The Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest

Where “WWW” means “Wretched Writers Welcome”

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2003 Contest Winners

**Winner**

They had but one last remaining night together, so they embraced each other as tightly as that two-flavor entwined string cheese that is orange and yellowish-white, the orange probably being a bland Cheddar and the white … Mozzarella, although it could possibly be Provolone or just plain American, as it really doesn’t taste distinctly dissimilar from the orange, yet they would have you believe it does by coloring it differently. — Ms. Mariann Simms, Wetumpka, AL

The wife of an Air Force retiree, the mother of an eight-year-old daughter and a fifteen-year-old herpetologist son, and the doting owner of an Australian Bearded Dragon, Mariann Simms of Wetumpka, Alabama, is the winner of this year’s Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest. When not stroking the beard of her Pogona vitticeps, she gardens, cooks, and runs an online interactive humor site, [HumorMeOnline.com](http://www.bulwer-lytton.com/2003win.html). Like Tony Soprano, a native of New Jersey, she has lived in Alabama since her husband was stationed there thirteen years ago. Besides becoming a household name, she will receive the contest’s traditional prize, a pittance.

**Runner-Up:**

- The flock of geese flew overhead in a “V” formation – not in an old-fashioned-looking Times New Roman kind of a “V”, branched out slightly at the two opposite arms at the top of the “V”, nor in a more modern-looking, straight and crisp, linear Arial sort of “V” (although since they were flying, Arial might have been appropriate), but in a slightly asymmetric, tilting off-to-one-side sort of italicized Courier New-like “V” –
and LaFonte knew that he was just the type of man to know the difference. — John Dotson (U.S. Naval Officer), Arlington, VA

Grand Panjandrum’s Special Award

Colin grabbed the switchgear and slammed the spritely Vauxhall Vixen into a lower gear as he screamed through the roundabout heading toward the familiar pink rowhouse in Puking-On-The-Wold, his mind filled with the image of his comely Olive, dressed in some lacy underthing, waiting on the couch with only a smile and a cucumber sandwich, hoping that his lunch hour would provide sufficient time for both a naughty little romp and a digestive biscuit. — Randy Groom, Visalia, CA

Winner: “All Creatures Great and Small” Category

His knowing brown eyes held her gaze for a seeming eternity, his powerful arms clasped her slim body in an irresistible embrace, and from his broad, hairy chest a primal smell of “male” tantalized her nostrils; “Looks like another long night in the ape house” thought veterinarian Abigail Brown as she gingerly reached for the constipated gorilla’s suppository. — Paul Jeffery, Oxford, England

Winner: Adventure

It wasn’t the desolate remoteness of the campsite that bothered him, or even the terrifying roar of the rapids beating themselves against solid granite below, so much as the eerie sound of pigs squealing in the distance and the fact that, in this light, cousin Billy looked disturbingly like Ned Beatty. — Cindy Erickson Gilman, Mission Viejo, CA

Runner-Up:

On the fourth day of his exploration of the Amazon, Byron climbed out of his inner tube, checked the latest news on his personal digital assistant (hereafter PDA) outfitted with wireless technology, and realized that the gnawing he felt in his stomach was not fear – no, he was not afraid, rather elated – nor was it tension – no, he was actually rather relaxed – so it was in all probability a parasite. — Chuck Keelan & Stern Stewart, New York

Winner: Children’s Literature
The Prince looked down at the motionless form of Sleeping Beauty, wondering how her supple lips would feel against his own and contemplating whether or not an Altoid was strong enough to stand up against the kind of morning breath only a hundred year’s nap could create. — Lynne Sella, Susanville, CA

Winner: Detective

Detective Inspector Mike Norman slipped six fingers into his overcoat pocket, five of them clad in a latex glove and attached to his palm, while the sixth was wrapped in a plastic evidence bag and apparently belonged to the kidnapped pianist Ricardo Moore, or, as it now seemed likely, the kidnapped ex-pianist Ricardo Moore. — Alan Campbell, Edinburgh, Scotland

