

Hello everyone, it is the first of October, which means it is time for the fifth installment of my Addventure Homage thread. The winner is... well it should have been pretty obvious.

In last place, with only 40 votes was Back on Earth, Setsuna was feeling happy, so veeeery happy (Wonder about Zero portions from Earth) No one wanted to see Setsuna again, I guess.

In second place, bringing in 264 Henrietta though still in love with Wales, admits to herself that she finds Ranma quite intriguing. (castle shenanigans from the original). Romance apparently was not a priority in your minds this time. Or perhaps you all trust me to put some romance in regardless? If so, thank you.

At 334 votes, was Louise and Tabitha were arguing about who owns Ranma, only for Colbert to interrupt and Kirche to point out an inconvenient truth. Louise, I'm sorry, but tsundere are seemingly not a draw for my patrons. Or me LOL. The flat chest does not help your case.

And of course, this leaves A group of assassins, not believing their luck, were moving into position to attack the carriage. Oops? to bring in the bacon with an overwhelming 1292.

So let the combat commence!

As always thanks go to the original authors, **Kestral**, and the others over on AA. I hope that if they ever read this, they will enjoy my take on their work. This is going to be mostly original but will have a few bits taken or expanded from the original in terms of Henrietta's manner of thinking and personality. As for the choices, again the ones wherein I can build on the original will be marked by underline.

Edited 10/4: This has been edited by Hiryo now. He got it back to me very quickly, but I couldn't get back to look it over until today. I also took the opportunity to change the name of the episode since I didn't like the original.

Episode 5: Bad Timing

After a few false starts, the horses finally began to pull the carriage along under Henrietta's direction despite the snorting of her new acquaintance. After a few minutes of making certain that they were moving in the correct direction, Henrietta turned and pouted at Ranma. "Is it really that funny I didn't know how to use the reins?"

“Hehehe, sorry,” Ranma held up his hands as the pout hit him full force. “It’s just, that horse, when it turned its head, it looked as if it was saying, ‘Come on girly, really? That weren’t enough to make me swish my tail.’ It was just funny.”

“Well, excuse me for worrying about whether or not I could hurt the poor creatures.” Henrietta huffed.

Still chuckling, Ranma turned his head away, looking out into the woods.

Surprisingly, Henrietta didn’t think the silence between them that blossomed at that point was tense, uncertain perhaps but not nervous or worrying. Seeing him chortling at her and remembering his earlier awkward but friendly manner, Henrietta couldn’t see this young man was any danger to her. Indeed, after that earlier interaction, Henrietta felt quite certain that whatever had occurred between him and her guards was almost entirely due to her Musketeers being a little too certain of themselves perhaps. Regardless, curiosity was eating away at her and she kept on glancing at him furtively.

For his part, Ranma was a little unused to this. The faint flashes of memory that he was starting to get from his life before digging himself out of the ground was not showing Ranma any memories of being around girls. Like at all, bar one where he was fighting someone on a log balance beam of some kind. Whatever that memory was about, Ranma knew he had seen, and indeed talked to – or yelled at – more girls since coming to this world than he ever had before. *After all, I didn’t exactly exchange words with those women who attacked me with the weirdo who was shouting about shampoo or something. Heck, I only threatened the green haired girl once.*

On top of that was the fact that Henrietta hadn’t attacked him, and had even apologized for her retainers, before making an agreement with Ranma to help him. Apologies, well as Ranma had thought when Henrietta had originally apologized, those were nonexistent in his memories. So he wasn’t certain how to proceed. Ranma also seemed to remember something about treating Royals formally, but what formally meant he didn’t know. He’d bowed earlier, but even looking back on it, Ranma wasn’t certain why or where the idea that he should come from.

A few moments after Henrietta had finally gotten the horses moving, they both turned to one another and opened their mouths to speak. Ranma blinked, then bowed his head slightly. “Ladies first.” He then blinked, frowning and looking down at his own mouth. “What the heck? Where did that come from?”

“You keep on mentioning your memory,” Henrietta interjected, her lips quirking as she thought Ranma’s expression was rather funny. “Can I ask what happened to it? Or perhaps I should ask, what is the first thing you remember?”

“Digging myself out of the dirt,” Ranma answered instantly, causing Henrietta’s eyes to widen.

