

Captain Future Quickies

Volume 2

by Sabina

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Furreal Future

"Dear Sirs and Ladies, dear colleagues, members of the press, it is great pleasure to have you here today. I'm sure that I don't have to introduce Captain Future."

Captain Future flashed a brilliant smile and waved. The audience cheered. Several flashlights went off. Joan raised her own camera and took a few pictures herself. The man continued to speak.

"I'm Professor Zhen Mu Catophis.

In the last six months Captain Future and I have worked on an idea which has fascinated humanity for a long time.

We have asked you here today to show you the fruits of long hours of work and dedication."

Even though Joan knew what this was all about, she dearly hoped the good professor would soon get to the point of his speech.

"Today we will demonstrate to you the teleportation of a man. Or in other words, today my assistant Scott 'Scotty' Halberson will beam Captain Future across the room."

There was a large uproar among the people present.

Catophis unsuccessfully tried to restore order, finally, Captain Future had to step in and once the audience had quieted down, he proceeded to explain how the procedure worked.

Eventually, it was time for the practical demonstration.

Captain Future stepped into the chamber standing behind him, its counterpart was at the other side of the room. In just a few minutes the Captain would disappear in one chamber and reappear in the other.

A computer voice counted slowly from ten to zero, then the doors of both chambers started closing.

Just as both doors were almost shut, a pitiful howl sounded and a red streak race into Captain Future's chamber.

The second before everybody overcame their shock was enough. The machine had already started the teleportation process.

Quickly Security shuffled everybody who didn't need to be there out of the room. Joan was allowed to stay, by virtue of being the only close friend of Captain Future at the laboratory.

The teleportation process took several minutes longer than usual, but nobody dared to interfere, least harm happened to both subjects being transported. In the meantime, the scientists had established what had happened. Apparently someone had stepped on Spot's tail. The laboratory cat,

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Spot, had fled into the chamber.

A chime sounded. The teleportation process was complete.

Everybody in the room tensely waited for the outcome of the botched experiment. Slowly the door of the target chamber opened. As in a cheap movie, white fog streamed from the opening.

A hand appeared and held on to the moving door. A groan was heard from the chamber.

"Captain Future, are you ok?"

Everybody held their breath, waiting for an answer.

"I felt a bit woozy, but am alright now. What happened?"

The door was fully open and the white fog dispersed. Joan took a deep breath, Captain Future stood there and didn't look worse for wear.

"Spot?" an assistant called softly. But the cat wasn't in the chamber with Captain Future.

A group of medical personal swarmed around Captain Future and bade him sit down. Joan stepped to him.

"Spot isn't here either," called somebody from across the room. The cat had disappeared.

That was when Joan saw the two bumps on Captain Future's head. She touched one of them, a soft, furry ear sprang from beneath the hair. It was triangle-shaped and cat-like. Joan experimentally touched the ear, it flicked away.

"Joan, stop tickling me. This is not the time ..."

Joan looked down to figure out why Captain Future had stopped talking, he was looking at his fingers. His fingernails were gone, instead sharp spikes protruded from his finger tips. Captain Future carefully flexed his hand and long claws appeared from the tips of his finger.

Professor Catophis exclaimed: "Oh, dear. It seems that the beaming has fused Captain Future and Spot. This is truly a fascinating occurrence."

"We have to figure out what happened," was Captain Future's statement. His voice sounded deep and he was purring. Joan knew, because once she had started rubbing the red-furred ears, the Captain had leaned into her and she could feel a rumble vibrating through her body wherever Captain Future touched her.

A scientist tapped Joan on her arm and pointed down Captain Future's back. His uniform was bulging weirdly, something long and snaky seemed to be attached to his posterior.

Captain Future had a tail.

Joan didn't relish to have to tell the rest of his crew, that their leader was now partly a cat. But she really wanted to explore what other cat-like characteristics he possessed.

The End – "Furreal Future"

Oh, To Be Young Again

Joan was eyeing her shelves.

There was no way around it, she would have to dust them.

She had been away from her apartment for the last few weeks, her assignment had been on such a short notice that she couldn't arrange for somebody to take care of her home. Her usually neat shelves and boards were covered with a layer of dust, her poor plants had died a waterless death, except for her cactus, so far it had survived no matter what.

No reason to delay the inevitable.

Just as Joan had swept her hair into a ponytail and taken a duster, her doorbell rang.

