

A Scriptwriter's Story

by Larry Strattner

He threw the manuscript through the open patio door. He felt better. But, of course, the quality of writing did not improve. Depressing. Where he lived there were few noxious bugs. He broke no glass, nor tore any screens as his three-ring binder sailed outside, landed in an azalea bush.

Writing romance was a bitch. It did not respond well to his normal approach, grabbing a problem by its neck and shaking until events came out his way. He was a dick. He paid the price for being a dick when he tried to write. The Muse did not care for violent behavior. Nor did she seem to care for his mental health. To constantly fail using an approach which worked in many other situations finds one teetering on a dizzying ledge of insanity, staring down at a vision of the splattered hasty pudding that was once your head.

His fast-payout project-in-progress explored justice, the politics of revolution, righteous indignation and scatological puerility. It might've been progressing more fluidly if he had realized at outset he knew less than he supposed about his themes.

When he began to write he fancied posturing and posing his characters in semblances of virtue, corrupted by the fleshly impetuosity of colonization. Instead, all somehow assumed the countenance of Batman's Joker, horrifically painted smiles applied to mask absent morals and hollow souls.

He rewrote the entire story once, twice, then again. Each rewrite showed a pernicious disconnect from upstanding or admirable behavior. He of course did not spend any time associating his own decadent worldview with words on his computer. Thus uninformed by his world, he supposed rather his world was informed by him, a common error in the arts. "Hubristic, no?" his houseman opined while constructing him a Quinoa Passion Fruit Martini.

Two wives had sloughed him off, citing as grounds, his favored "grab it and shake it," technique for problem-solving. He was not afterward as rich as he might have been had he concentrated on his

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amoral subject matter, remained single and cultivated seamless obliviousness to right and good.

Caught up in the wonder of himself, and his awesome power as an artist, he shot up with heroin one night to reestablish control, relax a bit and shuck his feelings of ineffectiveness.

Tragically his current batch of smack was running hot. It laid him out on the floor, from which position he found himself staring up at the boatman from the River Styx. As he was assisted into Charon's craft for the crossing he thought to himself, "at least I wasn't sitting on the toilet when this happened."

He will be remembered for his gruesome detail in anatomically correct movies about Jeffrey Dahmer and John Wayne Gacey; this Betsy Ross ero-romance saga, not so much, except perhaps for the graphic skirt and petticoat over-the-head dalliances with Von Donop.

He settled into his cauldron of boiling oil and thought, "Vita brevis, ars longa," as his knee-jerk brain involuntarily simmered with skewed drivel infused in timeless themes.

