

The Sex Life of Your Mouth

by Larry Strattner

He sat by the window looking out at the sea. The marine layer was in. Flat. Gray. The breeze just stiff enough to make it uncomfortable outside. His hair stood up. He hadn't combed it when he got out of bed. He looked like Buckwheat in sweats as he typed. The book had been giving him fits. It was about a nurse but he was stuck. Never should have started writing about a woman. What did he know about women? He grumbled obscenely under his breath. The marine layer wasn't making it any easier. The glass on the sliding door had an uncleaned film in each corner like a right triangle with a concave hypotenuse where the rag hadn't quite gotten into the corner. "I hate fucking geometry he thought," and grumbled under his breath again.

She dipped her teabag for the third time and raised her eyes from the pamphlet she was reading and regarded him from behind eyes so green she could have been a cat. Her red hair was in disarray and she was not beautiful but rather aristocratic with full lips always turned up just slightly somewhere between a smirk and faint amusement. Her silk nightgown was open at the front showing the cleavage between breasts of which she was justifiably proud. Confirmed by her collection of male oogles.

Here at the table it was the two of them alone with the sea at hand. The gray sky and his momentary writer's block. There was no doubt she was sensuous he thought. But he'd already mined her potential for prose and had now run up against a more enigmatic creation.

"Shit!" He said softly pushing his chair back so his fingers came away from the keyboard.

She continued to look at him.

"What, pray tell, is your obsession with foul language? She asked.

"It's the way people fucking talk."

"No, it's not. It's the way people *you* know talk, perhaps. And if they do talk that way perhaps you should look into some new people to know."

"Shit on that. It's my goddamn rhythm. I feel good when my thought process just flows. It helps my writing."

"Your writing is full of that despicable language as well."

"Yeah, well, it's helped me to publish three books so you can bite my dick on that one."

"Three books, none of which have sold very well. Has it ever occurred to you what some of the reasons may be?"

"Fuck reasons. I just haven't hit on a best seller hook yet. It'll come. Then I'll come. All over myself. I'll be famous."

"Maybe. But guess what? There's a huge portion of the population who doesn't talk as you do. Doesn't overuse inappropriate language. Is offended by it. Maybe not so overtly as in time gone by but offended none the less."

"Fuck them."

"That's all well and good. The problem for you is a big chunk of these are people who can read. They buy books. Serious books such as you are attempting to write. Unless of course they page through and gutter talk jumps out at them as a big portion of the content. And you make a bad first impression. They put your book down. You never even get a chance."

"Yeah, well, fuck them."

"You've just made a point in your last couple of sentences by saying the same thing repetitively. There is always another, better word to replace a vulgar word. Using vulgar words is stupidity taking refuge in aggression. It highlights your limited vocabulary. A good reader likes a challenge to their intelligence not constant in their face aggression."

"It's how people talk on the street."

"Well then use another voice. Not everybody talks that way on the street. Don't be so off-putting. You can be hard and graphic and

describe every little perverted detail without constant overuse of gutter language."

"Whoa! You're right. I can be hard. You're making me hard. I love it when you get angry. What say we adjourn to the bedroom and I give you a little demonstration of sexual acrobatics?"

"Fuck you. You illiterate pervert."

