

With Apologies to Female Hawk

By Lynn S. M. <lois_and_clark_fan_at_verizon.net
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Rated: G

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Summary: When the author's muse refuses to give her a birthday fic for Female Hawk (Corrina), she decides to take matters into her own hands.

By Lynn S. M. - with NO help from her muse, might I add!

"So, what do you have for me? Any ideas for a birthday fic for Corrina?" Yes, I know I have asked my muse that question every day for weeks now, and she has come up with zilch so far. But hope springs eternal.

She replies sullenly, "Maybe if you would stop nagging me so much, I might come up with something. Muses have to be inspired, too, you know."

I try to appease her. "It's just that Corrina's birthday is rapidly approaching, and I would really like to give her something nice. It's the least I can do for someone who has been such a good writing mentor and friend. And her birthday fic for me last year, 'The Gift of Words', was one of my favourite gifts ever."

"So you keep telling me. Every single day. You do know that pressure and inspiration don't mix?" she grouses.

I offer a helpful suggestion. "Corrina's muse Goo never seems to lack inspiration. Maybe you should ask him to mentor you."

My muse throws her hands up in exasperation. "Oh, Goo this! Goo that! Didn't you ever learn that it isn't nice to compare one child against its sibling? So, OK, Goo and I may not be related, but the principle's the same. You've made it abundantly clear to me that I'm a disappointment to you, and that you wish Goo were your muse. Well, I've got a newflash for you, sister: He ain't your muse. Not now. Not *ever*. And maybe if you treated me with as much respect as Corrina treats him, I might be encouraged to work a little harder."

"Harder? That implies that you work at all! You haven't given me many ideas lately, and the ones that you have given me are lame."

My muse makes a show of pulling an emery board out of thin air and applying it to her nails. "I still think the last one I gave you would be a big hit."

"You mean the one in which a high-school aged Clark Kent takes ballet lessons, and when he takes a flying leap in his first recital, he really takes a *flying* leap — his first flight ever?"

"Exactly! It's got everything: A pre-Superman Clark Kent, flights and tights."

"That might appeal to the Smallville audience — I hear they're pretty starved for the flights and tights bit. But I keep having to remind you that our fanfic is for the L&C crowd. Can't you even keep your fandoms straight?"

"That's just what I mean about not treating me with respect. I make one small mistake about the target audience, and you dis me."

"That wasn't exactly a small mistake." I sigh and mentally count to ten in a vain attempt to calm myself. My voice as I continue sounds strained even to my ears. "OK. We're not getting anywhere. How about you tell me how I could treat you better?"

"Well, for starts, you could give me a name."

"Fine. How about 'Thaleia'?"

She just stares at me. "You have GOT to be kidding."

"Hey, it's a good name. It's the name the ancient Greeks gave to the Muse of comedy."

"Yeah, it was a great name — thousands of years ago. Do I *look* like I'm thousands of years old? And before you answer that, remember that if you aren't nicer to me, you won't get so much as an L&C-related riddle from me ever again."

"Well, when you put it like that ... No, of course you don't look millennia old. In fact, you don't look more than half a millennium, max. Kidding! KIDDING! Hey, put down that rotten tomato! I didn't mean it. Seriously, you look fine." I don't know how she is able to conjure objects into existence, but I am very uncomfortable with her latest display of this ability. Fortunately, she sends the slimy red sphere back wherever it came from.

"Thank you. All right, we'll nix 'Thaleia'. I'll see if I can think up something better. In the meantime, would you PLEASE try to come up with something for Corrina's birthday?" I use my let's-be-reasonable voice, but my muse must have interpreted it as a patronizing voice instead.

She starts pacing. "You know what? I have had it." Her hands slice through the air. "I am really sick of your nagging me about that birthday fic. No, I will not give you anything for Corrina, today or any other day, so don't bother asking again."

"You ingrate!" I say through gritted teeth, "Like it or not, we're partners. Without me, your story ideas would remain just that: ideas. I do the fact-checking research, I flesh the stories out and type them up, and I post them to the message board and the archive. Remember that when you get all high-and-mighty on me."

