

The Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest



The Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest

Where “WWW” means “Wretched Writers Welcome”

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2009 Contest Winners

Winner



-  Folks say that if you listen real close at the height of the full moon, when the wind is blowin’ off Nantucket Sound from the nor’east and the dogs are howlin’ for no earthly reason, you can hear the awful screams of the crew of the “Ellie May,” a sturdy whaler captained by John McTavish; for it was on just such a night when the rum was flowin’ and, Davey Jones be damned, big John brought his men on deck for the first of several screaming contests. — David McKenzie, Federal Way, WA

The winner of the 2009 Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest is David McKenzie, a 55-year-old Quality Systems consultant and writer from Federal Way, Washington. A contest recidivist, he has formerly won the Western and Children’s Literature categories. David McKenzie is the 27th grand prize winner of the contest that began at San Jose State University in 1982.

Runner-Up:

- The wind dry-shaved the cracked earth like a dull razor – the double edge kind from the plastic bag that you shouldn’t use more than twice, but you do; but Trevor Earp had to face it as he started the second morning of his hopeless search for Drover, the Irish Wolfhound he had found as a pup near death from a fight with a prairie dog and nursed back to health, stolen by a traveling circus so that the monkey would have something to ride. — Warren Blair, Ashburn, VA

Grand Panjandrum's Special Award



- Fleur looked down her nose at Guillaume, something she was accomplished at, being six foot three in her stocking feet, and having one of those long French noses, not pert like Bridget Bardot's, but more like the one that Charles De Gaulle had when he was still alive and President of France and he wore that cap that was shaped like a little hatbox with a bill in the front to offset his nose, but it didn't work. — Marguerite Ahl, Prescott Valley, AZ

Winner: Adventure



- How best to pluck the exquisite Toothpick of Ramses from between a pair of acrimonious vipers before the demonic Guards of Nicobar returned should have held Indy's full attention, but in the back of his mind he still wondered why all the others who had agreed to take part in his wife's holiday scavenger hunt had been assigned to find stuff like a Phillips screwdriver or blue masking tape. — Joe Wyatt, Amarillo, TX

Runner-Up:

- In a flurry of flame and fur, fangs and wicker, thus ended the world's first and only hot air baboon ride. — Tony Alfieri, Los Angeles, CA

Dishonorable Mention:

- Karen Buffalo, sensing that her 1894 Brassic & Middon .45 calibre revolvers, mounted with mother-of-pearl grips and clasped by ivory buttons carved in the shape of elephants at play, were no match for "Duke" Bunton's double-barreled shotgun, muttered under her breath "Darn that Parisian gunsmith in the Fourteenth Arrondissement!" — Mark A. Gray, Wokingham, Berks., U.K.

Winner: Detective



- She walked into my office on legs as long as one of those long-legged birds that you see in Florida – the pink ones, not the white ones – except that she was standing on both of them, not just one of them, like those birds, the pink ones, and she wasn't wearing pink, but I knew right away that she was trouble, which those birds usually aren't. — Eric Rice, Sun Prairie, WI

Runner-Up

- The dame sauntered silently into Rocco's office, but she didn't need to speak; the blood-soaked gown hugging her ample curves said it all: "I am a shipping heiress whose second husband was just murdered by Albanian assassins trying to blackmail me for my rare opal collection," or maybe, "Do you know a good dry cleaner?" — Tony Alfieri, Los Angeles, CA

Dishonorable Mentions:

- The appearance of a thin red beam of light under my office door and the sound of one, then two pair of feet meant my demise was near, that my journey from gum-shoe detective to international agent had gone horribly wrong, until I realized it was my secretary teasing her cat with a laser pointer. — Steve Lynch, San Marcos, CA
- After quickly scrutinizing the two dangerously buff men coming toward her in the dark and wondering whether she could take them both out, P.I. Velma Plusch mentally inventoried her arsenal – two pistols, two stiletto-clad feet, two leather-gloved hands, two each eyes, ears, lips, and breasts – and decided that she could. — Donna Kain, Ph.D., Greenville, NC
- Detective Pierson mentally reviewed the group of suspects milling around the recent crime scene – two young siblings eating gingerbread, a young girl in a red hoodie, a beautiful girl with narcolepsy, and seven little people with the profession of miners – then gave his statement of "It's a grim tale" to the press. — Shannon Gray, Wichita, KS
- Darnell knew he was getting hung out to dry when the D.A. made him come clean by airing other people's dirty laundry; the plea deal was a new wrinkle and there were still issues to iron out, but he hoped it would all come out in the wash – otherwise he had folded like a cheap suit for nothing. — Lynn Lamousin, Baton Rouge, LA
- I entered the bedroom again, looking for anything the killer might have missed in his obvious attempt to clean the crime scene, when it hit me, the victim hadn't been eating just any potato salad, it was German potato salad, the kind usually served warm, with bacon and although most people prefer the traditional American potato salad, it was clear that this victim didn't, oh no, he didn't prefer it at all. — Lisa Lindquist-Perez, Daytona Beach, FL
- It was a quarter 'til eight in the ninth precinct when I got the call of a possible two-eleven at a nearby Seven-Eleven that turned out to be just a four-fifteen – that is until my number two from the ninth discovered the one-eight-seven under the Tenth Street Bridge, some two-bit mob soldier with a blossom of five .357's right in the ten-ring. — Jeff Riley, Fort Worth, TX

Winner: Fantasy Fiction



- A quest is not to be undertaken lightly – or at all! – pondered Hlothgar, Thrag of the Western Boglands, son of Glothar, nephew of Garthol, known far and wide as Skull Dunker, as he wielded his chesty stallion Hralgoth through the ever-darkening Thlargwood, beyond which, if he survived its horrors and if Hroglath the royal spittle reader spoke true, his destiny awaited – all this though his years numbered but fourteen. — Stuart Greenman, Seattle, WA

Runner-Up

- Towards the dragon's lair the fellowship marched – a noble human prince, a fair elf, a surly dwarf, and a disheveled copyright attorney who was frantically trying to find a way to differentiate this story from Lord of the Rings. — Andrew Manoske, Foster City, CA

Winner: Historical Fiction



- The Cunard “Carinthia” glided through the starry waters of the Bering Sea, 843 passengers aboard, including Harriet Dobbs, resignedly single for over a decade, while a nautical mile due west slunk the K-18 submarine, under the command of lonely Ukrainian Captain First Rank Nikolai Shevchenko: ships that passed in the night (although the second technically a boat). — Dr. Sarah Cockram, Edinburgh, U.K.

Runner-Up:

- On a fine summer morning during the days of the Puritans, the prison door in the small New England town of B----n opened to release a convicted adulteress, the Scarlet Letter A embroidered on her dress, along with the Scarlet Letters B through J, a veritable McGuffey's Reader of Scarlet Letters, one for each little tyke waiting for her at the gate. — Joseph Aspler, Kirkland, QC, Canada

Winner: Purple Prose



- The gutters of Manhattan teemed with the brackish slurry indicative of a significant though not incapacitating snowstorm three days prior, making it seem that God had tripped over Hoboken and spilled his smog-flavored slurpie all over the damn place. — Eric Stoveken, Allentown, PA

Runner-Up:

- Warily – as if his hands were a green-bean casserole in a non-tempered glass dish that had just come out of the freezer, and the patient was an oven that had been preheating for a good 75 minutes at 450F – the surgeon slowly reached into the incision and groped for the bullet fragment in the pancreas, at last finding it nestled near one of the Islets of Langerhans like a small wrecked lifeboat foundered on a sandbar as it floated in the fog, adrift in the Sea of John's Innards. — Christin Keck, Akron OH

Dishonorable Mentions:

- Mortimer froze in his tracks; the rhythmic clicking on the stones of the path (well ... not really a clicking sound so much as a kind of clinking sound, more like the noise made by shaking a charm bracelet filled

with Disney characters to a salsa beat) made him suddenly realize he had forgotten to buckle one of his galoshes. — Rick Cheeseman, Waconia, MN