“Were you attacked by some kind of earth mage?” she guessed.

“I... could have been? I don’t know,” Ranma scowled. “Although, I don’t think we had magic where I came from, like you all do. Anyway, as near as I can figure it, me and my old man, whose name I can’t remember, although I think I could draw his face now, which I couldn’t earlier today. Anyway, we were on a training journey. We’re martial artists you see, and we were always training to be better, stronger, faster, more skilled all that jazz.”

While confused about what ‘all that jazz’ meant, Henrietta nodded agreeably.

“Well I think he came up with this one really, really effective training exercise. Or maybe he stole it from someone? I think he’s done that a few times, though now that I think about it, no one ever chased us for long. Whatever the case, while we were in a foreign land country, where they weren’t speaking my own language...”

“I’m sorry to interrupt, but what language would that be?” Henrietta inquired politely.

“Japanese, that’s also the name of my country.” He looked at Henrietta hopefully. “Have you ever heard of it?”

Henrietta shook her head, indicating that she had never heard the name before, although she was intrigued by the fact that with everything else, Ranma had not forgotten his country’s name. “I’m afraid not. But you speak as if you aren’t good at languages. Yet you are speaking Tristainian easily.”

“Nope, I’m not, you’re listening in Tristainian, I’m speaking in Japanese,” Ranma replied. “This short pink haired girl with a bad temper used a spell, which she said was supposed to ‘silence me,’ but instead, it made me understand your language.”

“Truly!” Henrietta said clapping her hands before hastily grabbing at the reins before they could bounce down and out of her lap and down between the horses. Again Ranma chuckled at her, and Henrietta pouted at him once more before saying “You’ve meant dear Louise then? She is my childhood friend, indeed, the only one I ever really had. I was using the Familiar Summoning Ceremony being an important part of a mage’s life to come and see her.

Ranma blinked then made a face before shrugging, “Well, I suppose opposites are supposed to attract.”

“What do you mean?”

"It's just well you're being super polite and actually listening to me and she really... wasn't." Ranma wasn't going to go into details about his and the short sparkplug's interactions, not wanting to alienate the third person who had been nice to him, since he had apparently survived the uber-toughness training he had gone through.

"...Well, I know that her older sister has a temper, so I suppose Louise might have as well," Henrietta answered, before realizing that she had interrupted him a moment ago. "Oh, I'm sorry, do go on."

At that, Ranma explained what had happened since Ranma had dug himself out of the dirt. The increase in his internal reserves, the enhanced strength and speed, "more strength than speed really, at least I think so. My style before that's speed over anything else."

From there Ranma described how he had attempted to practice using an energy attack, whereupon he was then attacked by the warrior women and a flying magic user. He described the attacks of the odd magic user in great detail, causing Henrietta to frown pensively. Of course, she was also attempting to fit what Ranma was saying into her own old-world view as anyone else would, the least of which was mentally substituting magic for the word ki.

Thus, the princess built up an idea in her mind of who Ranma was as well as his world. Henrietta started to believe that Ranma and his father were some kind of nobles who were on a training journey which had crossed into an enemy land. *It would certainly explain why he was attacked so quickly.*

The attacks of the one called Herb was telling as well. Flying, using attacks like that, as well as being as durable as Ranma had mentioned? All that pointed to a highly ranked noble, or perhaps even a royal of some kind. A Square Class Mage at the very least.

The others, after a few moments thought, she would term as Line or Triangle Mages. The people in Ranma's world seemed to use magic exclusively to enhance physical abilities, which made the idea that Ranma had stumbled upon some kind of royal training regimen or perhaps had awakened his own royal blood all the more believable her mind.

The attack by the woman in what Ranma described as some kind of uniform was also strange, and she said so when Ranma got to the point of where he had been sucked into the strange magical spell. "You are certain she looked like someone from your Japan?"

"Yes," Ranma said with a nod. "She wore a school uniform despite looking like she was in her twenties at best, but yeah, that kind of uniform, we called it a sailor fuku came from my nation. I don't have any idea why thought. But more importantly, when the green-haired woman launched her magic attacks she used verbal spells in Japanese," Ranma answered instantly.