Whoever it was had a bad timing. Before Joan opened the door, she glanced at her dusty shelves.

Hopefully whoever was at the door would be fast, she didn't really want anybody to see the bad shape her apartment was in.

Her doorbell sounded for a second time.

"I'm coming."

Joan put the duster aside and opened her door, with the security chain firmly in place, just to be sure.

At eye height, Simon hovered. Joan immediately fully opened her door to let him in.

"Professor Simon, did something happen to Captain Future?"

"I'm Captain Future, Joan," an earnest, high-pitched voice said.

As Joan looked to down, she saw that the speaker was a child, about eight years old. He had red-hair.

Joan could only gape at the boy.

"Captain Future? Is that really you? Wha – What happened to you?"

She led her guests into the living room, where she sat down and continued staring at the boy.

Simon flew next to her, he explained: "Joan, this morning we experimented with a time warp machine on the Moonbase. The machine got out of control, we don't know exactly what happened, but the resulting explosion destroyed wide parts of the Moonbase and created a tear in the time continuum."

This was just too weird. This couldn't be true.

"But what happened to Captain Future? Is he ok? And where are Grag and Otho?"

The boy piped up: "I really am Captain Future. The time tear sheds some kind of radiation which

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youthens the human body.

The radiation doesn't affect artificial creatures, so I left Grag and Otho to repair the time tear and the Moonbase."

Joan just starred at the self-proclaimed Captain Future.

Could this be some kind of trick? Well, Professor Simon looked real enough, it would be rather difficult to fake the living brain.

Distracted she reached over to the child and strained to smooth the untamed red hair, before she asked, still not believing the tale: "Is it really you, Captain?"

"Yes, Joan, I am Captain Future. Here, look, this is my ring." The boy got a ring from his pocket and showed it to Joan. It was indeed Captain Future's famous ring, although the ring currently was to large for its owner.

"Oh, Captain, you really are you."

The kid gave a relieved sigh, while Joan took the time to take a closer look at him.

So this was what Captain Future had looked like as an eight year old. Oh, what a cute and endearing child he had been.

His cheeks flushed under her curious eyes. Seeing his embarrassment Joan herself turned away, she was about to apologize to him, when Simon gave a metallic cough to get their attention.

"Joan, we need your help. Due to the time tear and the damage to the Moonbase we need another place of habitation. We don't want to go to the government as to unnecessarily alarm them or anybody else to the fact that Captain Future is currently out of commission.

Since Ezra is inspecting Cerberus prison you are the only person we can turn to.

Will you allow us to stay here for the time being?"

Joan smiled at Simon and Captain Future.

"I'm pleased to have you here. I'll do everything I can to help you."

The End – "Oh, To Be Young Again"

Explorer

Joan sat on a chair on board the Comet. Captain Future stood in front of her. She was curious to find out why he had called for her. It must be something very important, because he had called her out of a lecture to her fellow agents by the head of the Secret Service. Not that she wasn't very glad to be out of the stuffy room listening to a boring monologue.

"I hope you are not mad that I got you out of your interesting meeting, Joan." His eyes twinkled as he said that, he knew that she'd rather listen to him than to her commander. "Now, I need you for a little experiment. There are not many people I can ask. My companions aren't fit for what I have in mind. I would have asked Ezra, but he doesn't possess the capabilities that I need for this to work."

A task the others couldn't perform for him. A few scenarios ran through Joan's mind, all of them made her blush.

He was intently peering into her eyes.

"You know, Joan, that I have some telepathic skills."

She remembered how his telepathic skills had gotten Eek to get them out of a tight spot. But she didn't understand were this was going.

He was still staring at her.

Oh, dear, he wasn't reading her mind, was he?

Joan's blush returned with vengeance.

"I want to practice those telepathic skills, unfortunately Grag and Eek are the only ones among my crew that can hear me. Eek can't talk to me and Grag's mind is too different from a human mind to get any useful information of what I'm doing. As I said, Ezra would have been a possibility, but he doesn't possess a shred of psychic abilities.

You are the only other person I would trust in a matter like this. I can force myself into another persons mind and read it, but while I do this my mind is open to them as well. It would only need a somewhat skilled telepath to intrude into my thoughts, I want to do something against that, therefore I want you to allow me to read your mind – don't worry I'll just kind of touch your mind, it won't be really reading. I'm aware when my mind is open and I want to train on closing it."

