

The Daily SHRIEK ■ Tales of the Castle: Bootcamp

[Click to see more pages](#)

[Go](#)

Tales of the WayOut Castle Crew



What follows is a series of letters exchanged between the Prince and the WayOut Castle Crew during his tour of duty at Ft. BFM, Missouri.

[Click here to read more adventures of the WayOut Castle crew:](#)

[Tales of the Castle: 1](#)

[Tales of the Castle: 2](#)

[Tales of the Castle: 3](#)

Editor's note: The WayOut crew's ongoing adventures are chronicled on ACD-L (see cattledog.com for information on joining the listserve) and in the [ACDCA Quarterly](#).

The Prince Goes West

His Royal Highness Prince Slate's carefree existence came to an abrupt end one evening when he overheard the Evil Prime Minister suggesting disingenuously to the personal attendant that it might be about time for the royal lad to do his stint of service to the country. "He's plenty old enough," sneered the furry potentate. "Send him off to the army. It is time he learned to work a little and not be such a sissy." The noble youth swelled up in anger to hear himself referred to as a sissy! The personal attendant gently chided the Evil Prime Minister for once again thinking the worst of the sweet prince but Prince Slate's hopes of a reprieve were dashed when he heard her agreeing to the Prime Minister's plan.

"I'm sorry, Pookie Bear," she said as she packed up his necessities. "I wish you could stay but you might as well get an education instead of moping around here all summer while I am so busy with school." The personal attendant was sometimes rather forward with the prince but this time he overlooked her use of such an undignified nickname.

After some twenty odd hours of travel, the royal chariot drew up at Fort BFM in Missouri. The princely youth was already acquainted with his new drill sergeant but he had not yet decided whether he liked him or not. HRH Slate was rather put out to discover that his royal chamber was not quite as luxurious as he was accustomed to. "Where is my pillow?" he asked in all innocence. His new bunkmates snickered loudly. "Get a load of the new guy! He wants his pillow!" The news quickly spread throughout the barracks and the raucous laughter quite embarrassed the prince.

The personal attendant tried to hide her tears as she said goodbye to her charge. "All princes must spend time in the service," she explained stifling a snuffle. "I will see you again when you are through with boot camp." She turned away quickly. "You can write!" she called back as she hurried away with a sob.

The drill sergeant gave the prince a toothbrush, told him to start cleaning and left him, both pillowless and without his personal attendant. His bunkmates continued to snicker openly as the sweet prince gave a deep sigh and started to scrub the floor with his toothbrush.



A Letter From The Prince

To: the Lovely Lady Tassel, the Evil Prime Minister Shan, the Catlandish Ambassadors and the personal attendant, WayOut Castle

From: His Royal Highness Prince Slate -- currently Private Slate of the 816th Missouri Regiment stationed at Fort BFM

My dear friends, enemies and servant:

I hope all is well back at the castle. I guess I am fine. It is hard adjusting to life among the commoners. My bunkmates are a motley assortment. Some of them belong to an ethnic minority calling themselves "kelpies". I have seen very few such dogs in my own kingdom. They have a very impertinent way of staring about them. It quite puts me out of countenance. May a kelpie stare at a prince? Have my personal attendant check into the etiquette of that and what the appropriate response to it would be.

It has also been raining a lot. I get wet. At least I figured out how to go in this poor excuse for a castle - they call it a "doghouse" here. It is much more fun to sit on top of it in the sunshine. Have my personal attendant put in a request for more sunshine but not too hot. I fear they are not quite up to date in their wiring and I have not been able to find either a heater or an air-conditioning unit attached to the "doghouse."

I am getting large amounts of fresh air which I find quite... invigorating. Perhaps my personal attendant would be good enough to send me a raincoat and while she is at it, a sofa would not be an unpleasant addition to my living quarters.