Henrietta frowned, thinking deeply. *A coup, then? The wandering prince, or powerful noble at any rate, killed before he can come home?* “I, I see... Unfortunately, I think that this green-haired woman had nothing to do with your memory loss. She seems to have simply taken advantage of it. The magical spell that you describe as a doorway may have been the summoning spell or perhaps... well in any event, you seem to be dealing with two different issues: memory loss and being here in general. But what happened next?”

Shrugging Ranma continued the story up to when Louise – Ranma made a point of using the girl’s name since she was Henrietta’s friend - apparently tried some kind of spell that made him dizzy and out of it.

Eyes widening, Henrietta had to interrupt once more at that point, setting aside her thoughts on Ranma’s past, to concentrate on the here and now, anger rising inside her. “Could you please describe the scene when you and Louise performed familiar bond?”

“Familiar bond?”

“I will get to that in a moment. Please humor me first,” Henrietta said, her tone turning sharp the first time since Ranma had laid eyes on her.

Blinking at that, Ranma looked at her face and saw her deep scowl. Shrugging his shoulders, he then proceeded to describe the scene in the classroom after the smoke of his crash had cleared, which caused Henrietta’s grip on the reins to tighten.

“So, let me get this straight. You appear, possibly due to this other green-haired woman’s connivance, or a strange juxtaposition of magics at any rate, to appear before Louise as her familiar. And instead of stopping the ceremony when they realize that you are a human being, they continue it! You are positive that the professor told Louise something at that point?” Henrietta inquired insistently.

“I couldn’t tell you what he said, this whole translation thing doesn’t work backwards after all. But yeah, that’s what happened. She looked really angry and annoyed for a second, and then sort of resigned. That change threw me off enough to actually follow her motion to lean down.”

“Which you would not have otherwise,” Henrietta nodded slowly, her knuckles now white on the reins. “I believe, then an audit of the academies counselor is in order, and yes, a review of the teaching staff, their policies and what exactly they are allowing students to learn in my kingdom!”

“What are you so angry about?” Ranma questioned, now pretty certain it wasn’t him, which was a relief.

The familiar bond to be is between a human being and a creature. The creature is supposed to match the individual's personality or strengths, as chosen by the spell made sacred by the Founder Brimir. In return for the aid of the animal, which can be considerable if the mage and creature work together, the creature gains some magic and intelligence they would otherwise not have. I have no idea why everyone just seemed to accept the fact that Louise could summon a human being to be her familiar! Between a human and another human, the familiar bond could..."

Henrietta hesitated looking at Ranma sympathetically, taking a hand off the reins to reach out and pat his hand comfortingly. "It might force you in some fashion to care for her or follow her orders, taking away your free will to a certain extent."

Looking at her, Ranma could only shake his head in surprise. "Let me get this straight, you're angry at how I was treated?"

"Of course I am!" Henrietta shot back, still looking furious. "Is that so surprising?"

"Kind of yeah," Ranma mumbled, looking away and scratching at his nose. Ranma was still getting a few more flashes of his past life, but somehow knew that kindness like that, consideration like that, just like her earlier apology, were very rare things to him. *Not that it's necessary right now.* Winking at Henrietta, Ranma squeezed her hand once as he continued. "Well, thanks for the heads up on that one, but I think I already kind of got rid of it, so there's no reason for you to be angry."

Henrietta blinked. "I'm sorry? You did what now?"

"I told you, my martial arts style emphasizes the power of the body, right? I mean, I have memories of needing to speed up my healing several times during training while I was younger. So those marks appeared on my hand" Ranma explained, holding in his hands up, show the backs of both of them to Henrietta. "I thought they looked way too much like a brand, which you just said they were. So I used my life force to get rid of them, to expel the weird energy within them."

"So your magic enables you to heal yourself to that degree? That's amazing! Here, only water elements users have any of ability with healing. I myself am a very good healer."

Ranma frowned thinking, then nodded slowly. "Because water makes up so much of the human body, right?"

Once more Henrietta blinked in surprise, then smiled at Ranma. "Exactly, yes. Few people who are not water mages themselves realize that. You must've had quite a good education despite this training journey of yours."

“I think I did when I could get it? Like I said my old man, he believed in training all the time, so I don’t know how much hitting the books I did.”

“Agnes, the head of my musketeers, says that life is the greatest teacher. So perhaps that means you are simply wiser than those of us who have to rely on books,” Henrietta replied teasingly.

