

LAW REVIEW

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BULWER-LYTTON FICTION CONTEST RESULTS

Every year we excerpt a handful of winners from the Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest, an international literary parody of competitor's bad opening sentences to imaginary novels.

The competition is to honor the memory of Edward George Earl Bulwer-Lytton who opened his novel *Paul Clifford* with Snoopy's immortal words, "It was a dark and stormy night." Apparently, that was bad writing. Being something of a bad writer myself, I feel qualified to select my favorites from the 2008 contest.

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Theirs was a New York love, a checkered taxi ride burning rubber, and like the city their passion was open 24/7, steam rising from their bodies like slick streets exhaling warm, moist, white breath through manhole covers stamped "Forged by DeLaney Bros., Piscataway, N.J."

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"Hmm . . ." thought Abigail as she gazed languidly from the veranda past the bright white patio to the cerulean sea beyond, where dolphins played and seagulls sang, where splashing surf sounded like the tintinnabulation of a thousand tiny bells, where great gray whales bellowed and the sunlight sparkled off the myriad of sequins on the flyfish's bow ties, "time to get my meds checked."

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Dorothy had reasons to be nervous: a young girl alone in a strange land, traveling with three weird, insecure males badly in need of psychiatric help; she tucked her feet under her skirt to keep the night's chill (and lewd stares) away and made sure one more time that the gun was secured in her yet-to-develop bosom.

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I'm convinced that the Doc is dealing drugs to most of the mining crew because they either can't stay awake, constantly sneeze, grin like maniacs, or won't look you straight in the eye (not to mention behaving like a moron) and they wonder why a dwarf gets grumpy!

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Mike Hummer had been a private detective so long he could remember Preparation A, his hair reminded everyone of a rat who'd bitten into an electrical cord, but he could still run faster than greased owl snot when he was on a bad guy's trail, and they said his friskings were a lot like getting a vasectomy at Sears.

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The hardened detective glanced at his rookie partner and mused that who ever had coined the term "white as a sheet" had never envisioned a bed accessorized with a set of Hazelnut, 500-count Egyptian cotton linens from Ralph Lauren complemented by matching shams and a duvet cover nor the dismembered body of its current occupant.

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"Toads of glory, slugs of joy," sang Groin the dwarf as he trotted jovially down the path before a great dragon ate him because the author knew that this story was a train wreck after he typed the first few words.

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Bill swore the affair had ended, but Louise knew he was lying, after discovering Tupperware containers under the seat of his car, which were not the off-brand containers that she bought to save money, but authentic, burpable, lidded Tupperware; and she knew he would see that woman again, because unlike the flimsy, fake containers that should always be recycled responsibly, real Tupperware must be returned to its rightful owner.

* * *

Carmen's romance with Broderick had thus far been like a train ride, not the kind that slowly leaves the station, builds momentum, and then races across the countryside at breathtaking speed, but rather the one that spends all day moving freight cars around at the local steel mill.

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Lightning flashed from the blue-black sky of this alien world and shattered the engines of the spaceship, destroying Reninger's last chance of escaping and reminding him of the time his sister returned from New York with the tips of her hair dyed blue, except for the part about the lightning and the spaceship.

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Bryson the Plainsman seldom spoke a discouraging word but he did when he filed for divorce after discovering his dear and an interloper played.

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"Let's see what this baby can do, Virgil," said Wyatt, as he floored the Charger, brushing a Dart out of the way, sideswiping an oncoming Lancer, rear-ending a Diplomat, and demolishing a row of Rams before catapulting head-on into the sheriff's Viper -- realizing that we'd indeed missed the turn-off to Abilene and ended up instead, in Dodge City.

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The homicide detective was an aging woman with a crusty and somewhat ill-tempered personality, an individual who reminded me of the kind of woman my mother, a Sunday-school teacher, would have been if she had been a crusty and somewhat ill-tempered homicide detective.

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Tom and Kelly's relationship had hit a dead end, like that road in your neighborhood when you were little that everyone used to throw their old chairs away at, and then the kids would use them to build forts.

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It was common knowledge around town that Bill drank like a fish, the kind of fish that consumes large quantities of cheap scotch on a daily basis.

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Enjoy the Fourth.

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