



## Pie from the Sky

Continued

"This is where you can post a collection of your work, or post pieces of a multi-piece or longer project all together for our viewing pleasure or your convenience in critique."

Speaking of [the Secret Bonus Track board](#), it's been seeing a bit of increase in postings lately but, sadly, is easy to overlook. Head on over and enjoy a mixture of fiction, poetry, and articles.

### Staff changes

After contributing much time, energy, and enthusiasm to spreading the gospel according to Literary Mary, Hawke has decided to step down

from the PR position. She did great work building bridges with other writing sites, keeping the [Virb](#) content fresh, and leaving behind many great ideas that should see the light of day in 2008.

Big thanks to Hawke for all she contributed as staff.

### Upcoming Request

In the not-too-distant future, you will awaken one day to an email in your inbox begging you to please please please take a short survey online regarding the wonder that is Literary Mary.

With her one year birthday coming up, it's a good time to check in and see how the forum is treating you and get ideas for how to spiffy her up. Literary Mary is the tremendous community that it is because of the great folks who make it home.

I look forward to hearing what each and every one of you have to say. Just so long as it is whispered into my ears like sweet-nothings and comes with flowers, dinner, and a walk along the river.

Till next time, happy writing and remember to keep your hands above the sheets.

- rooze

## Silver's Pet Peeves...



Not every writer does this, but I've heard it enough to make it a strong marker on my pet peeve list.

Writer's block whiners.

I've had writer's block. I accept it exists because it is the reason I am happily writing away on one novel instead of slogging through molasses on another novel. Note the important bit, though: I'm still writing. Exciting, I know.

I get annoyed by the writers who, because they 'simply can't move on past this scene' in their first draft science

fiction novel, they simply don't write. What? No, don't do that. Just because you 'can't' work on one project means you're simply going to not write for however long?

This is the part where I smack my forehead.

Oh, so you have writer's block? Okay, accept it and move on. Having 'the block' is not your excuse to walk away from the notebook/computer to go play video games. (Even if you do consider your [Xbox](#) your muse, leave it alone because you're probably ripping off the story line of the game in one way or another.)

### Pet Peeve #47—Writer's Block Whiners

Writer's block isn't the inability to write, it's feeling like you are unable to write. Sure, I feel like having a family size bag of M&Ms while I work today, but that doesn't mean I go ahead and have it. I don't have the money to waste or the gym time to spend working it off, so I override what I feel by using logic.

So, poor and pouty writers, bulldoze through. If you can't, work on something else because you obviously have the block with your current work in progress for a reason...



## Brand-Named Writers

### By Pete

Have you ever bought a book from your favorite author, gotten it home and started reading only to discover it's a piece of shit?

So you turn the book over and around trying to discern what sort of crack your favorite author has been smoking or what rehab they are currently residing at so you can send some hate mail and you see another name in small printing at the bottom of the front cover.

You realize you've just shelled out good money for a ghost writer. Ghost writing has been around forever. Wolfgang Mozart was hired to write music for his rich patrons to perform. All the "Nancy Drew" books famous in the fifties and sixties were written under the name "Carol Keane" that was just a revolving pseudonym for a series of ghost writers. Romance books by V.C. Andrews (writer of "Flowers in the Attic"), of which there have been several published in the past few years, are advertised as new writings even though the author died in 1986. Books by Clive Cussler, Tom Clancy and Robert Ludlum all have been ghosted.

Your favorite Jason Bourne stories were actually written by a guy called Eric Lustbader (No offence Eric, but I see why you used the Ludlum name). I'm sure there is many more all the way back to Plato's "Republic".

But it's pretty common for publication

houses to use Brand names for more common disposable fiction. The Hardy Boys stories were all written by "Franklin F. Dixon" and the Tom Swift books were written by "Victor Appleton" both of which were written by various authors. What does this mean to you as a writer?

I'm sure that if you are serious about writing, you've submitted your writings somewhere, sometime and have been rejected. A fellow writer and friend, Chris Miller, has told me in no uncertain terms that the usual reason for this is not based purely on the quality of the writing, but is because the main publishing venues are nothing but name whores.