Ranma chuckled and for a time, the two of them fell silent, wondering where to take the conversation. Ranma wasn’t willing to go on to describe events at the academy, leery of painting Louise in too dim a light for Henrietta to accept, despite the seeming anger she felt for the way he had been treated as a servant. Her anger on Ranma’s behalf actually made Ranma kind of stunned, considering they had just met.

And for her part, Henrietta was busy thinking about everything she had already learned about Ranma and his world. She was also thinking through what she, or the castle’s doctor, could do for his memory loss. Or if the best thing to do would be to just wait, since it seemed to be coming back to him in clumps. *Oh wait, I forgot to ask about that massive red beam of power from earlier.*

Henrietta was about to broach that subject when she realized, rather belatedly, they were going a little too fast, and the horses having picked up speed for some reason even as the carriage came to a curve in the road. Thanks to her conversation with Ranma she hadn’t noticed before, but their speed was almost enough to lift up her hair.

“Oh my!” Quickly Henrietta pulled on the reins, hoping that was the proper way to bring the carriage to a stop. *I knew I should have pushed harder for horseback riding lessons!*

However, it was too late. The horses, spooked by some scent on the wind, had kept running even as she tried to haul on the reins. The horses and carriages went around the bend so wildly that the right-side wheels of the carriage crashed down into a ditch along the side of the road, where they stuck.

Henrietta might well have been thrown clear entirely if not for Ranma grabbing her around the waist, as well as the reins, pulling back. He did so as gently as he possibly could, he didn’t want to break the reins (or the horses) after all, but he still hauled them to a stop, while Henrietta clung to him. “You all right there?” he asked solicitously.

Henrietta blushed slightly, not used to being so close to a man. *But I was just sitting next to him for the past while, wasn’t I? Get yourself together Henrietta!* “*Ahem*, um, I am well, thank you Ranma.” Pushing away from Ranma, she then looked at the horses, who were still trying to pulled away, whinnying now loudly. “What has gotten into them, I wonder?”

Ranma frowned, looking out into the woods. "Quick question, you're the princes of this country, right?" Brow furrowed, Henrietta nodded wondering why he had asked since she had introduced herself as such. "Do you have enemies out there?"

"Lots," Henrietta replied instantly, tensing as she started to look out into the woods as well. "In fact, you would rather be spoiled for choice."

"So people trying to sneak towards us through the woods would probably be a bad thing?" As he was speaking there was a booming sound of muskets being fired, and Ranma lazily reached out and grabbed a musket ball, grabbing them out of the air one after another so quickly it seemed as if they disappeared midair until he dropped them over the side of the carriage to the ground. "Huh, guess that answers that question."

With that, Ranma leaped up off of the carriage and into the woods, crashing into one man who had been racing forward after some kind of invisibility spell had ended. All four of them went down crying out in pain as Ranma crashed into them, making Ranma wince. Right, need to remember they don't have martial artists here, he thought to himself.

Then a blast of lightning of some kind slammed into him, and Ranma took a step back. The impact of the spell had caught him mid step, but otherwise Ranma was utterly unharmed. At the same time, more people rushed forward, seven of them, all large, swarthy fellows in cloaks with their faces obscured by wrappings. Each of them hefted a dagger and a sword.

Shaking his head, Ranma held up his hands, one finger from each hand extended. "Heh, if you lot can't even take me crashing into you, then I think I'm going to have some fun with this. With that he launched himself forward flicking his finger out into the forehead of one man. So powerful was the flick that the man flipped in midair as he was sent flying backwards. Another man lost his sword to a similar flick, while a third man cut at Ranma's back only to discover Ranma twisting around the blade like he was made of grass. Another flick, and a second man was sent flying as Ranma laughed.

But then from behind him, he heard Henrietta shouting, "Ranma, duck!"

Henrietta was a princess of a royal line that could date itself back to the Founder Brimir. This meant that, despite the fact that she would prefer to talk her way out of conflict, Henrietta was one of the few living Pentagram mages. Even without her guards, who were still unconscious from their earlier battle with Ranma, she was not without recourse.

Without questioning it, Ranma obeyed, hurling himself forward on his face.