I do hope the prime minister is not chewing up my Pinks or fuzzy toys. Have my personal attendant put them safely out of his way. I am sure his grace must be feeling very destructive since he does not currently have my nose to chew on. I also hope, dear Lady Tassel, that you are not flirting all over the neighborhood now I am not there to watch you. Your looseness of manner could very easily be taken the wrong way. I say this, you understand, with only your best interest at heart.

The great sense of pride that fills me when I consider how I am serving my county helps me get through each day. I hope I will be able to be of some small service after my basic

training is completed. I also very much look forward to the day I will get to come back home to my castle, friends and pillows.

Please don't worry about me. I am sure I am quite fine here... with the rain, the "doghouse" and the staring kelpies. Don't worry at all as you sit about the court on your sofa sipping cocktails and eating delicacies. I am learning to be useful and not just a palace decoration. Really, I don't mind. I don't...really! Can't you please have my personal attendant send just one Pink to your devoted but damp friend,

Slate



Lady Tassel Writes To The Prince

Dear Private Slate:

How silly that sounds! I would have thought that the personal attendant could have arranged for you to start out as an officer or something. Oh well, it doesn't affect me so who cares. The Evil Prime Minister and I have been having a lovely time. The personal attendant leaves the new doggy door open for us and we run in and out all day long. I can bark at every little dog that goes past. Not enough little dogs go past unfortunately. When she comes home, sometimes the personal attendant smells delightfully reminiscent of cows. Sometimes she smells like horses, she is usually more grumpy on those days and has the most astonishing collection of bruises. She complains very bitterly against "stinkin' baby horses." I don't know any myself but it sounds like they could use a few good chomps on the ankles. I am not sure why she hasn't tried that.

Last week I went on a vacation to Catlandia. It was rather exciting. The peasants there work hard to provide nice sofas for the Catlanders but they do not allow dogs on them. It was quite shocking. I really didn't know what to do so I got on the sofa anyway. These Catlanders also tended to stay cooped up inside their castle. I got to go for nice strolls in the park with peasants and made faces in the windows at the Catlanders. It might have been that they were afraid of the scary pig monster that lived without. I think we might want to establish better communications with that land. We could sell our services in driving away scary pig monsters and maybe receive some new sofas in exchange.

I know the personal attendant misses you very much. She often looks at your pictures and sighs deeply. She seems very busy though and will probably forget all about you soon. I know she likes me better than you because I got to come back from Catlandia after only one week and she promises that I don't have to go back til "Large Animal Surgery." I am not sure what that is but it doesn't sound very promising for the large animals. I am sure glad I am small.

Your Pinks are all forgotten in the yard. The personal attendant has to kick them around every time she mows. The garden is really looking nice. The personal attendant says it is the nicest it has been since you first came to stay. Neither the Evil Prime Minister nor I dig holes in it. The personal attendant likes us best. She says we are very helpful.

The Evil Prime Minister sends you a sneer and a chomp on the nose. He says don't hurry back. I say maybe you can make friends with one of those kelpie things. I would be embarrassed to start out a mere private. Keep your spirits up and work hard and maybe you will get a promotion someday. I missed you a little in the beginning but not too much. I am sure the personal attendant has completely forgotten about you. She hasn't sighed deeply for an hour or so.

Write soon! XOXO,

Tassel
& the WayOut Castle Crew

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

The Prince To Tassel, June 2002

Dear Tassel:

I am having the most amazing time here. I have made a great new friend. His name is Sutter. He wears a fabulous red jumpsuit. I wish I had a red jumpsuit. Ask my attendant to try to find one in my size. This blue one is just not where it's at. Red is in for the summer. Sutter says that pink does not look good with red so tell my attendant not to bother to send me my Pink. Sutter says toys are for babies. Tell the Evil Prime Minister that he can have my toys or you can have them if you want. Maybe the attendant can find you a red jumpsuit too. It would be groovy.