I agree. Names sell stories and books and the publication business is money, not quality, driven. Who can blame them really after the inception of the internet, which has pushed most of the smaller venues out of business and has taken a bite out of the bigger ones? Most struggle just to stay alive and if putting "Clinton" on a book guarantees sales, no matter how big a piece of shit, they'll do it.

So the idea is not for you to try to make a name for yourself in this business, it's too hard. If you really want to get something published, I suggest you take a name for yourself.

Who wouldn't read a murder mystery

by "A.A. Milne" (Winnie-the-Pooh writer), a romance novel by "Don Juan" or a military soap-opera by "Napoleon"?

Just think of what you could write never being fettered by name recognition or worried about rejections any longer. You would never have to work overly hard to refine your craft or bother editing all the miscues, because the publishing house would be happy to get the latest by "Abraham Lincoln" and actually have editors on staff who'll want to edit it.

If you feel that is a little too blatant, you might try some combinations.

Walt Whitman - Lewis Carol  
Walt Carol or Lewis Whitman

Geoffrey Chaucer - Oscar Wilde  
Geoffrey Wilde or Oscar Chaucer

This might actually convey a subliminal message to the editors that may induce them take a second look at your work.

So, I suggest you rummage around in your saved file and select that piece you believe in, but always seemed to collect rejections for whenever you send it, give it a quick run through and slap some lipstick on it.

Select a name with whatever method you want and send it out.

When the check comes in, we'll figure out how to cash it.

Good luck,

Peter Dostoevsky



## WELCOME TO LITERARYMARY

\*I've been looking through my files and found this story, based on my first weeks at LM. I thought you might enjoy... ~Silver

Silver put her bags on the floor, one to each side of her, and checked to make sure none of her writing materials fell out of the many pockets of the bags. She'd carefully packed her favourite writing tools along with notebooks, folders, and all manner of shapes, sizes, and colours of post-it notes. She then looked around the room she'd just entered, taking note of the beige colours of the room trimmed in deep red.

Rather a bit out of the normal in her experience.

Recognizing many of those who had come before her, she smiled and relaxed. Towards the back of the room in one corner, by\_significance and gigi happily played ping-pong while EstherHoffmanHoward was trying to explain...something. Silver didn't understand the woman half the time, and she shrugged, the fact not disturbing her in the least.

She didn't recognize Thursday Next, but any thoughts towards introductions disappeared as a shiver of excitement ran through her upon seeing another member: strangedaze. Her grin widened and she started feeling even more relaxed. He lounged on a couch, propping up his feet on a gas can. Not far from him, murdershewrote lurked, watching without much interest at the activities of the other forum members.

Admin, a freakish combination of the faces and body features of all staff members, stood off in the corner opposite the ping-pong table and watched over Ruben's shoulder as Ruben wrote endlessly, taking notes on the changes needed.

Others who had wandered into the room after Silver were already get-

ting comfortable. Hodge and TsuTseQ sat down on a black leather couch with Hodge threatening random people with promises of moderation. Nae laughed at Bika as he fumbled around with his digital camera, cursing all the shots he was missing.

More of her familiars like Sigur\_Ros, J.R. Mac, and dannyboy, and gary\_wagner were engaged in various conversations mixed with creating new pieces for critique.

Silver smiled as she saw that even Hawke had managed to find her way over to... to...

She frowned. Where were they and why hadn't she thought to ask earlier?

This was no WF meeting. Former members she recognized from the site walked around with new names on their "Hi, my name is..." stickers. She looked down at her sticker to find she had somehow dropped the annoying "writer" off her name to display "Silver" just as she had always wanted to.

So where were they?

Her initial reaction was to ask Ilan, but gigi had abandoned her game to purr over him, and that was something Silver in no way wanted to get involved with. Seeing ClapSo in the corner having a conversation with Durk\_Diggler, she considered asking some of the people she didn't recognize, but her shyness overwhelmed her.

No one else seemed disturbed, so why did she have this strange feeling...?

"Hey, lovely!" strangedaze called, waving at her.

She smiled and waved back, but made no move to go towards him,

as if by taking that step, she may further succumb to whatever had taken over everyone else.

Suddenly, someone over a foot taller than her 5'8" walked over to stand beside her and she slowly looked up.

