

Denis Kirby's

A Plaiting of Tales

This collection is but a window, a wonderful window with a wonderful view of other times and places, their characters and events. Come with me now, relax, watch and enjoy.

The Author

Denis Kirby is an Australian writer who has picked up the pen later in life. This is his third adventure novel preceded by 'Venture Thee?' and 'Master of the Fletching' His main ambition is to share his thoughts, characters and some situations drawn from his own experiences, mixed with imagination, with readers to then bring some enjoyment and perhaps relief from the hum-drum and strife that life throws at us.

Published by Denis Kirby-----

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Also by Denis Kirby:

Venture Thee?

<http://www.digitalprintaustralia.com/bookstore/fiction/adventure/venture-thee.html>

Master of the Fletching

<http://www.digitalprintaustralia.com/bookstore/fiction/adventure/master-of-the-fletching.html>

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Maryanne Regrets

A stop at this roadhouse could cost you more than just the price
of fuel

BIPED

It was a being, a gathering of precision; of high technology components, manufactured by the *Masters* to be an *Obeyer*.

It was commanded to *seek intelligent life* on the alien planet, but then to be abandoned and left to fend for itself.

The planet is Earth. The year was 189 A.D., deep in the jungle of the African Congo, the starting point of the *Biped's* epic journey. A journey filled with danger, from the ravaging wild beasts to entrapment by hunters; from the decadence of ancient Carthage where life or death in the Arena was but the balance on a sword thrust; to the confrontations with wild natives in unexplored regions. Come with me now to another time and place, relax and enjoy the show.

Ol' Morse

He was a loner and he took steps to keep it that way...unexpected steps.

The old man hated trespassers. But Hate was too kind a word ... as three unknowing campers discovered

Treasure Lost

1854 Gold Rush in Victoria. Treasures won. Treasures lost.
Treasures stolen. One is hidden in pursuit. Does an old letter
discovered today hold the key to its whereabouts?
Now in 2008, Jessica Simmonds starts the hunt with her small
group of friends.

Acknowledgements

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Also to my publishers, Digital Print Australia, in particular Cory Heneker, a longtime sufferer of my 'how to do' questions and his invaluable assistance with the cover of this novel.
Without their help you would not be reading this.

Disclaimer

All events and characters in this tale are fictional. Some places do exist; I have taken the liberty of moving the dates of their being a little.

To my wife Glenys

Maryanne Regrets

A stop at this roadhouse could cost you more than
just the price of fuel.

1

Steve Carter lifted the bonnet of the Ford and stood back. The air that rose from the engine compartment was hotter than that outside, and that was saying something.

According to a local radio station Steve had picked up through the static a couple of hours ago, it was 43 degrees Celsius in the shade.

He reached into the car and put on a hat, leaned on the front mudguard and waited his turn for fuel. This was not one of those self-serve stations that were everywhere in every city. The young woman had served the customer and they had a friendly chat as he paid.

Obviously a local, Steve thought.

An old speaker hanging under the verandah of the shop crackled out an old Burl Ives song... *Maryanne regrets she's unable to see you, again*

*We're leaving for Europe next week; she'll be busy 'till then
They knew that she loved me but poor boys don't fit in their plans*

Goodbye true love, goodbye my sweet Mary-Anne.

Weeks have gone by....

Steve brushed the ever-attendant bush flies from his eyes and watched the car in front depart with a short *bip bip* of the horn.

She hummed along with the melody, pony tail of hair swinging and a fair display of tanned, shapely legs below white shorts, as she neared.

Sounds good, looks good, thought Steve as he leaned against the side of the Ford and appreciated the view. “What’s your name honey?” he asked, paused, and then went on “you sure are a sight for these old, tired drivin’ eyes.”

“Been far?” she asked in avoidance to answering his question.

“A fair run, but needed fuel and a bit of a break. Been goin’ since early.”

He looked around. “Pretty dry ‘round here. Where is this anyway? I know I’m on the Kennedy Devel Road but that’s about it.”

“You’re right there. An’ this place is sorta north of Muttaborra. Where ya headin’?”

“Brisbane.”

“Well ya sure won’t make that today.....or maybe not even tomorrow. It’s around eight hundred miles through the mountains an’ such.”