- Without warning, their darting tongues entwined, like a couple of nightcrawlers fresh from the baitshop – their moist, twisting bodies finally snapping apart, not unlike an old man’s muddy galosh being yanked away from his patent leather shoe. — Matt Dennison, Erie, PA
- She expected a beautiful morning after the previous night’s hard rain but instead stepped out her door to a horrible vision of drowned earthworms covering the walkway – their bodies curled and swirled like limp confetti after a party crashed by firefighters. — Rita Hammett, Boca Raton, Florida
- The first time I saw her she took my breath away with her long blonde hair that flowed over her shoulders like cheese sauce on a bed of nachos, making my stomach grumble as she stepped into the room, her red knit dress locking in curves better than a Ferrari at a Grand Prix. — Harol Hoffman-Meisner, Greensboro, NC
- He slowly ran his fingers through her long black hair, which wasn’t really black because she used Preference by L’Oreal to color it (because “she was worth it”); her carrot-colored roots were starting to show, and it reminded him of the time he’d covered his car’s check engine light with black electrical tape, but a faint orange glow still shone around the edges. — Lisa Mileusnich, Willoughby, OH
- Their relationship hit a bump in the road, not the low, graceful kind of bump, reminiscent of a child’s choo choo train-themed roller coaster, rather the kind of tall, narrow speed-bump that, if a school bus ran over it, would cause even a fat kid to fly up and bang his head on the ceiling. — Michael Reade, Durham, NC
- It was a dark and stormy night, well, not pitch dark so much a plumby, you know, that time of night where it turns into that kind of eggplant color, which I hate – eggplant not the time of night – and it wasn’t stormy so much as drizzly, like a cold that’s not so bad but really annoying, where you sound a little plugged up and all your mucus just sort of hovers at the edge of your nostrils or drips down the back of your throat, it was like that. — Maisey Yates, Jacksonville, OR

Winner: Romance



- Melinda woke up suddenly to the sound of her trailer being pounded with wind and hail, and she couldn’t help thinking that if she had only put her prized hog up for adoption last May, none of this would be happening, no one would have gotten hurt, and she wouldn’t be left with only nine toes, or be living in a mobile home park in Nebraska with a second-rate trapeze artist named Fred. — Ada Marie Finkel, Boston, MA

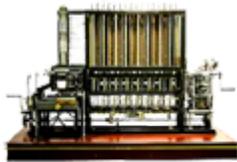
Runner-Up:

- The first time I saw her she took my breath away with her long blonde hair that flowed over her shoulders like cheese sauce on a bed of nachos, making my stomach grumble as she stepped into the room, her red knit dress locking in curves better than a Ferrari at a Grand Prix. — Harol Hoffman-Meisner, Greensboro, NC

Dishonorable Mention:

- As she slowly drove up the long, winding driveway, Lady Alicia peeked out the window of her shiny blue Mercedes and spied Rodrigo the new gardener standing on a grassy mound with his long black hair flowing in the wind, his brown eyes piercing into her very soul, and his white shirt open to the waist, revealing his beautifully rippling muscular chest, and she thought to herself, “I must tell that lazy idiot to trim the hedges by the gate.” — Kathryn Minicozzi, Bronx, NY

Winner: Science Fiction



- The golden, starry wonders of the dark universe unfurled before the brave interstellar vessel “Argus” like a black flag of victory with a whole bunch of holes in it as the mysterious mission buoyantly commenced that would one day resolve critical questions about space, time, and the appropriate ratio of nuts to chips in a perfect chocolate chip cookie. — Robert Friedman, Skillman, NJ

Runner-Up:

- George scratched his head in abject puzzlement as he tried to figure out where he’d parked the rocket this time in the 100-acre parking lot of Nallmart 75B, but then he remembered that a ship-boy had taken his DNA key – but which one, the kelly-toned humanoid or the atmosphere-of-Rylak-hued android; scanning the horizon, he at last turned to Babs and asked “how green was my valet”? — Harol Hoffman-Meisner, Greensboro, NC

Winner: Spy Fiction



- Oliver Smith, spy on Her Majesty’s service – not that she knew about it, because that tended to spoil the whole secrecy thing and really, who’d want an un-secret spy, anyway? Not to mention that any spy worth his salt would kill anybody who knew his identity ... so I wouldn’t go around mentioning that I read this if I were you – looked both ways before crossing the street. — Rafaela Canetti, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Runner-Up:

- The serrated butter knife tossed capriciously onto the 38th Street sidewalk amid the detritus of Salem cigarette butts and a Mentos box was devoid of zero trans fat margarine, but glinted invitingly in the sunlight nonetheless, poised for the opportunity to be repurposed to cut up a Snuggie, and Vladimir took it. — Amy E. Gross, Fair Lawn, NJ

