

Please Help, My Wife Writes Fanfic!

A Survival Guide for the Exasperated Husband

by The Blintz

So your wife writes fanfic, and you're at the end of your rope. Or, more specifically, your wife writes Starsky and Hutch fanfic and you're tired of being compared to two 1970's cops. Fair enough. The purpose of this dissertation is to provide you with the information you need to survive in a world dominated by Starsky, Hutch, and a striped Tomato.

1) Learn the vernacular. Since discovering fanfic and the Starsky and Hutch fandom, your wife has learned a whole new vocabulary, kind of like a second language. If you wish to continue communicating with your spouse, my best suggestion would be for you to learn the lingo. Below is a short list of terms to get you started. (Remember, this is by no means a complete list.)

- a) Hurt/Comfort (or h/c) – Probably the most important term in all of fanfic, and Starsky and Hutch stories are loaded with it. Quite frankly, it is something that your wife probably lives for now so get used to it. Now here's the tricky part. Most of the fans of this show have a favorite character whether it be Starsky or Hutch. Perversely enough, it is their favorite character whom they like to hurt the most so the other one can worry about, rescue, and comfort him. I know that really makes no sense, but I figure maybe it's a throw back to the old expression "You always hurt the ones you love". So, if your wife ever comes at you with a butcher knife, mumbling something about "research" with a strange gleam in her eye, my best advice to you is to run. Fast.
- b) The Muse – This is a very important person in your wife's life now. You will never actually see this character, but your wife will listen to him or her without fail and will follow his/her every whim. You may even find your wife staring blankly into space awaiting word from this mysterious person as her fingers stay poised, yet still, over the computer keys awaiting inspiration. Now this next part is vitally important. Even if you ignore every other piece of advice I give you, please pay attention to this. Never, EVER make fun of the Muse or suggest that he/she isn't real or doesn't exist. This would be automatic grounds for divorce in most cases and there's not a judge in the world who would rule otherwise. So, if you value your marriage, value the Muse. You may even want to consider including him/her in your will.
- c) Beta Reader – This is the person who edits your wife's fanfic and she is almost as valuable as the Muse. Your wife will listen to her beta reader even if she doesn't listen to anyone else in the world. Now, there may come a time when you come home from work to find your wife still in her pajamas pacing around the house, muttering about that "no account, tasteless, uneducated, no talent bum". Just leave her alone and agree with her, no matter what she says. Eventually she'll come to

her senses, make the corrections on her story, and go on with her life. Just nod your head and smile at her encouragingly. She'll get over it. She knows she can't survive without her beta reader, and that her beta reader is always right, but every once in a while your wife just needs to assert herself in this manner to make herself feel better.

- d) Feedback – another very, very important term that is never to be taken lightly. This term refers to the letters and comments your wife receives on the stories that she posts and is what she lives for. Often, you may find her reading and re-reading comments from her buddies on the lists, basking in the warm glow of their approval. Now, the great thing about feedback is that it can work to your advantage. When your wife has a good feedback day, it can often set the tone for many days to come, and is the best time to get her to do the things you want her to do. Often, one good letter can thrust her into the throes of a good mood for up to a week, so you'd better get while the getting's good. Your best chance for any type of...uhm...marital relations is probably during a good feedback stage, so be alert. You may even want to join the list under a pseudonym to insure that your wife gets good letters at the most opportune times. Trust me, you can't go wrong on this one.

2) Now, you've learned a few key terms. What else can you do to aid in your survival? Here are a few tips which may prove to be useful in your day-to-day life.

- a) Find a hobby. It's going to be very important for you to find something that you enjoy doing to keep yourself busy while your wife perfects her craft. The down side of that whole feedback thing is that it's addictive, and the more good comments your wife receives, the more she's going to want to get. And that means lots of writing. So, while she's writing, you will be expected to amuse yourself so that she can concentrate. Now, this in no way means that your wife does not love you. Quite the contrary. It will only make her love you more when she realizes that you have taken up Tibetan basket weaving (or whatever) just so you can stay out of her hair. And, as soon as she's finished with her latest story, she'll show you just how much.
- b) Always pay the Internet bill. No matter what else you may have to do without, pay that connection fee religiously. Even if you have to stop eating, wearing clothes, and having a roof over your head, PAY THAT BILL!!! You do NOT want to know what will happen if your wife is Internetless for any significant length of time! The results could be disastrous. So, if you've lost everything and find yourself living under a bridge in a cardboard box with nothing but the clothes on your back, make sure you have a computer with a 56K modem and a long extension cord and your wife will follow you anywhere.
- c) If your wife sits you down one day to have a heart-to-heart, pay attention. Chances are there is a Starsky and Hutch episode coming on she doesn't have on tape and she wants you to record it. DO NOT FAIL IN THIS MISSION!! Although I have no proof, I'm pretty sure that is why Charles and Diana finally broke it off. Rumor has it that the uncut version of "The Fix" came on while she had to go to a charity ball and, instead of remembering to record it for her, he was out petting his polo ponies and forgot to record. Imagine all the heartache that could have been avoided

and learn from it. You may want to make sure that you have a plentiful supply of video tapes in the house at all times just in case your wife gets an urgent email about some obscure Paul Michael Glaser or David Soul TV appearance that's being run. This could get you lots of bonus points in the good husband department.

- d) Learn to love take-out food. You'll be eating a lot of it when your wife is on a roll. If she's in the middle of a writing frenzy, don't fight it. Just pack up the kids and take them to McDonalds. You'll save yourself a lot of time and effort if you just resign yourself to visiting the golden arches from time to time. As for your wife, just make sure she has a supply of her favorite source of caffeine and a pile of chocolate within arm's reach and she'll be good for days. If you simply must have a home cooked meal, learn to shop for groceries. Your chances of a meal at home increase exponentially if you'll go to the store and actually supply the ingredients.
- e) And learn to cook them.
- f) And serve them.
- g) And clean up the dishes afterwards.
- h) Or perhaps it would just be easier to go to your mother's house every now and then. Unless she's busy writing fanfic too. In which case my suggestion would be to go back to step d.
- i) Housework is probably not your wife's number one priority right now (if it ever was), so you may want to make up a list of chores and divide them amongst the children (that IS the reason you had children, isn't it?). If you don't have children, learn to do the housework yourself, or get used to living in a less than sparkling home. And try to look at the bright side. If no one cleans up, then nothing gets thrown out, and just imagine all the stuff you'll have at your fingertips if you ever need it. Like old wrapping paper, unmatched, unlaundered socks, mateless shoes, broken appliances, and piles of unopened junk mail. The possibilities are endless.

In closing, I'd just like to remind you that if your wife is happy, everybody's happy. So it is in your best interest to do whatever it takes to make her happy. Indulge her odd little hobby whenever possible and encourage her at every opportunity. You may want to consider actually watching a few of the episodes yourself so you can try to figure out what it is your wife sees in it. Chances are, she isn't really sure herself. She's just hooked on a show that, according to her, has the two most gorgeous creatures on the planet depicting a friendship that transcends time and space while delivering lots of action, drama, and hurt/comfort. Go figure.

If you really want to go that extra mile, try reading one or two of her stories. You may be surprised at the talent you find lurking on those pages. Chances are, your wife is actually a very good writer and the kudos she gets from her friends are well deserved. You may even find yourself genuinely applauding her talent. And, if you think feedback from her listsibs can make her happy, wait until you see how happy she gets with positive feedback from you. With you being there in the same room and all, she's liable to get carried away showing her enthusiasm and appreciation of her most understanding husband. NOW, the possibilities really are endless!

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