

Cable girl

Lucy Mangan
Tuesday April 29, 2008
The Guardian

It has long been a vexed question as to why young women are still so dissatisfied with life, even though we now have the vote, contraception and two flavours of Jaffa cake available in most major supermarkets. So you will be delighted to know that I now have the answer. And it is: Ron Perlman. The man warped the psychosexual development of a generation.

He accomplished this not inconsiderable feat by playing Vincent, the leonine tunnel-dweller in the 1987 series *Beauty and the Beast*, starring Linda “post-Terminator, pre-Terminator 2” Hamilton as the other half of the equation, and ruined anyone passing through their pubertal years at the time for lesser - albeit more mainstream-looking - men.

Somehow in the late 80s, while brutal materialism laid waste to the hearts and souls of millions, CBS allowed on to the screen the unrepentantly romantic story of Catherine (beautiful lawyer, mugged, left for dead) and Vincent (rescues beautiful muggee, tends to her wounds, returns her to the world above) who find that they have a Wordless Connection that transcends space, time and the fact that Vincent looks like a bipedal Aslan* in, inexplicably, Tudorbethan costume.

He helps her solve crimes, she helps him find the man behind the lion. When he feels jealous of the men who can visit her in daylight without frightening the horses, she says things like: “I know those feelings! But they come from love! To turn away from them is to forget where they came from!” And when she is wracked by the torment of their secret luurve, he says things like: “Sometimes, secrets give us strength!” then raises her face to the moonlight and recites Renaissance poetry. He is noble, passionate, constant and untouchable! She is somehow simpering and stoic at the same time! They love without limits! Or touching!

Oh, tis all too marvellous! And the problem with women ever since has been that there are simply not enough subterranean, sonnet-quoting, semi-bestial heroes to go round.

(* Aslan is the god-like lion in C.S Lewis’ *Narnia* books - ed)