Using five smaller spells, Henrietta had created a sphere of water, which she now hurled forward, the spear, growing and enlarging from side to side as it went into a crescent shaped cutting blade, the speed of the water enhanced further by Henrietta's mastery of air. The massive crescent of water crashed into the forest, shattering trees and hurling more of the

attackers through the air to land crumpled and broken on the ground. Two of them had been carrying the muskets which had fired earlier and had retreated through the woods to try and get time to reload. Now they would never get the chance, and Ranma grimaced a bit, at seeing the bits of people flung out everywhere.

He'd been in fights for his life before, but this hadn't been a serious fight to his mind. But evidently the princess had not agreed with that assessment.

However, a second later, another spell was flung towards Henrietta, this one a beam of white-hot fire. Hastily, Henrietta created a shield of water in front of herself. This absorbed the fire but created steam hot enough to make her cry out, and stumble backwards on the carriage's box.

seeing this from where he had ducked underneath Henrietta's attack on their attackers, Ranma traced the spell back to see a black-cloaked man, barely visible from where he had crouched by a downed tree. Thinking quickly, Ranma grabbed up one of the corpses from nearby and hurled it at the enemy mage. The man was concentrating so much on pouring more of his power into the beam of fire going towards Henrietta that he didn't even duck, and the half of course crashed into him, hurling him off his feet several yards away from where he had been crouching,

By the time he pushed the corpse off himself, Ranma was standing over him. The man reacted quickly thrusting a hand up towards Ranma, the same fire spell sparking out. But Ranma responded by smashing the fire spell with a fist, the fist moving so fast it created a booming noise as air crashed into the fire, overwhelming and dissipating the man's hasty fire spell.

Before the man could create another spell, a finger flicked down, smashing into the assassin's forehead with just a little more force than Ranma had been using before. The man didn't flip like Ranma's previous victims, already being on the ground but he did fly backwards and the blow knocked the man clean out, his eyes rolling up in his head before the back of his skull impacted the ground.

Ranma grabbed the man up in one hand while scanning the rest of the forest, only to turn as Henrietta launched another attack deeper into the woods, even larger than her last one. This shattered more of the forest, blasting or cutting trees apart but revealed no further attackers.

From where she stood on her carriage's box, Henrietta stared hard through the woods herself, then looked over at Ranma who was now walking towards her dragging the prisoner. He grimaced when he came to the unconscious bodies of the others he'd delt with. Tossing the wizard in front of Henrietta, he knelt down next to them checking for pulses and finding them, thankfully, before searching their bodies for weapons then tying them up with their own clothing. "So," he began conversationally, "is this an everyday thing for you, or a special event."

"A, um a special event, thankfully," Henrietta chuckled, her body shivering in aftershocks. If not for Ranma, that first fusillade of musket balls would've done her in, so complete had been the surprise. *Indeed, with that wizard involved, and that number of those attackers, I don't know if he can my musketeers would've been enough to...*

She sat down abruptly on the carriages seat, the thump of it carrying, and Ranma looked up at her sharply. Looking at her shivering there, Ranma grimaced. "First fight?" he asked commiseratingly.

"Would you think less of me if I said yes?" she asked, although why she asked that question Henrietta didn't know. All Henrietta knew was that it was important to her that Ranma keep looking at her as he had.

Ranma shook his head, tossing the wizard prisoner up onto the top of the coach, figuring he was the most important to keep an eye on, before sitting down next to her, and hesitantly reaching out to take one of her hands. Henrietta however would have none of that, and flung her arms around him and almost moving into his lap, shivering as she clung to him. "I, I've had training, of course," she said weakly. "I've sparred with other mages, sparred with my musketeers occasionally, u, used my magics to see what would happen if I were suddenly fired upon, what kind of shields to create, wh, what would happen if I turned my, my power on a human. But, but..."

"But it's different when you're putting your own life on the line, and see what you did afterward," Ranma commiserated as he awkwardly patted her back. Then feeling her tremors ease at that, Ranma went a bit further, putting his own arms around the princess. "At least you didn't hesitate when the fight was going on. That means a lot. And so does the fact you're not happy with what you did. Heck, that means even more in a way."

"Thank you for that," Henrietta replied, moved by Ranma's simple words. She looked up at him quizzically as she began to fight her tears back. "How did you... that is how did you deal with your first fight?"