I get to stay up late every night. We drink lots of water and sing songs til the wee hours. Sometimes the coyotes come near and sing with us - they are a rowdy gang though and usually end up trashing the place. The kelpies know the funniest stories. They don't even know they are funny but all of us cattle dogs end up rolling on the floor laughing. The kelpies think they are so serious. There is this one big one named Spur. He is taller than I am! All he wants to do is stare at those hoofers. How silly I was to ever think they were philosophers. They are not wise at all. Sometimes they get their silly heads stuck in the fence and they just stand there. Who knows, maybe they would starve to death!! What dummies, I want to bite them. Sutter knows some really good moves and he says he might show me a couple. I try to move the hoofers around the way he tells me. He knows everything!

The Drill Sergeant isn't bad. He always wears a hat. Tell the personal attendant she should wear a hat. Sutter says hats are cool. The Drill Sergeant says I do ok for a puny city boy. Am I a puny city boy? Sutter doesn't like cities. He says they have noise ordinances and no singing is allowed after midnight in cities. Ask the personal attendant if that is true. I don't want to live in a city anymore and be puny. Sutter has never lived in a city. Sutter isn't puny.

Sometimes a Hotdog Vendor comes around and gives me hotdogs. I think she likes me. She has red hair that goes with Sutter's jumpsuit. Sutter's daddy, Syd, says that he trained her to give out the hotdogs. Maybe Syd can train the personal attendant too.

Thanks for your letter! Tell the personal attendant not to be sad, I am having a good time. Say hi to the Evil Prime Minister but make sure you remember to stand back when you mention my name. He is so grumpy! I don't know how you get along so well with him.

Write again soon!

Pvt. Slate
816th Missouri Regiment
Fort BFM

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Lady Tassel To The Prince, June 29, 2002

Dear Slate:

I missed you a little today so I dug in the garden in memory of you. The personal attendant jumped around a bit. It was very fun. I might do it again later once she has cooled down some.

The personal attendant doesn't come home smelling like cows or horses anymore. Too bad. Now she just stinks like Catlandish ambassadors and peasant dogs. She often grabs my arms and tells me I have nice veins and that she would have no trouble hitting them. This makes me very nervous. Why would she want to hit my veins? Maybe one of those "stinkin' baby horses" hit her in the head. She just isn't like herself these days.

I think it would be a very good idea to have your friend Sutter's dad, Syd, teach her how to give out hotdogs. I think it would be great to have a HotDog Vendor come around sometimes. Why do you get all the luck? I don't get to stay out late and have parties with kelpies and coyotes. It might almost be worth being a lowly private for all that!

It is really very boring here. Other than trampling the carnations, I haven't gotten much accomplished yet this summer. The Evil Prime Minister is so cheerful and jolly these days. I think it is because he is so glad you aren't here. He doesn't send any message at all to you this time. He says he prefers to think you don't exist. I prefer to think you are making up the HotDog Vendor just to make me jealous. I don't believe there is any such person out there. Why would she give you hotdogs anyway? - why not to the kelpies and coyotes. What is a coyote, anyway? You never explained that.

We are going for a promenade now so I will close. Say hi to Sutter for me, you know I love red dogs!

XOXO,

Tassel

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

The Prince To Lady Tassel, July 6, 2002

Dear Tassel,

Thanks for digging in the garden for me. I think I might have left a bone under the lavender, can you check for me? If I did, it is time for it to be moved over to near the Russian Sage. It is very important to rotate one's stock regularly.

Speaking of stock, the Drill Sergeant says I am doing "jes' fine" (I know it sounds funny but that's really how he talks!). He says I get to work with the cattle next week. Sutter says I will like that. Sutter had to move back in with his mom so he doesn't get to sing and carouse at night as much. We both snuck out last night and had some fun. We went cow-tipping! Did you know if you sneak up on cows when they are sleeping you can push them over? Sutter told me it was true. We tried but they woke up. That was Sutter's fault. He tripped over a duck in the dark and it squawked. We went skinny dipping in the lake while we waited for the cows to go back to sleep. I tried to get Sutter's red jumpsuit when we came out but he beat me to it. He doesn't want to be stuck wearing blue. Has my personal attendant found a red jumpsuit in my size yet?