Runner-Up

Mac was the crustiest ex-LAPD homicide detective with three ex-wives, two mortgages, a greedy daughter wasting time at college, a gay son playing acid-blues punk in some Sacramento dive, and a liver that had been bitch slapped by cheap vodka so many times it looked like a bag of yellow fat, who ever walked into my floral and gift shop. — Robert Salsbury, Veradale, WA

Dishonorable Mentions:

They say she carried her own warmth around with her, like one of those thermoregulating arctic mammals, say, a polar bear, or a baby harp seal (though not a penguin, which is antarctic, anyway, and not a mammal, but a bird), but she wasn’t fat or blubbery, which makes it all the more unbelievable why anyone would have wanted to club her to death for her fur coat, which wasn’t even white, I’m told, but black. — Harry H. Buerkett, Urbana, IL

Had Dorothy known Duncan was a psychopath who would seduce, then brutally murder her, and that her best friend Dana, a forensic pathologist would investigate her death and also fall in love with him, but be saved just in time by Dwayne, her much maligned colleague, perhaps she wouldn’t have bought him that Screwdriver. — Karen Clark, Barkers Creek, Victoria, Australia

He knew that, at most, he had five seconds left to live, one one-thousand, two one-thousand, the gun barrel pointing at his face like a scolding finger, three Mississippi, four Mississippi, the hired assassin Ricardo’s grip tightening on the trigger, five white elephants SIX white elephants, and then a bright blast of light as he wondered which was really the most accurate way to count five seconds. — Vincent M. Zito, Monroe, CT

I’d stumbled onto solving my first murder case, having found myself the only eyewitness, yet no matter how frantically I pleaded with John Law that the perp was right in front of them and the very dame they’d been grilling — the sultry but devious Miss Kitwinkle, who played the grieving patsy the way a concert
pianist player plays a piano – the cops just kept smiling and stuffing crackers in my beak. — Chris Esco, Miami, FL

- The sobering scene was laid out before Detective Robinson like a centerfold spread in Better Homes and Gardens or Martha Stewart Living, if the splayed bodies could be considered home furnishings such as hand-knotted 100% wool Tibetan area rugs or allergy-free hypodown throw pillows stuffed with European goose down and the blood on the walls had been a carefully spattered burnt vermillion latex paint for a classic aged or contemporary Jackson Pollock-like finish. — Theresa Olin, Nineveh, NY

Winner: Purple Prose

Raul strode through the dark night, his way lit by twinkling stars as if the gods at some celestial concert were all flicking their lighters at the same time in appreciation of the drum solo-like beat of his boot heels against the pavement, occasionally accompanied by the steel-brush-on-a-cymbal sound of a splash as he kicked through a puddle, the plip-plop of water dripping from leaves like someone playing staccato on a two-note piano gone flat, and the wind blowing a bluesy tissue-paper-on-comb harmonica through the trees. — Dot Young, Garland, TX

Runner-Up:

- There was no question about it, my computer was locked up like a crazy aunt in a dark, secluded attic, or like the brakes on my ‘73 Chevy Impala on a rainy day when my wife is driving the kids to origami lessons and is running late because Isaiah, my son, made a fuss at the last minute and refused to be put into his car seat. — Peter L. Belmonte, Altus AFB, OK

Dishonorable Mentions:

- The sun rose over the horizon like a great big radioactive baby’s head with a bad sunburn but then again it might just have been that Lisa was always cranky this early in the morning. — Debra Allen, Wichita Falls, TX

- The rhythmic breathing of my companion was interrupted violently by a fit of coughing, causing the peace of the early morning to be ripped from me as if Richard Simmons had charged into my bedroom in his be-sequined health fervor and started Sweating to the Oldies on the end of my bed. — A. Caywood, Hermantown, MN

