

# “What will I do if I run out of stories,” she asked?

*by* Larry Strattnner

“What if I run out of stories,” she asked?

“What do you mean run out of stories?” A question to answer the question. “How can you run out of stories?”

“Don't always answer me with a question. Just answer the question I ask you. I'm not looking for therapy here. I'm just asking you a question.”

“Seems like this is already turning into a story. Why are you concerned?”

“Life has seemed a little stale lately. When it's not stale it's tacky. Who wants to read about stale and tacky?”

“Uh. Everyone who watches television?”

“Television's not comparable. Things are moving around on the screen. It engages more senses than print. It has more dynamism.”

“Oh. Right. And now there's color. Soon they'll have 3D. Pretty soon that William Gibson thing will happen; where they drill a little receptacle in the bone behind your ear and you jack directly into the Web. Whoa!”

“I'm talking about literacy here and you're steering us away into Universal Studios, Six Flags and Weird Science. The people who read what I read, read stories. Character development, plot, and emotion.”

“You talking about those bodice rippers on that web site you go to? The little snatches of stuff where you can't figure out what the fuck happened, why, or to whom. You talking about that shit? I wouldn't worry about running out of those stories. Every time one of your friends calls there's another one of those on the loose.”

“What!? Because you can't understand doesn't mean they are beyond understanding. Because you can't plumb their depths doesn't mean someone with a higher IQ and more sensitivity than a walnut doesn't get enjoyment out of them.”

“Yeah? Well plumb this! You and all those fucking Madame Curies you hang out with.”

The volume scale on the bottom the flat screen showed NCIS at 5. Shouting and crashing noises in the kitchen caused it to be raised to 7 by the pimply boy in the den. As he turned it up the debate in the kitchen concluded in blather of commingled scatology.

“You better well not come home drunk either, you shithead, or you'll be sleeping in the yard!”

Sounds of a forensic saw going through a thorax at 7 counterpointed the slam of the aluminum screen door.

He banged his palm against the steering wheel as he drove. “Damn that woman!” He thought. “She gets me so pissed I could...”

She finished wiping off the counter. There was no question he'd be drunk. Fuck him. He stays in the yard. Maybe I'll forgive him tomorrow. She permitted herself a small smile. Can't stay mad too long. I'll get at least three good stories out of this one.