We had to run back to the barracks after that because it was almost light. We would be

in terrible trouble if we were caught AWOL - that means Out Tipping The Cows. I don't know why the letters don't match.

Sutter lets me stand guard for the HotDog Vendor. I always sing out when I see her coming so all the guys know to pay attention. She really does exist. Why would I lie to you? She gives me hotdogs. I know she likes me.

You should just be glad you don't know what a coyote is! They are nothing but trouble. They drink and smoke and spit and their bellies hang out of their scruffy jumpsuits. It is really a very unpleasant sight. The language they use is not anything I can repeat in a letter to a lovely and delicate lady. The HotDog Vendor would never give them hotdogs!

Here is a song we like to sing:

Home, home on the range
Where the cows and the sheeps and goats play
Where often we herd
without discouraging words
and eat hotdogs at the end of the day
The chorus goes something like this:

AWWWOOOOO AWOOOOO AWOOOOOOOOO AAAAWWWWWOOOOO!!!!

Write again soon! Sutter is jealous that I get all the letters.

Pvt. Slate
816th Regiment
Fort BFM

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Queen Tassel To Private Slate

Dear Private Slate:

The Evil Prime Minister is gone. He took one of your Pinks and absconded. We don't expect to see him again. The castle is now mine. I will call it Tassel Castle. The guards are under orders to imprison you if you pass the borders of my queendom. Don't bother trying. I think you will find that life as a career soldier is safer - you better hope for that promotion.

Yours,

Queen Tassel
Tassel Castle

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Tassel To The Prince In Exile

Dear Slate:

I am very sorry to report that there has been a coup. After the Evil Prime Minister suddenly departed for the Netherlands with your Precious Pink, there has been quite a power struggle. Perhaps you received my last note? If so, you can disregard it. I was feeling a little giddy. I regret to inform you that I have been ousted from power and am

currently held prisoner. The personal attendant is still at large and I have hopes she will be able to come up with a plan to rescue me.

I hope you are sitting down.

The Catlandish Ambassadors have seized control of the realm.

WayOut Castle is held by the devious creatures. I have been packed up and shipped out to Catlandia where I am tormented by two of the creatures. They are quite cruel and delight in taking comfortable seats to watch my discomfiture as I must grovel on the floor. The only time I am allowed out of their presence is when I am taken outside to the very primitive toilet. I am going to eat this letter and try to smuggle it out that way. I hope that whoever finds it will forward it on to you.

If the personal attendant does manage to rescue me, we will proceed forthwith to Fort BFM. It is imperative that your safety be assured. The Catlandians have spies everywhere. Be prepared to leave at a moment's notice. I do not know if I will be able to write to you again. Destroy this letter after you have memorized the contents. Watch your back. Trust no one.

Yours,

Tassel
& the underground WayOut Royalist Party

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Report From KAT, re: WayOut Castle

Decoded:
Report
Re: Catlandian Coup

The Catlandian Ambassadors, now self-styled rulers of WayOut Castle, are well and truly addicted to the food supplements we have smuggled to the personal attendant of The Exiled Prince. In accordance with instructions, she has been providing these supplements to the Renegade Catlandians on a daily basis. They are now beginning to fight amongst themselves for access to more of this food supplement. Dissension is leading to chaos. Upon the prearranged signal, the personal attendant will cease to deliver the food supplement. If all goes as planned, the leadership of the coup will fall apart as they suffer the pangs of withdrawal and the people will be able to throw off the yoke of Catlandia and pave the way for the restoration of the young prince and his court.

We have been unable to establish contact with the Lady Tassel. Her captors keep a close watch over her and she is well guarded by the roving pig. She appears to be in no imminent danger however. We have plans in the works for her rescue: Action set for Sunday AM. If we are captured, we will deny all knowledge of the WayOut Underground Royalist Party (WURP). The personal attendant's cover must not be blown. She must leave Monday morning with or without the Lady Tassel. We must get her to the prince so that his safety can be assured.