- T’asha lay in bed musing at the slight wrinkles in the down comforter which like waves in a gently wind-blown semi-calm sea heaved gently as she moved her legs under the cover and alternately wiggled her toes, causing a rogue ripple to course across the bed and die against the shore of the pillow. — Bob F. Bledsoe, Austin, TX

- She’d been to Boulder, she’d seen Stonehenge, Rocky Bluffs was a distant memory, and now, as she rocked out to the music blaring from her gem of a radio, traveling over the gravel road to the Solid Rock cafe, she pondered the dusty past, and finally Sandy realized that the greatest achievement was passing her kidney stone. — Susan Walterhouse, Weeping Water, NE
Anton was attracted to Angela like a moth to a flame – not just any moth, but one of the giant silk moths of the genus *Hyalophora*, perhaps *Hyalophora euryalus*, whose great red-brown wings with white basal and postmedian lines flap almost languorously until one ignites in the flame, fanning the conflagration to ever greater heights until burning down to the hirsute thorax and abdomen, the fat-laden contents of which provide a satisfying sizzle to end the agony. — Andrew Emlen, Skamokawa, WA

**Winner: Romance**

![Heart](image)

She lay next to him that night, regretting sleeping with another while they were broken up, knowing she had done nothing wrong but feeling vaguely unclean, like freshly washed, once-folded laundry that has been shoved off the bed onto the floor and slept on by the dog. — J. J. McClanahan, Tyrone, GA

**Runner-Up:**

“Bring a bottle of wine and wear something uncomplicated – I’m in no mood for a struggle tonight,” rolled from Jean-Pierre’s lips like a bowling ball shooting up the return ramp, only to slow itself abruptly at the top before ka-whonking! into the balls already lined up there like all the lines she had heard before, and Sylvia knew at last that all the good ones were not married, gay, or in Mexican prisons. — James Pokines, Hickam AFB, HI

**Dishonorable Mention:**

Chloe hated the way the mud squished up between the toes of her Birkenstocks like cappuccino-colored bog-ooze, as she ran to meet Teddy, who hated her Birkenstocks anyway, and would complain bitterly about her soggy feet as they shared some stolen moments in the back of his ice-cream truck. — Patricia Benedict, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

The ballerina stood on point, her toes curled like shrimp, not deep-fried shrimp because, as brittle as they are, they would have cracked under the pressure, but tender ebi-kind-of-shrimp, pink and luscious as a Tokyo sunset, wondering if her lover was in the Ginza, wooing the geisha with eyes reminiscent of roe, which she liked better than ebi anyway. — Brian Tacang, El Prado, NM

There was something unnerving about the way Jim looked at Doris that day, something which made her tremble, which brought back painful childhood memories of a boat trip off the coast of Western Finland flooding back like a flood, flowing back, onto a boat, oh, you see why it was so difficult for her to get the memories out of her head once they had flowed in there. — Michael Minihan, Johns Hill, Waterford, Ireland

Charles thought Stephanie was at her most attractive when she was irritated – lips pursed, cheeks flushed, and eyes flashing, though not so much like lightning flashing as like a spark of static electricity from touching a fluffy cat after shuffling across plush carpet in a cold, dark room. — Deanna Stewart, Austin, TX

Although Sara could believe the brassiere she had found was from a mix-up at the laundromat, that the lipstick on Bill’s collar really had been from a cramped elevator, that the stiletto heel was indeed
something the cat dragged in, when she pulled Chloe’s unmistakable prosthetic arm from under the bed, she realized she had been played for a fool. — Nicholas R. Eaton, Saint Charles, MO

**Winner: Science Fiction**

- Colonel Cleatus Yorbville had been one seriously bored astronaut for the first few months of his diplomatic mission on the third planet of the Frangelicus XIV system, but all that had changed on the day he’d discovered that his tiny, multipedal and infinitely hospitable alien hosts were not only edible but tasted remarkably like that stuff that’s left on the pan after you’ve made cinnamon buns and burned them a little. — Mark Silcox, Auburn, AL

