

Self-Analysis II

... a short story, from the two of us!

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The old man sitting on the bench looked sad. He was alone, and staring off into the distance as I approached. I wasn't sure if I really wanted to sit down beside him, but the park was

"Please, not another one of those stories. They're so depressing!"

Oh, no, not you again! Can't you leave me alone when I'm writing?

"You could show a little gratitude! I helped you a lot with your last story ..."

No. Go away and let me write!

... but the park was full, and the hot sun had tired me out. I needed a place to sit, and the old man looked pretty harmless. I sat, and

"This is pretty pathetic, you know that, don't you? Some of these stories you've been writing are so gloomy, it's a wonder anyone reads them!"

They're not gloomy! They're introspective, and full of pathos, and ...

"I think you mean 'bathos'".

Bathos? I don't know what that is ,,,

"Insincere and excessively sentimental anguish ..."

See? Now you're making fun of my stories again. I don't need your 'help'!

"You certainly do. Why don't you write another student-teacher story? Some of those were quite good!"

I ran out of ideas. Besides, it's summer.

"OK, well, you could always do another 'Bonnie and Darren' story. They were fun."

I can't. Bonnie isn't speaking to me after the last one. And Darren has reassigned all the rooms for next year, and I'm teaching in the back room of the library ...

"I can understand that. It's probably not a good idea to make fun of your boss that way ..."

So let me finish this story, all right? It's going to be a good one!

"Well ..."

I sat, and removed a book from my purse. There's nothing I like more than sitting in the sunshine and reading

"There ... you're doing it again! You're writing as a woman! What is it with you, anyway? And do you realize that in almost all your stories, someone cries? It's unmanly!"

That's been pointed out to me, thank you. It's only about half of them. And I occasionally write from the perspective of a woman because the story demands it. Now leave me alone.

"I think you should write more like a man. You know .. guns, scantily dressed women, fights, car chases ..."

Just what is it you've been reading lately, anyway? And you know I don't write that kind of stuff!

"All I'm saying is, maybe you should. At least consider the scantily clad women ..."

Right!! In a student-teacher story? Or a 'Bonnie and Darren' story? Give me a break!

"Oh, I don't know. It could work. You need to branch out. Flex your wings as a writer. Experiment."

This story *is* an experiment.

"I know. And it's boring. I'm just waiting for the old guy on the bench to start crying. You were thinking about having him do that, weren't you!? Admit it!"

Well ...

"Hah! I thought so! Look, why don't you let me write the next paragraph or two. Bring some freshness to your writing. What do you say?"

Well ...

"OK, here goes."

There's nothing I like more than sitting in the sunshine and reading. The old man beside me didn't move. That was fine with me. I just wanted to sit and read for a while.

It was hot sitting there, and I was perspiring a lot. I was dressed for the heat ... a pair of very short cut-offs and a pretty scanty bikini top, and the sweat was running down between my

Now wait just a minute! This is my story. I know what you were about to write!

"So? You have to spice things up a little if you want to keep your readers' interest!"

But not like that. Before I know it, you'll have the girl naked on the bench!

"I never thought of that!"

Well, just put those thoughts away, OK? I want to write this story my way. No half-dressed women. No guns. No ...

“You’ve written stories about guns before. And they were quite violent. You should do more of those. And come to think of it, wasn’t there a topless ...”

Those stories were some of my first, and I was trying to find a writing style. I decided I liked to write more thoughtful stories instead. And the toplessness was necessary for character development ...

“Hah! I bet all authors say that!”

Look, just let me finish my story, OK. I have to fix it ... you’ve sort of ruined it, you know!

I was dressed for the heat ... a modest pair of cut-offs and a light blouse, but the sweat was running down my back. I tried to concentrate on the book, but it was no use.

The old man turned towards me and spoke. “It certainly is hot out today!”

He seemed harmless. I smiled. “I don’t do well in heat. It’s even too hot to read!”

“What is that book you’re reading?”

“Oh, this is terrible! You could have a good story here if you’d only add some elements of suspense, or intrigue, or even a little sexual tension ...”

Will you stop!? It’s my story!

“Yes, but nobody is going to read it! Maybe if the old man were really a terrorist ...”

Please! Just let me write, all right?

“Go ahead. I can’t wait!”

“What is that book you’re reading?” the old man asked me.

I held it up. “Bridget Jones’ Diary’. I just started it”.

He looked at me. “You like that kind of thing, do you?”

“OK, look ... this is silly. Just because you started reading that book and didn’t like it, doesn’t mean you have to try to make a story out of it!”

It was trash. And I do that sometimes. Someone tells me something, or something happens in my life, and it gives me an idea for a story ...

“Like that story you did about the girl giving away her stuffed animals, I suppose. If you do that too often, no-one will ever talk to you again for fear of ending up in a story ...”

I didn’t use her name! And besides, I just used the idea ...

"You've used her name in stories before. And other people too. Lots of people".

So what's your point?

"Your stories have no 'zing' to them. Why don't you put in some action? Instead of your characters talking about some stupid book, let them, oh, maybe witness a purse snatching, and have the girl and the old man work together to grab the purse-snatcher ..."

Actually ... that's not a bad idea, all things considered. But I'll save it; that's not where this story is going.

"I know. You're going to have the old guy question her about her beliefs, and have him get her to admit that the book has some pretty poor morality in it..."

How ... OK, yeah, I was. And thanks for giving the story line away! Now what am I going to do!??

"You can finish this one if you want. It wasn't that bad, I guess ..."

No thanks. You've ruined it for me.

"So what are you going to write now?"

Oh, I don't know. Maybe guns, scantily dressed women, fights, car chases ...

"Hah! That'll be the day!"

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... although I do have a few ideas ...

You can read all of my stories at

<http://www.worsleyschool.net.stories/stories.html>