We have a series of safe houses provided between here and Fort BFM where the personal attendant can rest on her journey. Once she has reached the prince, however, they must not be seen until they reach our hideout in Florida. The personal attendant swears she will not leave the Lady Tassel in the grasp of her evil captors. The situation is critical. Further reports as events develop. Sunday will see the success or failure of all

our hopes.

Chaps & Granite
Kylie Action Team (K.A.T.)

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

WayOut Forever!

The turmoil in the upper echelons of power at WayOut Castle has not passed unnoticed by the commoners. Sighing under the tyranny of the catnip-addicts and forced to work long hours in the fields and city to pay the heavy taxes imposed upon them by the tyrants, the populace mourns in its heart the absence of their bonny prince. The ferocious felines have come down hard on any who murmur against them. They have outlawed the national costume, the bandana, and made it a crime for more than two dogs to congregate in any area.

Even the most tyrannical of tigers cannot keep down the desire for freedom, however. The WayOut Underground Royalist Party (WURP) meets furtively in back alleys and dingy bars. The operatives sent in from the Kylie Gang have provided some hope and organization to the revolutionaries.

On Sunday afternoon, the countryside buzzed with excitement. Dogs were slinking down the sidestreets and passing the word from citizen to citizen, the news spread like the smell of a summer cookout in August. The Lovely and Delicate Lady Tassel, beloved by the commoners for her ignoble beginnings, was safe, said the rumors. A daring rescue had snatched her right from the fastness of Catlandia itself! The Catlandish Cohorts put out a strong presence and made many arrests for illegal gatherings. Some dogs were even spotted wearing bandanas in a show of support for the deposed monarchy!

A quick appearance by the Lovely and Delicate Lady Tassel at the darkest and dingiest of public inns has crystallized support for her and the absent prince. If she and the prince can be reunited and return with a strong presence, the people will rise up against the tyrants! Already the graffiti mars the palace walls where the carnivorous ones groom their whiskers and delight in their catnip hallucinations: WayOut Forever! it says. Prince Slate Will Return! Hurrah for the bonnie prince! and WURP!

The Lovely and Delicate Lady Tassel is quickly whisked back into hiding and smuggled out of the city disguised as a platypus. All the faithful dogs of the kingdom sing songs to wish her a safe journey and a successful return with Prince Slate.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Happiness Is...

Getting your dog back from Herding Boot Camp!!

Is it possible for a dog to wiggle out of his skin? Is it possible for a dog (or human) to fit through a hole in the fence approximately 1/5 the size of their body? Is it possible to explode with joy? The answer: Absolutely not or it would have happened.

The Drill Sergeant gave me instructions to HIDE from my dog when I arrived at Fort BFM so he could show me how he works before the Silly Puppy got all distracted by my arrival. The Silly Puppy started out ok but then the wind shifted. He stopped, put his nose in the air, sniffed, looked around, sniffed some more. Drill Sergeant says: Stop

Sniffing! Drill Sergeant says: Come on Slate, git em up! Drill Sergeant says: Ok, he knows you're there. Drill Sergeant ceased to exist in Slate's world.

I start walking toward the fence. Slate is staring at me, still not sure. I call his name. He stares. I reach through the fence and he sniffs my hand and explodes. He tries to shove his way through the fence by force of will and chokes himself. He does it again. Of course, he doesn't need to go through the fence as I am also choking myself trying to go through it! If we had both succeeded we wouldn't have improved the situation at all but merely switched sides of the fence.

I could go on some more about how happy I am to get my PB back, but I have to go out and play with him some more. I suspect the Drill Sergeant thinks I am a bad influence on that dog.



copyright by MJ Hotter

[Back to top](#)

All content on this site is the property of Rebecca Elder. All rights reserved. Copyright by the author 2005.