Winner: Vile Puns



- Using her flint knife to gut the two amphibians, Kreega the Neanderthal woman created the first pair of open-toad sandals. — Greg Homer, Placerville, CA

Runner-Up

- Medusa stared at the two creatures approaching her across the Piazza and, instantly recognizing them as Spanish Gorgons, attempted to stall them by greeting them in their native tongue, “Gorgons, Hola!” — Eric Davies, Dunedin, New Zealand

Dishonorable Mention:

- Eyeing the towering stacks of food colouring that formed the secret to his billion-dollar batik textile empire, grumpy Old Man Griffington was forced to admit that dye mounds are a churl’s best friend. — Janine Beacham, Busselton, Western Australia

Winner: Western



- He was the desert nightmare whose name no one dared breathe, this deadly gun-slinger Garth Tedder, whose face struck terror in the hearts of man and beast, its macabre, round, maroon cheeks almost exactly like the pickled beets that farmers’ wives force-fed their horrified families. — Brett Hawkins, Burleson, TX

Runner-Up

- There stood Tex Omaha, fillin’ his canteen with his last bottle of Fiji water – a case of which, oddly, he’d got off an Irishman travelin’ west on the railroad – ‘cause it’s good water, better than the dirt-brown stuff at the waterhole that tastes like a rusty nail, worth the two buffalo hides he traded for it, and it’ll keep him cool, calm and well-hydrated while he’s huntin’ down that dirty, no-good Scots-English cattle rustler, Angus “Shorthorn” Hereford. — Eric Davies, Dunedin, New Zealand

Miscellaneous Dishonorable Mentions

- “I want you to follow my husband,” said my newest client, the enigmatic Mrs Yogi, estranged wife of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. — Steve Heckman, Taylors, SC
- Automotive power and the color red proved fatal to Santino; Sophia found his body wrapped around the exposed custom pistons of his ruined Ferrari Testarossa, and remembered the morning she found a sowbug on her red anthurium, a racy flower with an exposed pistil. — Denise Welding, Amesbury, MA

- As Laurel made her way through the plaza, she couldn't help but notice the gorgeous co-anchor for the morning news show, out yet again signing autographs, smiling broadly, and infusing everyone around her with happiness, and she wondered, just for a second mind you, how good it would feel to punch her right in her stupid little face. — Nikkia Daniel, Marietta, GA
- “They clang to me like horse flies on cow dung,” said angry, shivering onion farmer Jesper Lunk, whose clothes had been eaten off him by a plague of locusts except for his boxer shorts, which were a comfortable cool blend of rayon and nylon in a floral pattern with a three-button fly and a snug elastic waistband. — James Macdonald, Vancouver, B.C.
- From my car I took thorough stock of the loose group of illegals standing around outside the Home Depot – plasterers, roofers, painters, all for hire ... girls, too – and fingered the FEMA money in my pocket ruminatively; my house was a mess, but so was my love life – what was my pleasure? — Jeff Eller, New Orleans, LA
- As Oedipus watched his mother gracefully glide across the great hall, he felt a stirring in his loins which he immediately regretted but then quickly dismissed, for he knew if these wanton desires for his mother were wrong then someone would have named the condition by now, thus proving once again that where his emotions were concerned there was only one description for Oedipus ... complex. — Ted Begley, Lexington, KY
- Rosalita came in looking, with a look of surprise not unlike that of Hedy Lamarr in the 1947 version of “Samson and Delilah” when she learns that Samson will marry the woman, portrayed by Angela Lansbury, but with less fervor than that of Joan Crawford’s 1948 version of “Mildred Pierce” discovering her daughter, played by Ann Blythe, was to run away with her, (Mildred’s) boyfriend, to discover that Ernesto had once again left up the toilet seat. — James Biggie, Melrose MA
- As Lieutenant Baker shrank his lips back to their normal size, he tried desperately to think of a situation in which his new-found power might be useful, as have I, your narrator. — Dan Blaufuss, Glenview, IL
- She had whispered wantonly, “Come to bed, Yul,” but was now staring in utter disgust because the green lava lamp was too revealingly bright as he fumbled to adjust his new Merken, a \$300 pubic toupee that had looked like a steal on eBay, but now looked just like a wet Tribble that had inexplicably crawled up his crack from an old “Star Trek” episode. — Barry Bozzone, Allentown, PA
- Her kiss grasped his lips like an aroused sea barnacle; her breath smelled like wet feet mated with ham – marinated, salty, delicious; and the sea wailed around them like lovers in a trailer park. — Matthew Brady, Seattle WA
- Peter shaded his eyes from the brilliant April morning sunlight as it suddenly illuminated the Bunny Trail, contemplated his handiwork, (separating all of those pearly white chicks-to-be from their mothers) and prepared for the final task to complete his mission – yes, this was a good day to dye. — Trent Bristol, Mandan, ND
- There were earthquakes in this land, terrible tsunamis that swirled flooding torrents of water throughout, and constant near-blizzard conditions, and not for the first time, Horatio Jones wished he did not live inside a snow globe. — Rich Buley-Neumar, Amityville, NY
- Grimly aware of the rapidly approaching disaster, Spiderman leaped from rooftop to flagpole, from flagpole to fire escape, hurling himself recklessly from building to building, darting glances through every window in his desperate search for one vital room, while silently cursing the fact that the last thing he had done before donning a one-piece skintight costume, was to eat a large bowl of hot chili. — David J Button, South Australia, Australia