Steve slowly shook his head staring at an oil spot on the concrete drive “I knew I should have stuck to the main drag down the coast. I thought I’d get inland a bit and enjoy the country scenery.” He grinned a little but kept his eyes on the driveway then casting around the sky, anywhere but in her direction. But he did finally.

She knew she had him. Just even by his eyes that seemed to drink in every movement of her body and her smile. She knew how to smile and lower her head demurely, it was all part of her practiced driveway service. And it worked, many a traveller came here again, salesmen, distant farmers, even touring couples of the straight-faced male trying not to drool so his wife would notice.

“Well you’ve come to a stop at the right place! Oh! And the name is Maryanne. That’s why I like this song.” she said as the

pump-nozzle on the hose clicked...then clicked again as she tried to put a little more into the tank.

“It don’t sound like a real happy song to me.”

“It’ll do.” She said as she hung the hose up and put the petrol cap on. She looked at the bowser and said “That’ll be forty-three dollars thank you, Oh! And pa-favor, what is *your* first name?”

“Steve.”

“Well hullooh! Steve, how are you payin’? Cash? Card?”

“Cash.” He handed over a hundred dollar note and watched that swaying arse all the way to the building. *It has been a while.*

He was still leaning on the Ford when she came back with his change. Her smile was a little more alluring than before and now a couple of buttons on the blouse were undone. He did notice that. He knew a come on when he saw one. But the soft swell of the tits was hard to drag the eyes away from.

“Hungry?” she asked as she handed over his change.

“Somewhere where I can get a good meal around here?” he said, almost ignoring the question.

“If you’re after Mackers, there’s one about eighty miles down the road, I guess they might have a steak ...maybe. Myself, I don’t go for all that fried shit; I like to eat natural stuff without all the grease. It’s good for the body.” The clear grey eyes bored into his.

“I can see that.” he said and dropped his gaze to roam down the length of her then back up again.

“I can see you look after yourself pretty well too.”

“Yeah, well, I travel around a bit and I miss more meals than I eat. If I ate every time my gut told me to I reckon I’d be a coupla stone heavier.” He turned to the driver’s door and said “Well gotta get goin’..thanks..ah.Maryanne.”

“I can cook a better steak than you can find in a hundred miles of here!” she responded quickly “and my roast spuds and gravy are second to none.”

Here comes the con...but Christ I’m hungry...another eighty down the road...and I could sure use a break. He turned from the door and leaned his backside on the front mudguard. The grey eyes were upon him..... and the stance had a slight provocative sway. Pressing the advantage, she almost whispered

“Twenty-five bucks,...and another thirty for the night.....it is kinda getting’ on.” She lifted her head towards the lowering sun. “If I was a traveller, I reckon a fresh start in tha morning is the way I’d go.”

He paused for effect even knowing he was gone. He let his eyes tear away from her tilted chin and roam across the neglected fascia of the servo. *Why not! I don’t know what overnight means but if she is included...well...after all it looks like she could use the dough. Still feels like a con, but.*

“Sounds good to me.” He smiled with a downward inclination of his head.

“Done then! You can park that car of yours ‘round back and come on in through tha front door.” Another meaningful glance from those eyes came with the words.

The front shop of the servo was nothing to write home about *but then there would be no competition out here. No need to display little nick-nacks to drag customers in. Anyone stopping here, stopped for fuel and or a cold drink. Maybe she also cooked a meal or two around the noon-time hours. Basically what you see you get* he thought as he walked through the front wire-screened door.

Maryanne was wiping down the top of the front counter. An old cash register stood in the middle. It looked like it didn’t work. Perhaps it was just a change-till he thought. *After all most prices are rounded off so it’s no big deal to give ten back out of fifty. Drinks are probably in even numbers too.*

“Ah! There you are. Park okay?”

“Yep!.....say there’s a coupla old Fords out there behind. Who owns them? Looks like they’ve been sittin’ for a while.”

“Sure have! Belong to my dad. He don’t drive now tho’. Tha ’56 he bought from new. Had it imported all tha way from America....back in ’56. Then he bought the stang in ’66. He liked doin’ things in tens... or at least in ten year tens. Always said he was goin’ to collect good cars and start a museum out here. Never did tho. Now they’re just sittin’ there all lonely and all.”