that time already planned, it would have been logical to let Actarus recall her in ep32 or at least somehow later. Considering that – if my memories are right – nothing similar happens, this means to me that at the creation of its hangar in ep42 and even later Drill Spacer's driver was not probably been identified yet. A very strange situation, that confirms once more that Grendizer development story is probably to be called a nightmare for both Toei and the Authors point of views. And considering the really short time available for the drawing of the final version of episodes (usually a couple of weeks in advance from the airing) the probable lack of agreement about Drill Spacer's driver should have become soon a big issue for everybody.

Personally, applying a logical reasoning, I tend to think that the idea of the third spacer was approved or even suggested by Toei as a good plot trick to maintain an high interest level in the audience, but there was really no agreement with the Authors about the possible driver for some time. I believe personally that both rumours (Sayaka and Banta) can be true. In the first case I think the proposal of Sayaka could have come only from Toei executives, which were the only people interested in reinforcing the idea that Grendizer was the third chapter of Mazinger saga, while the Authors were clearly instead trying since ep1 to develop the anime as a different story - I won't repeat the considerations already made in various previous discussions on the Forum about this topic - so the proposal turned out as unfeasible "as it was" (well, I won't enter here in an analysis of Phenicia character for sure :-)). A similar reasoning can be applied to the other rumour too: Toei could have thought to Banta, but it would have meant to change dramatically the mood of the serie (can you imagine it???) plus probably facing the same Benkey's problem, who was never appreciated by Getter Robot fans - unlike Musashi - so accepting the risk to see the ratings downfaling rapidly.

So at a certain point somebody (maybe really Shingo Araki – I read lots of different reports on the web telling the same thing) suggested to create a new character: Actarus' younger sister. But when this idea was put on the table of negotiation? It's impossible at ep 49 development time itself like the rumours seem to imply: the creation of Drill Spacer in ep45 should have been done knowing already the answer to its driver question – I apply here a logical reasoning again. Why introducing the new spacer in that particular episode otherwise? Without knowing its final driver's identity the material introduction of a new spacer in the story would have been really a crazy decision, with the high risk to jeopardise soon the benefits of the plot trick. But if I am right, this means that Marie-Grace arrival was conceived and organised during Komatsubara era.

I would say that this theory of mine could be confirmed by the analysis of eps 46-47-48, which are the episodes between Drill Spacer introduction and the arrival of Phenicia, and are for instance also the last eps co-ordinated by Komatsubara. These episodes let us face suddenly a new Alcor's behaviour: his - rejected - interest for Venusia. Actually we already had hints about his great sympathy for her (don't worry, no MM now on this topic :-)) but in eps 46-47 and still also a bit in ep48 that subtle feeling turns in big attraction. Why? Apart from other meanings which would require a deeper episodes analysis, I believe that from a storytelling point of view this change in Alcor's attitude towards Venusia, her total not-caring attitude in response and Koji's decision to not pursue his feelings to preserve their friendship were introduced for a STRATEGIC factor: both to prepare the not previously planned arrival of Marie-Grace and reinforce the link between Actarus and Venusia, in order to better allow the soon coming two-couples scenario in Grendizer (again: no MM now...). It was the best possible solution given the conditions after all: one of the biggest tournament points of the anime had really a few time available to be prepared in my opinion and probably the scriptwriters were forced to redesign once more the whole story concept of Grendizer in really a short time. And this bad and uncertain situation in the storytelling approach explains for me the existence of the plot holes I underlined previously.

I would add also a further explanation of the evidenced plot holes: Komatsubara left Grendizer exactly at ep49, together with Tomoharu Katsumata (the main director of the serie up to that moment, who followed him in the Gackeen group) and with probably a big part of the original team. Whatever reason was behind their leaving (agreed or not amicable), Toei gave to Araki the role of Character Design – more a typical problem solving decision from a budget management perspective than a prize for the invention of Phenicia for me - and appointed a new team to the design of the anime. And we all know what it meant for the storytelling quality of Grendizer :-((((At least up to what I call "The Final Arc"...

Well, I am here waiting to read your comments to this theory of mine. Anyway, it's somewhat disturbing that we – the fans – don't know nearly anything sure about the story of Grendizer development but in some ways it's also fascinating... provided that you love puzzle games and the over-analysis process!!! LOL!!!!!!!

Love to all,
Gerdha

:~)))

PS: Stephane Dumas, thanks for having given me the first input for this post. Would you mind to be appointed Support Member of The Crazy Trio? LOL LOL LOL!!!