**Runner-Up:**

- “Theeeey’re here!” whispered Billy Joe under his foul breath through yellowed teeth as brilliant white light permeated all of the windows of his trailer, and he flashed back to fragmented recollections of the previous four abductions – the questions, the pain, the probe – which he was powerless to stop but this time was better prepared for, having just finished a seventh bean burrito, a case of Bud, and four packs of Pop Rocks. — Jim Sheppeck II, Newtown, PA

**Dishonorable Mention:**

- She fumbled for her laser gun, knowing that the alien was eager to ravage her, unlike Captain Johnson, who wanted to take things slow since he was coming off the heels of a very painful divorce. — Wendy Burt, Colorado Springs, CO

- Brock de-holstered his Maxi-Hurt 3000 phaser and blasted off the Narguwullian trooper’s head, the way a teenager pops the head off a zit, except of course on a much larger scale because those Narguwullians are big suckers, and although Brock had personally had some door stoppers in his teenage years, most zits aren’t twelve feet high, blue, and liable to rip your arms off if you look at them the wrong way, and are also much less inclined to leave a mess on the flight deck. — Geoff Blackwell, Bundaberg, QLD, Australia

**Winner: Spy Fiction**

- Standing in the concessions car of the Orient Express as it hissed and lurched away from the station, Special Agent Chu could feel enemy eyes watching him from the inky shadows and knew that he was being tested, for although he had never tasted a plug of tobacco in his life, he was impersonating an arms dealer known to be a connoisseur, so he knew that he, the Chosen One, Chow Chu, had no choice but to choose the choicest chew on the choo-choo. — Loren Haarsma, Grand Rapids, MI

**Runner-Up:**

• It was a bright, beautiful day in Baltimore – not one of those dark and stormy nights in a land far away where no normal person could ever have lived because it was inhabited by evil sorcerers and fire-breathing dragons – so Forbes MacVain decided to eat his tuna sandwich on a bench overlooking the Inner Harbor while he waited for Yuri to make the dead drop. — Patrick Bomgardner, Baltimore, MD

**Winner: Vile Puns**

![Image](https://www.bulwer-lytton.com/2003win.html)

• The Insect Keeper General, sitting astride his giant hovering aphid, surveyed the battlefield which reeked with the stench of decay and resonated with the low drone of the tattered and dying mutant swarms as their legs kicked forlornly at the sky before turning to his master and saying, “My Lord, your flies are undone.” — Andrew Vincent, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, England

**Runner-Up**

• The ancient Peruvian Airlines DC-3 lumbered slowly over the snow-capped peaks far below as Gunderson turned to Ricketts and marveled at how their avian import business “Incahoots” had led them once again to the far reaches of South America in search of the elusive gray-spotted owl. — Miltiades Mandros, Oakland, CA

**Dishonorable Mention:**

• The final auction item in the estate was the electric home in the frozen tundra, often referred to as “the top of the world,” even though the world doesn’t really have a top (or a bottom for that matter), and it was expected that Mrs. Claus, a pleasantly plump lady who smelled of cookie dough, would again have to outbid the jovial fat man’s former employees to purchase his assets, that is until the gavel fell and the auctioneer announced solemnly, “The elves have left the building.” — Jay Dardenne, Baton Rouge, LA

• When the noisy parrots took flight Dark Vador leapt from the sylvan shadows brandishing his exterminator pod and mercilessly sprayed the flock with its sizzling lethal rays, and as the silent spiraling cloud of bright green feathers floated to the ground he hissed, “I hate sky squawkers!” — Brian Racher, 01170 CESSY, France

• Sarah felt bored and unsatisfied, even though her job as a nurse’s aide included helping patients and keeping track of the billiards equipment in the recreation room at the Venereal Disease Treatment Center, and she wondered what her mother had been thinking all those years when she repeatedly told her that a young lady should mind herpes and cues. — Brad Jolly, Longmont, CO