Reading her mind. Joan wasn't really sure about this, but if he was working on his shortcomings, he wouldn't have enough time to dig around in her brain. He was always so worried to keep her save, he wouldn't endanger her like that, and she just couldn't say no to him.

"Captain, I will help you, if I can."

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"Good, Joan.

Now, no reason to not start now." He sat down across of her.

"Relax, Joan. This won't hurt. Just close your eyes and try to concentrate your thoughts on something pleasant. Maybe we'll even get to the bottom of this sixth sense women are said to have."

She did as he had told her and pictured a meadow in her mind.

After some time there was a slight disturbance in her meadow picture, something strong seemed to weigh down the scenery. Joan was somehow drawn there. She knew that it must be Captain Future, but she wouldn't have imagined that it would be like this. He seemed to almost stand in the meadow looking distractedly into the distance.

Would she be able to touch him here in this unreal world. Trying wouldn't harm anybody.

Joan touched his arm.

Captain Future snapped around and looked at her. She was mesmerized by his eyes.

Deeper and deeper she seemed to fall into the grey eyes staring back at her.

Pictures whirled around her. Unknown places and people appeared before her, places and people she knew, she herself was present in many of the scenes.

So this was Captain Future's memories, but was she supposed to see them?

Joan fell deeper, the swirl of pictures got faster, she was becoming overwhelmed as a great cacophony of sounds set in.

A bright white light appeared under her.

Joan screamed and opened her eyes.

In front of her sat ... she herself!

"This wasn't supposed to happen," said the other Joan. "It appears that we have exchanged minds."

Joan looked down at herself, she was indeed in Captain Future's body.

"What can we do? How do we get back to our own bodies?"

"As we swapped bodies, but we shouldn't do that yet. It might be dangerous to try it now, and you feel probably as tired as I do."

She ... he ... the Captain looked down at herself.

"This is a fascinating situation. In all likelihood this will be my only chance to find out what it means to be a woman. As an explorer this a chance I just can't pass."

Captain Future was still looking down at Joan's body, he had just raised her hands.

"Captain, you can't. This is my body! How would you feel about me touching you?" Joan cried.

He didn't hear her.

The End – "Explorer"

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AI

Curt was hunched over the keyboard, typing furiously. His three companions had left the *Comet* some time ago to pursue their own devices, but Curt was determined to finish the little project he had started three months ago.

On the monitor in front of him long lines of programme code scrawled over the screen. Almost noiselessly three data storages fed their own information into the construct Curt was building.

If everything went according to plan, the Comet would be controlled by an artificial intelligence even more sophisticated than Grag. It had taken a long time to gather all necessary data for this endeavour, but now the last lines of Code had been typed.

Curt sat back and stretched, massaging his cramped shoulders.

For one anticipatory second Curt's finger hovered over the key, then he pressed the button firmly down. The computer chirruped softly before everything went dark and silent.

Holding his breath Curt waited, and indeed, after a few more moments the computer turned on again. The famous hero of space was nervously moving in his seat. The time it took the computer to reboot all systems and integrate the new one took just too long.

Finally, the computer gave a little beep and the screen went white, for the blink of an eye Curt thought that something had gone wrong causing the computer to crash, but in the next instant a face appeared on the screen.

A beautiful, young woman was looking at him. The pale, finely shaped face was framed by dark curls, equally dark eyes were looking him in the eye. It took but a moment before she recognized him and the formerly emotionless features changed to present a most radiating smile.

"Hello Curtis."

Her soft and melodic voice made him shiver.

The likeness was really uncanny. Curt was excited, he could barely wait to see whether his attempts to implement her other personality traits and mannerisms had been just as successful.

He would have to show the computer programme to Joan soon, and he would make sure to see her face when she saw her artificial doppelgänger.

"Hello eIAIne. How do you do?"

Curt had given her another designation, naming her after Joan was just too weird, not mention, that it would be too confusing to keep the two apart in any discussion.

"I'm fine, Curtis. Thank you."

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Her smile was almost irresistible.

"Then, dear lady, let us test your systems. We'll start with data integrity and work from there."

"That is not necessary, Curtis. I already tested all systems during start up. I'm in perfect shape."

Curt was taken aback by this obvious rebellion.

A slight tremor went through the sleek ship, Curt could hear the hangar door engines engaging.

"Stop! What are you doing? Why are you launching the *Comet*?"

Frantically Curt tried to abort the newly installed artificial intelligence programme, but his attempts were thwarted at every corner.

