

Multiple Simultaneous Submissions

by Larry Strattner

The phone rang. He checked the caller ID for “toll free”, weird area codes and phone numbers of known enemies. The calling number seemed OK. He picked up on the fourth ring.

“Hello?” He said

“You slimy motherfucker!” A shrill voice shouted in his ear. “You sent us multiple simultaneous submissions! We specifically noted in our submission guidelines we do not accept multiple simultaneous submissions!”

“I didn't think you'd...”

“Find out! You didn't think we'd find out! You lamebrain piece of shit! You didn't think we'd find out! You blithering idiot. We always know! We've been publishing drivel longer than you've been writing drivel. There's no way we won't know! We can tell! You're such a transparent piece of refuse you multiple simultaneous piece of dreck!

“I don't...”

“You don't what? Want to get caught? Want to get called out? Want to be known as a guy who cheats? You don't what? Want to get a visit from Leon? Well, that's too goddamn bad because we're returning this piece of shit you call a story right now! And we're sending it over with Leon! He'll familiarize you with the fucking rules when he drops off your worthless story! Get your first aid kit ready asshole. You're gonna need it!” The phone went dead.

He looked at the receiver in his hand as it hummed its dead-line song. His hand shook. *Shit* he thought. *It's OK for them to take forever to get back to me, if ever. But it's not OK for me to try and shorten my response time by reaching out to two or three people at once? That fucking guy was insane! Who was he? He never said. What am I gonna do? This fucking Leon guy will tear my arms and legs off.*

He went into the bedroom. He felt sick, like he might vomit. His fear was palpable. He opened the drawer of his dresser and began rummaging through his socks, searching for his Glock.

