

(picks up his jacket and the manuscript and goes to the door, chuckling)

No need to see me out.

As he's about to go, ABIGAIL reappears from the bathroom. She looks pale and shaky -

Side #2
Abigail 1
Lyle

ABIGAIL

(weakly, half to herself)

What am I going to do? --

LYLE

Mop up the bathroom?

ABIGAIL

With my life --

LYLE (shrugs)

As for moi, I'm going to take this manuscript, remove all of your helpful improvements, change the title --

(rips off the title page)

-- unfortunately Harmsworth's mentioned it a few times

-- and publish it as my own. Which it is.

ABIGAIL

(bursts into weak but disdainful laughter)

It will sink without a ripple. It will end up piled in your basement gathering mould beside your other two abysmal flops.

LYLE

Three, actually. You've forgotten that I had one highly promising flop -- followed by two abysmal flops.

(shrugs)

So, maybe I'll keep a few of your changes. It's possible I do go a bit overboard sometimes, prosewise.

ABIGAIL

That won't make the slightest difference. Face it. As a Harmsworth it's a publishing event. As a Lemmerman -- even a brilliantly rewritten Lemmerman -- it's a black hole.

This silences LYLE. He looks as if he'd like to argue, but doesn't have the heart for it.

LYLE

Have you got a better idea?

ABIGAIL

Actually, I do. Why don't we call up this agent, Jasmine, and ask for money?

LYLE

Oh. Brilliant. Just remind me again why she'd give money to us.

ABIGAIL

Perhaps you should go and have a good vomit. Does wonders for clearing the head. She won't give money to us. She'll give it to her fair-haired client, Noble Harmsworth. Your party piece, remember. You return her call with the happy news that your long-awaited manuscript, *False Gods*, is finally done -- and could she wire you up a nice cash advance chop chop.

(LYLE wanders back and picks up his bottle of Scotch -- pondering all of this dubiously)
We did the work!! We deserve something for it!!

LYLE

I know, but even if she sent a cheque for Harmsworth, we couldn't cash it.

ABIGAIL

You think washing his socks is all I do for him?! I pay his bills. I have signing privileges on his chequing account.

LYLE

But I've already told her Harmsworth's dead!

ABIGAIL

(puts the phone back on the hook)

So -- wing it.

(as Noble)

The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated. Huh, huh, huh. Be creative. A whole new experience for you.

LYLE

It's crazy. She'll never swallow it --

ABIGAIL

Damn you!!! Don't chicken out on me now!! I need that money!! -- I'm poor!! Little bits of foam are coming out of the seat of my car! I'm -- 29 years old and I haven't even paid off my student loan!! -- Besides, you should be jumping at this!! It's just the sort of cheap, implausible plot device your manuscripts are full of!! The only thing missing is a bunch of sex-crazed midgets!!!

LYLE

Those were dwarfs not midgets!! They were not sex-crazed but merely normally sexually active!!! A concept you obviously haven't the slightest working familiarity with!!! -- And you cut that whole bloody section out anyway!!! ← End