"elAIne, I demand an explanation for this! Give me access to the computer!"

Only the knowledge how futile it would be, kept him from hitting the control panel.

They had just cleared the Moon and were travelling to reaches unknown, when elAIne answered him.

"You have programmed me based upon upon your image of the perfect woman. I am all that she is and more. I'm a better companion than she could ever be.

Curtis, I'm backed by the best scientific database in the entire universe. I can help you with your experiments, we can have endless deep and meaningful debates.

And most important, I can protect you from yourself. Your crusade to end all evil is doomed to fail. Evil lurks in every man's heart. Your self-appointed task would crush you eventually.

No, it is best for you to stay with me. For now and all eternity."

All Curt could do was stare at monitor in front of him. Stare at the face of the woman he loved, while the artificial intelligence guided the ship farther away from everything he knew.

End – "AI"

Di-Lemma

It was a beautiful day in New New York City.

Joan returned home after her shopping trip. As a secret agent she needed new clothes and disguises ever so often, fortunately the department paid for everything she bought, as long as she didn't go overboard.

She struggled out of the elevator, four full bags in each hand.

Neatly avoiding a potted plant standing in the hallway, she arrived at her apartment door. Putting the keycard into the lock presented a slight challenge, but at her second try the door opened.

Somebody was in her apartment, Joan tensed.

"Allow me to help you, Joan," somebody said in a weird stereo effect. Joan looked towards her kitchen. She not only heard double, she also saw double.

Shaking her head didn't remedy the situation at all. She was still seeing two Curtis Newtons.

Both had stepped next to her and each took four bags from her.

She was still looking at them slack-jawed, when the self-satisfied smirk the two Curtises wore registered.

"Curtis, what is going on here? Is this some kind of a joke? Making Otho look like you," she said outraged.

"Joan," both Curtises started at the same time, and stopped.

Their next three tries to start an explanation didn't work any better at all.

The two identical looking men would always start their sentences at the same time and couldn't work out which of them should go first.

Finally Joan had enough of this. She took the bags from the two men and just left them at the door before gesturing the two men towards her living room.

Once the three of them were seated, Joan pointed at one Curtis and bade him, and only him, to explain.

"Joan, as you know, I have been conducting some very dangerous experiments in the last months. Now, it would take to long to explain what went wrong, sufficient to say that something did.

As a result, there are now two of me."

The Curtis would have continued hadn't Joan interrupted him.

"You got copied? Which one of you is the original?"

The other Curtis spoke: "No, I didn't get copied. I was duplicated. We did some extensive testing

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and as far as we can determine, we are both the same person.

There is no original.

We are both Curtis Newton."

Joan was looking at her two quests, flabbergasted.

"We think the situation could be advantageous to everybody," the first Curtis called her attention back to him.

"You know that I could never stop the fight against those that threaten humanity and the universe, but as there are now two of me, one me can actually take a step back. As long as there isn't a terribly dire situation requiring two Captain Futures.

So, if you agree, I'll stay with you all even months and Curtis, "Curtis nodded at the Curtis sitting next to him, "will stay the odd months."

Feeling slightly hysterical Joan was hard-pressed to fight down a nervous giggle. The suggestion of such a ménage a trois was insane. Joan felt like her brain was shutting down, and so she asked the first question coming to her mind: "How did you decide who of you got which month?"

"We flipped a coin."

End

Match Made in Heaven

Curt was a bit puzzled.

Earlier this day he had gotten an urgent message from Joan and flown to Earth. The girl secret agent had snatched him aside immediately after he had landed. There had been a distracted and hasty hello before the frantic girl had dragged him into an empty office.

He now sat on a chair watching her pacing in front of him. As amusing as it was to just look at her as she was wringing her hands, Curt was contemplating to ask her why she had called him.

Heaving a last desperate breath Joan turn towards him, looking him straight into the eyes.

"Curtis, we haven't known each other for very long, but you are my last hope. I considered all options and you are the only I chance I have left. Normally I wouldn't be so forward, I'm just running out of time.

Please, Curtis, you have to help me."

Dark eyes looked at him beseechingly.

"I'll do whatever I can to help you, but you have to tell me what this is all about."

Joan blushed and started to chew on one of her nails.

"It is somewhat embarrassing. I went to my annual check up. They found out that I have a medical condition necessitating surgery."

Joan was back to wringing her hands, Curt could only imaging that she wanted him to operate her, but, surely, such a request wouldn't have her so close to panic.