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Stéphane Dumas

Re: Marie-Grace introduction: why, who, when?

Sun Jan 26 05:08:04 2003

24.201.149.63

Thanks for the offer Gerdha ^^

Banta, becoming the pilot of the drill spacer? O_O At least it could had been a good point to keep the Actarus-Alcor-Banta-Venusia triangle or square to be precised, alive for a good couple of episodes ;-) and to keep him on the series instead of removing him without notice (and having fun to see lots of "discussion" between Alcor and Banta, to me, even if Banta is a bit dumb, it added a bit of chemistry effect on the comical side in the series, with Rigel, there was the counterpart of Laurel & Hardy, Abbot & Costello, Fred Caillou & Arthur Laroche).

I guess this will bring a lot of inspiration to Goldorak fans who'd like to write their own stories in a interesting "what if Banta..." Of couse there Bernard's fanfiction "Le Fantôme du passé" when Banta sacrificed his life to save Actarus' life at Duke Fleed's webpage but what if Maria Grace/Phenicia wasn't introduced.... ;-)

Or if BOTH Phenicia and Sayaka was introduced in the anime instead of just Gosaku Ota's manga version? I guess Alcor would complain the trouble to be in the center of a triangle now.

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Jérôme

Interesting

Mon Jan 27 22:51:10 2003

212.198.0.96

As usual Gerdha is asking interesting questions. unfortunately as she wrote we won't be able to have the ultimate truth about them. But it's true that somehow the introduction of Phenicia was surprising. I remember when I was a child watching Grendizer I was thrilled when she arrived in the series. She definitely had stamina and was bold and beautiful!!! But now it seems to me that indeed her introduction must have had a special meaning. Actarus never remembered her before. Maybe we can say that since she was so young and he was older, he was more affected by the death of his parents than of his little sister. Therefore we didn't have any flashbacks on her before her introduction. But this is overanalysing as usual!! I do think like Gerdha that there must be a logical and commercial reason to that change in the plot of the series. The drawers needed definitely a third Aigle and among all the possibilities and after all, Phénicia is the best one. One must not forget that somehow the general storyline must have been written before, I guess that they all knew that they had 74 episodes and not a single more! Did they? This would be a good question to ask to Go Nagai! Anyway if they were told to deal with the whole series in 74 episodes they definitely had to beat Vega in the end and find a true ending to the story. Was Actarus, last of his kind, going to stay on Earth? In a way, finding a young sister, was a perfect opportunity both to find a plausible ending, and to create the final cliffhanger : Alcor and Venusia stay on Earth while Phenicia and Actarus go back to Euphor. 2 loving couples are separated and that's exactly what a good novelist would try to do : to create the possibility for a sequel. Or else to allow the viewers / readers/ whatever, to imagine this sequel according to one's fantasies.

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- [Insight, insight: you're great!!!](#) — Gerdha, Tue Jan 28 05:49



Gerdha

Insight, insight: you're great!!!

Tue Jan 28 05:49:56 2003

151.26.162.111

Jerome wrote: "if they were told to deal with the whole series in 74 episodes they definitely had to beat Vega in the end and find a true ending to the story. Was Actarus, last of his kind, going to stay on Earth? In a way, finding a young sister, was a perfect opportunity both to find a plausible ending, and to create the final cliffhanger : Alcor and Venusia stay on Earth while Phenicia and Actarus go back to Euphor. 2 loving couples are separated and that's exactly what a good novelist would try to do : to create the possibility for a sequel."

Eh eh, you're great Jerome, you have nailed perfectly what's the core problem of the end of Grendizer. And I have an idea about the reason of that final and the particular construction of ep74; okay, I am adding it to my MM agenda... because I won't stop this game as I enjoy it so much !!! You know, I am crazy... :-)))

About Phenicia, personally I believe more to the Sayaka scenario than Banta actually (but I suppose Stephane is planning a new fanfiction anyway, eheh ;-).

And maybe also the definition of Phenicia character was not so easy for the designers. We have still to find an explanation about the difference between her "official" age (14) and the fact she MUST be older as she drives a motorbike (at minimum 16). I reiterate what I wrote here in September: there must be a reason behind this contradiction; scriptwriter could not absolutely ignore the rules for obtaining a driver licence in their country. So there must be a STRATEGIC factor behind this discrepancy. And I had an insight just yesterday for a possible explanation but I should elaborate a bit... stay tuned...

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