**Winner: Western**
The Hoss eyed the deserted town square like a hungry mother vulture hoping to catch a decaying carcass to feed her squawking young, for he knew that as sure as a norther would blow in from the Rockies, though actually the northers in these parts were usually coming from Canada, sort of up around Lethbridge but not all the way to Banff, he knew that Jimmy One-Tooth and his band of toughs would be back for their gold. — Tracy Edmondson, Austin, Texas

**Runner-Up**

- When Jimmy walked into the saloon the entire bar stopped and stared for here was the only cowboy who could wear pants as white as the marrow found in the neck of a well-roasted sheep, one that had been bled properly first, not like the ones you get now. — Greg Eastwood, Menora, Western Australia

**Winner: Dark and Stormy Night**

- It was almost a dark and stormy night – not dark or stormy enough to be called that but just the kind of sweaty night that makes your shirt stick to your back and make you wish you were still at home with the air conditioning and eating pig skins and watching the Martha Stewart trial on T.V. — Sarah Harris, White Rock, NM

**Runner-Up**

- It was a bary and wormy night at Dr. Kilmore’s 24-Hour Veterinary Emporium when, right in the middle of his 3:00 AM stool watch, Alberto suddenly realized that, pound for pound, Shih-Tzus swallow more tennis bracelets than most dogs twice their size. — Jan Socie, Campbell CA

**Dishonorable Mention**

- It was a dark and stormy night and the enormous orb spider-web, lodged betwixt gigantic branches of the ancient oak, twinkled and sparkled whenever lightning coruscated through the firmament, resembling an ectoplasmic pizza studded with a million round, well cut, D, 50pt, FL diamonds, so utterly beautiful any couturier would give his soul, or even pay a small fortune, to be able to wrap it gracefully around the skeletal body of a supermodel. — Anna Rotenberg, Sao Paulo, Brazil

**Miscellaneous Dishonorable Mentions**

- After escaping the clutches of that crazy cult, it was going to take more money than that to start a new life, but still, for one day’s work, 30 pieces of silver wasn’t bad. — Lawrence Person, Austin, TX

- When the time came for Timothy to fly the nest, he felt the best years of his life were ahead of him, if only because he had spent the childhood ones living in a nest. — Sian Arthur, London, England

- Head Coach Adams found himself in a quandary as he looked at the scoreboard and saw that his team was going to win 41-13, and he whispered to Phillips, who was the defensive coordinator, “I really don’t know why the team plays so much better on grass, but it’s obvious they do, so, for the sake of winning and our jobs, do I just turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to their red eyes and constant laughter?” — Randy Blanton, Murfreesboro, TN

- As Rachel glared at Clarissa dancing in her smart gilt cage, her jutting decolletage going bubbuda bubbuda to the throbbing disco beat, Rachel clutched the lamb shishkebab skewer she had hidden in her purse, a weapon she now intended to use on Clarissa with deadly force once she dislodged the last piece of Vidalia onion which stubbornly clung to it. — Melina Costello, Portland, OR

- It was from the primeval wellspring of an antediluvian passion that my story arises which, like the round earth flattened on a map, is but a linear projection of an otherwise periphrastic and polyphiloprogenitive, non-planar, non-didactic, self-inverting construction whose obscurantist geotropic liminality is beyond reasonable doubt. — Milinda Banerjee, Kolkata, West Bengal, India

- Struggling helplessly against the iron-clad clasp of the cruel and unforgiving handcuffs, Penelope Innes stared into the eyes of her remorseless sibling and bravely stated, “I’ll never clean the bathrooms for you, nor aid you in any of your chores.” — Celeste Carano, Dublin, OH

- Our story begins in the farthest reaches of the frozen tundra where, due to the axillary convergence of the solar angle of incidence and the latitudinal reflective attitude of the quiescent magnetospheric photoreceptors, it stays light for a really long time. — Marsha Engelbrecht, Lafayette, LA