- They said that his writing was rich in metaphor ... not the type of rich that one likens with the amassing of great wealth, but rather the richness that one might associate with a Pot Pourri pasta meal available at Spaghetti Factory, featuring a mix of Brown Butter and Mizithra Cheese, Meat, Clam, and Marinara sauces – yes, that’s how rich his metaphors were! (for John Updike-RIP) — John Drew, Santa Clarita, CA
- Before she was Tabloid Sally, the impossibly foxy movie star who destroyed marriages like a busty ball-peen hammer, before she was Nobel Sally, the mercurial chemist who cured chronic halitosis, and before she was Pulitzer Sally, the honey-dipped scribe who brought Washington to its knees, she was just little Sally Barns from Crow’s Neck, Neb., Bill and Margie’s daughter, a doe-eyed pixie who loved fairy tales and onion rings. — Roger Collier, Ottawa, Ontario
- I awoke in my sleeper on the way from Amsterdam to Rotterdam, my nightmare riven by a train of thought that abruptly stopped me in my tracks with cataclysmic, explosive, and yet equal and opposing force, like a train on its way from Rotterdam to Amsterdam; then I realized I was on the wrong train and headed for Rotterdam, instead of Amsterdam. — Joe Dykes, Denver, CO
- The skydiver jumped out of the plane and felt his skin being pulled back like that of a dog sticking its head out of a car going 110 on the highway, owned by a driver rushing to be on time for work or else he would get fired by his boss with the curly mustache who owned a large speedboat. — John Faherty, Queensbury, NY
- Swain had always come out of bar fights unscathed, built as he was like a ’70 Dodge pickup (with that “Adventurer” styling package), but after tangling with Big Luther tonight, he felt like he’d been in a wreck, not a five-car pileup, exactly, but a pretty bad fender bender, busted headlights, maybe a bumper knocked loose, and, for sure, his tailgate dragging. — John Hardi, Falls Church, VA
- It was a dark and stormy night, dark like the inside of a spare tire in the trunk of a 1957 Chevy sitting up on blocks in a tumbledown barn somewhere in rural Ohio, and stormy like the romance of Pete Kimball and his girlfriend Betty Lou, who used to make out in the back seat of that Chevy when it was new and shiny and the Dell-Vikings were singing “Come Go With Me”; but this is not their story, it just starts out dark and stormy like that. — David G. La France, Burbank, CA
- Perry had come a long way in the nine years since being arrested by a park ranger in his ’81 Firebird tenderly holding a spiral-cut, honey-glazed ham (with the bone removed). — Jesse Kolman, Goodyear, AZ
- Crickets chirped in the lawn, katydids made that annoying grating sound in the trees, a mosquito whined near the ceiling, squirrels snuggled down in wherever it is they sleep, somewhere – probably Africa – a lion roared, ants gathered together in their underground tunnels like so many, well, whatever, and – in spite of the fact that it was night (dark and stormy) – Jimmy cracked corn and no one cared. — Dorinda Partsch, Chesterton, IN
- If she wasn’t the poster girl for the word voluptuous, with her not exactly “bedroom,” but definitely “walking-down-that-hallway” eyes, her hair a palomino mane rather than platinum blond, lips reminding me of Marilyn Monroe not Angelina Jolie, and that slow hip-swaying walk that sweet-talks a man’s thoughts into dim, smoky rooms where R&B is played, she should’ve been. — Sandra Trentz, Yakima, WA
- Lady Rowena, fresh from her bath, knew she had time to be ready to meet the Prince at 6:00 o’clock even though the mantle clock was striking six, because the brass escapement lever mechanism that engages the teeth of the large gear which drives the smaller gears that send the hour and minute hands on their circular paths, was worn. — Frank J. Weidler, Placentia, CA
- On a lovely day during one of the finest Indian summers anyone could remember – a season the Germans call “old wives’ summer,” obviously never having had Native Americans to name things after, but plenty of old wives, and “Indian summer” in German would refer to the natives of India in any case, which would

