

Arts & Entertainment

'Lavender Moonlight': The Final Chapter

By Pat Clark

Last week: A series of self-righteous speeches and lots of gunshots have left April May June all alone with . . . Dante Lavender. By official tally, Babe Ruth shot Randall Hitler, Randall Hitler shot Walker Treadmill, and Walker Treadmill shot Babe Ruth, conveniently eliminating April May June's romantic alternatives and otherwise extraneous characters in time for the heartwarming final episode.

April stared dumbfounded at the carnage around the dining table. She had become used to staring dumbfounded at things. Soon she couldn't bear looking any longer, and buried her face back into Dante's pudgy and slightly sweaty chest. "They're dead," she sobbed into his Cardin original shirt.

"I know," Dante said. "I'll have one of the crew lob them overboard as soon as possible. Or we can arrange a brief burial at sea if you'd prefer."

April pulled her face away from Dante's chest long enough to breathe and take one more glance at the by-now motionless bodies. Babe Ruth, the same Babe Ruth who had been her best friend and confidant since the Wonder Bread years, lay slumped over her chair, her auburn hair coursing down over her face.

And Randall Hitler, who had taken her from the life of just another Nebraska girl with caviar dreams and oatmeal reality, and had brought her into a world of wealth and political intrigue and hotels with room service. She had to admit even now that it was a world in which she longed to remain.

Walker Treadmill; poor, dear Walker Treadmill. She wondered if she ever had really loved him. They had known each other for such a short time. She knew that, given more of a chance to get acquainted, she would have died for him. She hoped he hadn't died for her.

"Shouldn't we inform the police or something?" April said, tears still rolling down her cheeks, but fewer and farther between.

"And what would we tell them?" Dante said, his voice void of emotion. "Shall we tell them that these three people shot each other? That we were all conspirators in a revolution in Madagascar? All they will see is three dead people on a boat with two live ones, and assume the live ones killed the dead ones."

April could hear the crackle of distant gunfire. "What is that sound?"

"Oh, just the crackle of distant gunfire," Dante said, looking at his watch. "The revolution for White Madagascar has started. They're a couple of minutes late, but we'll let it go without a dock in their pay."

Nebraska had never seemed farther away, or more foreign. April knew she never would go back to that life, if she could possibly live this one. Life with Dante Lavender would always be exciting, she told herself. And, well, except for Randall Hitler and Walker Treadmill, and those senators from Nebraska and the desk clerk of the hotel and the cab driver and Mark Harris and maybe a couple dozen other men at the very most whom she had met in South Africa, Dante was just the keenest guy she ever had met. It sure felt like love to her, as she clutched him tightly to her.

"You are going to tell me you love me, I imagine," Dante said. "If you had the courage, you would even ask me to marry you."

April looked into his eyes, admitting without speaking that Dante had read her mind.

"It is unfortunate that I started making wedding plans for us a couple of episodes ago," Dante said. "I could have had nearly any woman in the world, but I wanted you from the minute I heard about you. I knew you were that one-in-a-million, no, one-in-10-million woman that was too stupid, too malsadjusted, too ill-prepared to make it on her own. All the other tycoons I know have their own vapid glamour kittens, and now I have mine. I love you, April May June."

They kissed. Dante burped. An explosion sounded in the distance, followed by two more. April looked up and twilight sky was filled with lavender haze. Any place where they have lavender moonlight is all right by her, she decided, wedding the title into the story one last time.

"What is that?" she asked.

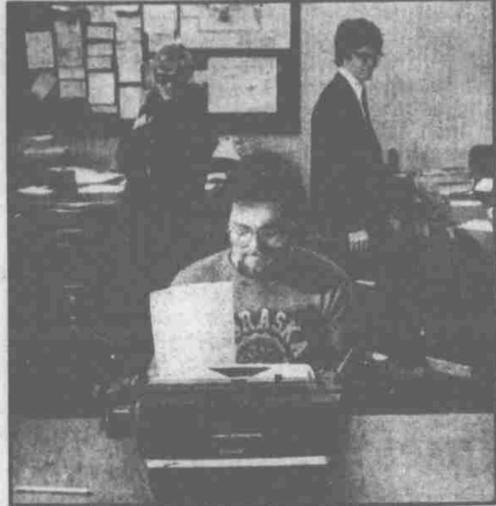
"Chemical bombs. They will probably make the island uninhabitable," Dante said.

"Oh well, that's too bad," April said, drawing Dante's mouth closer to hers. "Sure makes a pretty sky, though."

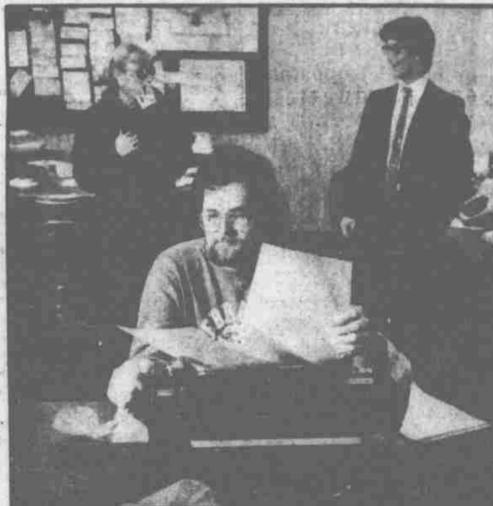
BEHIND THE SCENES OF LAVENDER MOONLIGHT



The work day begins as Pat gets his face touched up by his make-up man, Monsieur Geoff. "You have to look good to write good . . . write well," Pat says.



Face prepared, Pat gets paper and typewriter ready for the work ahead. Because "Lavender Moonlight" is such a major production, there always is a large crowd milling about as Pat prepares to go to work.



Before writing can actually begin, Pat must make many decisions. "Should I put the paper in horizontally or vertically?" he wonders.



"Lavender Moonlight" has become famous for its use of special effects. Here, Pat demonstrates how he wrote the intergalactic fight scenes for the "April May in Outer Space" chapter. The episode never made it to print.



Because Pat is a big star and an important commodity to the Daily Nebraskan, he sometimes employs the use of a double for the more dangerous sequences. Here, his double takes over for the writing of the risky "April May Falls in the Ocean" sequence.



Another episode completed, Pat heads for home. "Even though I enjoy writing romances like 'Lavender Moonlight,' someday I hope to concentrate on serious biography," Pat says. "It's a little disheartening to write something week after week that you know never can happen in real life."

Photos by Craig Andresen

Story by Mike Frost and Pat Clark