- Holly had reached the age and level of maturity to comprehend the emotional nuances of Thomas Wolfe’s assertion “you can’t go home again,” but in her case it was even more poignant because there was no home to return to: her parents had separated, sold the house, euthanized Bowser, and disowned Holly for dropping out of high school to marry that 43-year-old manager of Trailer Town in Idaho – and even their trailer wasn’t a place she could call home because it was only a summer sublet. — Eileen Ostrow Feldman, Oakland, CA

- On holiday in Paris, France, we watched the Parisians sing and dance and soon they made us feel so good we fell into the festive mood of that city’s cheerful pace that keeps a smile upon your face where there’s such a lot to do and see, but it’s hard to find a place to pee. — Walter Hamp, Sierra Vista, AZ

- With a shriek like a damned soul tormented by a thousand devils, or by one really mean devil, not the underachiever kind that just stands idly around occasionally providing a pitchfork poke to a soul turning on a spit, but more like the kind that ducks ahead of you into Hell’s only 10-items-or-less aisle with thirteen items and spends all eternity paying for them with an out-of-state check while standing on your toe the whole time with his cloven hoof, yeah, that kind of devil, and that kind of shriek: the vegetable-grater jammed on a particularly burly spud. — Arthur Helm, Tucson AZ

- When Red Murphy was named Coach of the Year, nobody was surprised, for Red had taken a last-place baseball team and made them into champions in just one year, and people said he turned more L’s into W’s than anybody since Barbara Walters tried to read the “Luke Luck licks lakes” pages in Dr. Seuss’ “Fox in Socks.” — Brad Jolly, Longmont, CO

- Jane was toast, and not the light buttery kind, nay, she was the kind that’s been charred and blackened in the bottom of the toaster and has to be thrown a away because no matter how much of the burnt part you scrape off with a knife, there’s always more blackened toast beneath, the kind that not even starving birds in winter will eat, that kind of toast. — Beth Knutson, Coon Rapids, MN

- Outside, the rain fell ceaselessly, making a hollow sound on the old slate roof – thwack, thwack, thwack – as the bare branches of the ancient tree clawed at the panes of the mullioned window – scratch, scratch, scratch – and the broken gate repeatedly slammed the gate post – clack, clack, clack – while inside Edgar

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Blackmoor and his apple-cheeked young cousin, Annabelle Gray, watched the old German clock – tick, tick, tick – had their milk and tea – sip, sip, sip – and diverted themselves with endless games of whist – slap, slap, slap. — Deanna Ledgett, Riverside, CA

- As she contemplated the setting sun, its dying rays casting the last of their brilliant purple light on the red-gold waters of the lake, Debbie realized that she should never again buy her sunglasses from a guy parked by the side of the road. — Malinda Lingwall, Bloomington, IN

- John Stevenson lives in Vancouver with his wife Cindy and their two kids Shawn and Cassie, who are the second cousins of Mary Shaw, who is married to Richard Shaw, whose grandmother was Stewart Werthington’s housekeeper, whose kids Damien and Charlie went to the Mansfield Christian School for Boys with Danny Robinson, whose sister Berta Robinson ran off with Chris Tanner, who rides a motorcycle and greases his hair and their kid Christa used to go out with my pal Tom Slipper, who is the main character of this story, but not the narrator ’cause I am (Tommy couldn’t write to save his life). — Emma Dolan

- I won’t delay this story with any fancy “Once upon a time” nonsense, preferring to dive right in, like Pete Rose bowling over Ray Fosse at home plate in the 1970 All-Star game at Riverfront Stadium, erupting a controversy over the point of the All-Star contest since that infamous slide did end Fosse’s season and compromise his career in a seemingly pointless exhibition game, which was nothing compared to the subsequent controversies surrounding Charlie Hustle’s tax fraud, betting habits, and haircuts. — Elizabeth Metz, Cincinnati, OH

- Our story begins, as very few do, in the small but diabolically clever town of Torrington, Alberta, where the Gopher Hole Museum, displaying 71 adorable yet eerie stuffed gophers dressed up to resemble the townspeople, has attracted so many tourists that when a Torrington home goes on the market, it sells in less than six years. — Joanne Morcom, Calgary, Alberta