"Isn't this place nice?" the drag queen asked.

Silver stared for a moment and then her eyes widened. "Alex?"

hisgaze smiled at her and she laughed, hugging him. She wanted to ask him so many questions, but she again felt the strange sensation of being sucked into a fog, and she stopped. The moment she began mentally stepping away from the fog, hisgaze grew disinterested in her and wandered over to the rest of the group.

"Smooth as silk," she heard Ilan say as hisgaze passed him and he reached out to get a feel of hisgaze's thigh.

*What was going on?*

Almost desperate for some answer now, she looked around for Hawke, only to find her caught up in conversation and good coffee along with TsuTseQ and Hodge. She then turned to Bika, but he was taking as many pictures of an all-too-willing Nae as he could.

"Perfect!" he said. "Keep going Nae. You're a goddess. Tell yourself you're a sexy goddess." He stopped taking pictures for a moment and looked at her. "I could just call you Goddess. What do you think?"

She thought a moment and then said, "I like it and a lot, actually."

"Excellent," he said and went back to taking pictures.



## WELCOME TO LITERARYMARY

Silver picked up her bags and took a step back. Dear gods, what was happening to these people?

Cearo and walrus, walking arm in arm, bumped into Silver. The pair gave their apologies and walked happily off, giggling and chatting away.

Unable to bear it any longer, Silver ran over to gohn and held his shoulders. "gohn, something is going on. You have to—"

Without warning, he put one of arms around her waist and the other around just under her shoulders so he could support her as he lowered her into a dip. Gently and with much forced passion, he kissed her. He then pulled her back up so she could stand on her own, and she slapped him.

"gohn! I'm trying to ask for your—"

He sighed, looked at her for a moment, and then shook his head. "No, I need something more to get inspired."

With that, he turned away from her and began talking to ross.

"What... What..." Silver stammered. She clenched and relaxed her fists repeatedly, wanting someone, anyone, to at least feel *something* was amiss. "Are you saying I'm a bad kisser?!"

Looking around the room, her eyes widened, and she stepped back. LoneWolf had wandered over to murdershe wrote and they had been having a seemingly innocent conversation. However, words turned into kisses, and Silver was left speechless.

"I'm glad we all think polygamy is hot," Ilan said in a relaxed tone.

Nae and Bika, who had joined the

group on the couches, nodded. Even Ruben had joined.

"Come on," he called. "I have the cherries and the lube right here."

To her horror, he pulled them out of a bag on his lap.

To her further horror, she realized Ruben wasn't looking at her but at someone behind her.

"Cherries?" ckm asked, rubbing the back of his neck as he walked past her toward the couches. "I don't know about cherries..."

He sat down on the couch with Hawke, Hodge, and TsuTseQ and relaxed with their murmured encouragement.

Sigur\_Ros, dannyboy, J.R. Mac, gary\_wagner pushed past her without one glance her way. She bit her lip, wanting to hit someone or something.

"I just joined," G.K. Fralin said, smacking Silver's ass on her way toward the couches. "Is there room for me?"

Everyone was more than delighted to offer her spots to sit on the couch or on the floor in front of the couches.

Silver's entire body trembled. If one more person groped her or touched her in any way...

She felt the presence of someone near her before she saw anyone, and suddenly she could feel someone's hot breath on her neck.

"You smell good," Barr murmured.

She screamed and ran a few steps away from Barr, nearly stumbling. Everyone stared at her as she tried to catch her breath.

Looking a bit angry, Barr shook his head. "You're no gigi."

Silver put her hands on her head and watched as Barr walked over to gigi, made a place for himself beside her, and began letting his hand wander...

"STOOOOOP!"

She shuddered, and then sighed in relief when she saw her yell had stilled Barr's hand, as well as the hands of others.

For a moment, all were silent and no one moved. Then, a black door appeared on the wall a few paces away from Silver, and she stepped further back. The door opened slowly, but not with the annoyance of a creaking sound everyone expected.

A figure wearing a robe the colour of red wine emerged.

ms. vodka.

Smiling at them each in turn, she said, "Welcome."

With a wave of her hand, gigi and Ruben stood and joined ms. vodka, standing on each side of her.