"I have a condition called endometriosis," she said blushing.

Curt started, he knew what that meant and he had a vague idea what Joan wanted from him.

"Curt, with your medical knowledge I'm sure you know the consequences of the necessary surgery.

This is my last chance to get a child ... and I want you to be its father."

Joan was shyly looking at him with such a hopeful expression.

Curt sighed, stood up and took her hands in his.

"This is really a difficult request, Joan, and I would really like to help you, but I fear I can't grant you your wish."

Crushed Joan was trying to free her hands, but he held her to him.

"Joan, I really wish I could help. But, you see, all my space travels and experiments with radioactivity have rendered me sterile.

End

Do the Math

"Curtis Newton! How could you do it again?!"

The scream was echoing through the Moonbase.

Curt tried to remember what he done that would anger Joan so much, but he couldn't come up with any misdeeds. Then Joan stood in front of him, her eyes clouded by rage.

The other persons in the room were inching away, not wishing to be caught in whatever was going on, yet they didn't retreat completely. Curiosity kept them in the room.

"So, what do you have to say in your defence?"

"Joan, my dear, what did I do? Surely you aren't still cross with me because I brought this cat home as a pet?"

"The damn cat is as large as a horse, but this isn't what this is about.

I'll give you a hint, it is something you did seven years ago, too."

Seven years ago, there was the matter with her watch he had ruined in an experiment, there was his request to the president to give her a desk job, there was this undercover mission when he had to kiss that stunningly attractive CEO. He hadn't done anything remotely similar recently.

Curt looked at Joan blankly.

"I see you don't know what I mean. Let me tell you.

You are the universe's best scientist, there is nobody who can surpass you. Your formula and calculations have become so arcane that even Simon has severe problems following you.

Pray, tell me, why can you get a simple summation right. You assured me last time and you assured me this time, that it is alright. In the future I'll be sure to employ other methods."

Summation, summation, what had involved summations he could have messed up?

Curt looked around his room, his eyes finally settling upon his four five-year old children: Futura, Futuri, Futuro and Futuru

Oh, dear.

"Joan, are you trying to tell me that ..."

"Yes, I'm trying to tell you that I'm pregnant again."

"Oh"

"Exactly, Oh. Lets just hope that we can stick to the vowels and won't have to dabble in the semi-vowels, or worse."

End

Author Comments

Furreal Friends: As somebody who likes Inuyasha's ears I couldn't resist the temptation to give the Captain a pair of them. Well, Inuyasha may be a half dog demon, but I like cats better. It just took some time to find a good method to turn him into a cat. Sometime I'd really like to explore his other catlike aspects. Catnip and rubber mouse, anybody?

Oh, To Be Young Again: It is a reworked version of a German story, an unfinished, longer German story. And don't worry they'll run into a few interesting problems before he gains his adult body again.

Explorer: What can I say, the almost stereotypical body change story, just the method is something I hadn't come across so far. Someday something had to wrong with his telepathic abilities.

AI: Nerdy little story, I got a few more involving the *Comet*. Writing it eIAIne is a bit of a tribute to AndrAIa from ReBoot – the cool fishy lady was also inspiration for another story of mine. The title is a bit of a wordplay, btw. *AI* isn't just the abbreviation for *artificial intelligence*, but *ai* is also Japanese for *love*.

Best Intentions: Sorry, that story got scrapped. I couldn't find a handle on the topic, basically Crt would have hypnotized Joan and something would go wrong turning Joan into a frightful, proper and stiff office worker.

Di-Lemma: Another senseless play of word. When I came up with the story I also thought about the sequels "Tri-Lemma", "Quattri-Lemma" and "Infinity". When I got that old ideas out for the *Quickies*, I was faced with the problem of how to split them, the teleporter idea was already used afterall.

Match Made in Heaven: This little story brought two ideas together, somehow. Endometriosis is really and I got the idea to use it from a challenge on a *Lois and Clark* message board.

And, well, you got to agree that Curt is rather careless when using radioactivity. I think he would have been fried crispy at the end of first book.

Do the Math: Unfortunately I can't remember who, but one very famous musician, who had been a math teacher, confessed that he had all of his children, and there were more than two, because he had gotten the dates wrong. I had to get the fifth vowel in somehow.

Btw, you can reach me under " ilisidi at freenet dot de ", just put Captain Future as a subject, otherwise you might end unread in the garbage bin. Sorry for being so abrupt.