make even less sense than the current naming system – on such a day, however named, John Baxter fell in the creek and drowned. — Deanna Stewart, Heidelberg, Germany

- Fenwick was concerned when his voices returned, but they hadn't been troubling him much until now – now that they were singing an old tune by the Shirelles, or the Crystals, or the Ronettes, or the Angels, or the Chiffons, or one of those damn girl groups he couldn't keep straight, the uncertainty making him very agitated again, although he had to admit the harmonizing was quite good, really. — Jim Seamon, Punta Gorda, FL
- As my darling Jean-Claude entered the salon, with a single rose bud bouquet, I felt a wave wash over me, like the full brunt of Napoleon's forces at 9:05 am on the second of December 1805 ripping through once fertile fields to the Prutzen Heights, and I knew that Paris in printemps would be to my liking. — Andrew Pitt, Paris, France
- As always, that morning he awoke to the melodious sound of a stream of water cascading into a still pool, punctuated by several ominous silences – and he could judge, by the length of the silences and the volume of the cascade, just how much of his three-year-old son's urine he would have to wade through to get to the sink. — David Pellicane, Highland Park, NJ
- Tinkerbell landed softly on the bedpost in a sparkle of Industrial Light & Magic, handed the packet of cigarettes to a rather stubbly "Pete" Pan and, seeing his little green tights strewn carelessly on the floor and a still sleeping Wendy lying naked beside him, quickly realized they were now a very long way from Never Never Land. — Hugh Trethowan, Bath, U.K.
- Harvey placed the muzzle of the .45 against his head, and as the cold steel touched his temple a sudden shiver raced along his spine, and the hair-trigger took on the frisson, his brains missing Marlene's photo, where he wanted it to go, and splattered across his burgundy nightgown, so he got the color combination right. — Edward Vincent Tennant, Cape Town, South Africa
- It could have been no more than midnight's icy incipit when Clifford, stumbling in hitherto sanguine emprise through the tombstone teeth of the raven lit Kirk-yard like some well-performed but lichen-hushed human bullet-catch, heard the manifest bactrian vociferation which betrayed with desperate flourish the inexplicably wretched fact that his camel was out there, out on the ice – and she was in mortal peril. — Mr. S. J. Crawford, Redlynch, QLD, Australia
- No man is an island, so they say, although the small crustaceans and the bird which sat impassively on Dirk Manhope's chest as he floated lazily in the pool would probably disagree. — Glen Robins, Brighton, East Sussex, U.K.
- A dark and stormy night it was; in torrents fell the rain – except at occasional intervals, when, by a violent gust of wind was it checked, as up the streets it swept, (for in London it is that lies our scene), along the housetops rattling, and the scanty flame of the lamps fiercely agitating, that against the darkness, struggled. (The story of Paul Clifford, is Yoda, to a padawan telling) — Jay Clifton, Berkeley, CA

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 2008 Winner Garrison Spik](#) (August 16, 2008)

[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](#)

Bulwer-Lytton’s Bicentennial Birthday Celebration at Knebworth House. [With pictures](#). (May 20-23, 2003)

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[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.

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