- Penny was always there for me even when she was somewhere else because we – Penny and me – were literally, though not really, two peas in a pod: round, green – the naïve kind – and overall, well, pea-like; and whilst our un-leguminous domicile was not pod-like, it was padlocked. — Brian Nash, Derry, NH

- And thus spake the Lord unto Saint Dominic, who is numbered among the lands as a baker above bakers, and said, “Ye shall bake it, and the span of the crust shall be one span, and the thickness of the crust shall be as of a thumb and the sauce shall be of fresh tomatoes for canned are anathema unto My sight and the pepperoni shall be sliced thin and be of meat from an animal that moos and thou shalt not use the meat of the pig nor mix it with pineapple nor Spam nor shall ye use anchovies strong enough to maketh even the angels gag and thou shalt deliver it anon thirty minutes or else it shall be free.” — Caleb Ronsen, Kenmore, NY

- As darkening shadows skittered tentatively (yet progressively) atop the rainforest canopy the way telemarketers do when they know you’re on a no-call list, the proud parrot pondered avian atavism: “descendant of vicious Velociraptors, I am become the Chicken Kiev of the jungle, a curious cocktail of predator and prey;” and in the night, a jaguar howled like Godzilla on helium – the bird stirred, but was not shaken. — Barry J. Drucker, Wildwood, MO

- Harold Goldfinch froze, his fierce pride at having placed the last brick on what would now be known as the biggest Lego metropolis ever built by one man melting into terror, as from somewhere in the blue plastic streets below him a tiny voice called out, “Hey buddy, where can a guy get a drink in this four-color town?” — Rebecca Nagy, Hilliard, OH

- As Fiona slowly drew the heavy velvet curtain aside, her eyes smoldered black, deep, and dark as inside the lungs of a coal miner, although it would be black in anyone’s lungs if you could get in there because there wouldn’t be any light, even in the pink ones of people who don’t smoke. — Lou A. Waller, Norman, OK
“Failure” was simply not a word that would ever cross the lips of Miss Evelyn Duberry, mainly because Evelyn, a haughty socialite with fire-red hair and a coltish gait, could pronounce neither the letters “f” nor “r” as a result of an unfortunate kissing gesture made many years earlier toward her beloved childhood parrot, Snippy. — David Kenyon, Toronto, Ontario

It wasn’t the first time Dame Harriet Bundt had discovered a corpse in someone’s drawing room, the head turned in a horribly bizarre, unnatural, rictus-induced pose (so that she quietly retched into the silent butler) and the teeny-weeny hole exactly four millimeters above the right eye that had once oozed the bright red stuff of life, but which now was as hard and brittle as the rock candy her grandfather used to surprise her with every Wednesday, and it certainly wouldn’t be the last. — Geoff Alnutt, Philadelphia, PA

Fans, Stalkers, and Others

Mariann Simms, winner of the 2003 contest, writes about the BLFC in her blog. (April 2006)

Celine Shinbutsu: Fantasy Category winner’s blog from Japan.


Suite.101.com interviews the Grand Panjandrum (August 16, 2008)

Guillaume Destot interviews the Grand Panjandrum (2002)

“The Great Bulwer-Lytton Debate” (Manchester Guardian)

Sticks and Stones (a “new” contest, last updated August 2010)

Bulwer-Lytton's Ancestral Estate


Literary Locales: Over 1,350 picture links to places that figure in the lives and writings of famous authors

The Eye of Argon (a Sci-Fi conference classic)

Dead White Guys

Dead Dogs

Shakespearean insult?

Bad Sex in Fiction Award

It Was a Dark and Stormy Night — the game for people who love to read

Dickens or Bulwer?

“Dark and Stormy Night Cocktail” from the Swig Bar in San Francisco: Pour ginger beer into a highball glass and top with Zaya rum.

Did this site give you a smile? Perhaps you would like to give a child a smile.
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