"Come," she said, and the misshapen Admin walked over to stand behind her. She smiled lovingly at Silver. "Now, Silver, why are you upset? Did no one invite you to sit on their couch?" Her voice suddenly tripled in volume and steel as she looked at the others and asked, "Did none of you ask her to join you on your couch!"

Everyone looked away, muttering excuses.

"Oh, poor darling," ms. vodka purred, walking over and taking Silver's hands. "They didn't mean it. We've been waiting for you. We



## WELCOME TO LITERARYMARY

have a present for you to prove it.”

“A present,” the others murmured, curious.

“I... don’t... need a present,” Silver said, shaking her head.

“Nonsense,” ms. vodka said, smiling. She looked at Ruben and then gigi. “Why don’t you go get her present?”

Ruben and gigi walked through the black door while Silver shifted uncomfortably. She didn’t want a present; she wanted to know why everyone was acting so funny, where she was, and how she’d arrived.

“I don’t... really...”

“Ssh,” ms. vodka said, practically crooning. “See what we’ve created for you.”

As if they had been waiting for that statement as their cue, gigi and Ruben emerged from the door, leading a naked young woman over to where ms. vodka and Silver stood. Silver looked to ms. vodka, confused. ms. vodka simply smiled and waved them closer. Then Silver realized what it was she was supposed to see.

On one of the woman’s breasts, a sticker stuck way too low, had “Hi, my name is... the Forum Stories Forum” written on it. Silver looked to ms. vodka (in question and in relief to be looking away from the naked woman’s body).

“You don’t like her?” ms. vodka asked. “Then perhaps...”

She waved her hand and the young woman transformed into a young man, causing Silver to blush.

“A virgin forum,” ms. vodka whispered, placing one of her hands on Silver’s forum. “For you, my dear. A

present.”

“A virgin forum. A *virgin* forum.” Silver looked at the man. “A vir- You mean...literally?” She asked, horrified. “You have to be kidding me.”

“You don’t like?” ms. vodka asked, pouting. In that moment, gigi began caressing the man. “You refuse our present.”

“I didn’t say that,” Silver said. “I’m just... What the hell is going on here?”

“Merely giving you a present of welcome.” ms. vodka gave her a quill, which Silver stared at dumbly. “A virgin forum, all for you, as a present of welcome.”

*I don’t want to! I don’t want to!* Silver screamed mentally as ms. vodka gently but firmly urged her forward toward the man.

“Come,” ms. vodka said, positioning Silver’s fingers correctly on the quill. “You know you want to. First post in one of the forums. Just think of it. Take his virginity.”

Silver hesitated and looked back at the couches, knowing she was giving in to a bad temptation but felt unable to resist. gigi and Ruben turned the man around and made him bow his head, exposing his clear, white, back. ms. vodka moved Silver’s hand so she could dip the quill into an inkwell Ruben happily held out.

Silver laughed roughly. “Am I signing away my soul?”

Chuckles erupted from those on the couches.

“Just write, my dear. Just write. Take the virginity of the Forum Fiction Forum.”

Silver frowned. “I really don’t like

you putting it that-“

ms. vodka smiled and urged Silver’s hand towards the man’s back. The quill tip just barely touched his skin, and Silver stood, mesmerized. The others who had been sitting on the couches now stood and wandered closer, whispering encouragement to her.

“Join us,” they whispered. “Write the first forum story. Write. Join us.”

Ideas began flooding Silver’s mind, and she smile. The beiges and reds of the room swirled around her combining with the voices of the others. ms. vodka’s voice reigned above all others, encouraging her with words of comfort and admiration.

Silver began writing.

The others cheered.

ms. vodka smiled and put her hands on Silver’s shoulders, turning her around. Silver looked somewhat high, with a vacant smile on her face as she still held the quill up.

ms. vodka held up her hand to get everyone’s attention.

“Welcome to Literary Mary.”

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ManofFestivePants put his bags on the floor, one to each side of him, and looked around at the beige and red room. Scratching his head, he wondered where he’d arrived. He couldn’t remember where he’d been or how he’d arrived at the strange room.

“Welcome,” Silver said seductively, wrapping her arms (and nearly her entire body) around him. “Won’t you sit down and write a while?”