Ranma frowned, and was about to remind Henrietta about the whole missing memories thing. But as the question bounced around in his brain, Ranma realized he could remember the first time he was forced to really fight for his life against another person. "Er, I think I was 10 maybe 11 Mark my old man, I told you about him, right? He signed me up to fight this in this underground fighting ring. I'm not describing it right but..."

"I can understand what you mean yes," Henrietta interjected, looking a little sick at the very idea of someone signing up an 11-year-old boy to fight in what was no doubt a death match.

"Anyway, I won the fight. Afterward, the locals were annoyed that I had won and tried to ambush us. We took them all out, I mean that there wasn't a single martial artist among

them. But, I had to... I had to kill at that point to protect myself from... well think of it as a really good pistol I guess." Ranma didn't want to go into details about the fight, or about modern guns from his own world but did want to get the emotions of the moment across so Henrietta knew her collapse wasn't something to be ashamed of. "I collapsed afterwards, it was one of the few times my old man acted all fatherly toward me rather than as a martial arts trainer."

"A, and taking a life?" Henrietta questioned hesitantly.

"I hate it. I hate killing and I doubt you're going to have a good night's sleep tonight. But, well, you thought it was you or them. You, you did what you had to. It's scant comfort, I know, but if it's you or them, sometimes it is just that simple."

After taking this in, Henrietta realized that she was still holding on to Ranma, and hastily retreated, blushing brightly at the impropriety of it. "Th, thank you for that Ranma, and for your aid here." She smiled. After all, protecting me in lieu of my Musketeers certainly wasn't part of our agreement."

Ranma shrugged. "Well, I suppose friends help one another without agreements you know," he ended hesitantly looking at her, but she simply nodded her head firmly, and then looked around at the surrounding battlefield, as if she hadn't just blown Ranma's mind. With his memories returning with every fight, Ranma felt he could now count on one hand the number of friends he had, and still have fingers left over. Making a new one as easy as that, that was kind of awesome.

Looking at the men Ranma had knocked out, Henrietta concentrated, using an Earth spell to create metal manacles which began to rise out of the dirt, encircling the prisoner's hands and ankles and then their mouths. "If you could toss that lot onto the top of the coach, I believe we can keep going." When Ranma looked at her, Henrietta shrugged. "If my musketeers didn't wake up during this bit of activity, I doubt that we could wake them up without hurting them in some fashion and I would rather not do so. Nor would taking the time to do so be a good idea. I want that mage in the royal castle's prison answering questions as fast as we can manage it."

Ranma nodded, although he absently wondered why the horses hadn't tried to run off. When he said this aloud, Henrietta replied that, "The mage must have used a wind spell to carry some kind of spell to the horses, which spooked them. Now that the spell is gone, they are back to normal. And as royal horses, they have been present during magical combat and know to simply stand still until it is over."

"Huh, well-trained horses then," Ranma grunted as he followed Henrietta's request, piling the three living prisoners on top of the mage after a final search of all of their pockets. With that done, Ranma lifted the carriage out of the ditch, musketeers, Henrietta, and prisoners all without apparent effort, something that caused Henrietta to shake her head in astonishment. Then he hopped back onto the carriage's box.

Neither of them noticed it, but instead of sitting at the far ends of the carriages box, they were now sitting side by side. Henrietta smiled at him, and Ranma smiled back, as Henrietta then turned to the horses and flicked the rain again getting it right the first time.

Quickly the carriage once more began its journey back to the capital of Tristan, and...

1. Elsewhere, Louise and Tabitha were searching for the wayward Ranma, while back on Earth, Setsuna is feeling very good indeed. (various bits from the original covering events on Earth and Louise hearing a certain rumor)

2. The journey is uneventful, and Henrietta returns, and, while dealing with other things, finds her mind turning to Ranma and Wales, comparing the two men and wondering on the future. (castle shenanigans from the original expanded).

3. The attackers' client ponders, wonders, and then decides to see for himself what happened while stopping in at the academy. Killing two birds with one stone is always a nice idea.

4. Agnes wakes up underneath the rest of her musketeers, hearing the voice of the boy who manhandled them as her jaw begins to throb, making her wonder what the heck has been stuffed into her mouth.

{I will apologize that the choices in the poll are different from the descriptions but the choices for the poll have a word limit}

End Episode 5