My muse, apparently at a loss for words, resorts to the age-old last-ditch response in an argument: She sticks her tongue out and makes a face at me.

I am ashamed of what I do next, but she makes me so mad! I launch myself at her. As I tackle her to the ground and prepare to throw a punch, I see a blue and red blur fly toward us, and then the next thing I know, strong hands gently, but firmly, separate us as an authoritative voice asks, "What seems to be the problem, ladies?"

I do a double take. "Superman?!"

He gives a quick, nodded response to my squealed question, and asks my muse what has happened.

My first thought is that if I am seeing a fictional character in real life, I must be going crazy. I just hope that the doctor they take me to see isn't Deter. Then I realize that, just as my muse could conjure objects into existence, apparently so too could she summon people, at least fictional ones.

I come out of my reverie just in time to hear her accuse me of assault and battery, and ask Superman to fly me to the nearest precinct office so she can press charges. At Superman's nod, she poofs out of sight.

The next moment, Superman and I are in the air. While these certainly aren't the circumstances in which I would have liked to have flown with Superman, I must admit to enjoying the ride all the same. And he's even more handsome up close than he is on the TV screen. I will give my muse that much credit.

All too soon, I find my feet firmly planted just outside the precinct office's entrance. My muse poofs back into sight beside us. As Superman flies off, she firmly escorts me to a police officer's desk and explains the situation to him. He has me sit down to answer numerous questions. A short while later, just as my muse is finishing giving her statement at a nearby desk, a male muse enters the room and approaches her. I listen in on their conversation as my officer types.

My muse throws the opening gambit. "Who are you, and what are you doing here?" Her manners, never stellar to begin with, have evidently further deteriorated under the stress of recent

events.

The other muse answers patiently. “Superman brought me here. He said he thought you could use some emotional support. I’m Goo.”

“You? You’re Goo?!” She looks about ready to commit some assault and battery herself. At least, I ponder wryly, she wouldn’t have to go far to be booked. And there would be plenty of witnesses. That thought must have occurred to her, as well, because she takes a deep breath and forces herself to calm down.

Perhaps Goo considers my muse to have a temperament similar to Lois’. In any event, he tries something that would be sure to work if one wanted to ingratiate one’s self with the reporter. He pulls a chocolate covered wafer out of the air and offers it to her. “Fancy a Tim Tam™?”

My muse gratefully accepts it, and as the chocolate melts in her mouth, her animus toward Goo melts into nothingness. I hadn’t realized before just how cheaply her friendship could be bought. The two make their way to the exit, and I hear her comment that she likes his Hawks t-shirt; she then claims to be a fan of the Aussie rules football team herself. She links her arm through his and the last thing I hear her say as they exit the room is that she thinks this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship. I mutter to myself about her so lacking in creativity that she has to plagiarize movies.

I haven’t time to reflect further on the perfidy of my muse, because I am led to a prison cell to await a bail hearing.

And so, my good friend Corrina, that is why I wasn’t able to write you a birthday fanfic. I’m sorry. I am currently looking for a new — and, I hope, a much better — muse. Would Goo happen to have any brothers?

Disclaimers: Superman belongs to Warner Brothers and DC Comics. Goo belongs to Female Hawk; he was used without permission, since I wanted this story to be a surprise for her. The line about the beginning of a beautiful friendship comes from the movie Casablanca; I’m not sure who owns it, but I know it’s not me. My muse belongs to no one, not even myself anymore, apparently. I first saw the idea of a meta-story in which an author talks to his muse in Terry Leatherwood’s amusing “When Muses Go Bad”; I borrowed his concept with his permission. (Thanks, Terry.)

No muses were harmed in the creation of this story. And my relationship with my muse is nowhere near as dysfunctional as it appears here; I do treat her much better in RL — really! (OK, so I have yet to come up with a good name for her. Any suggestions?)

This story was deliberately written using an idiosyncratic mixture of British and American orthography. It is the way author-I normally write, so I figured I would have narrator-I write the same way. (I usually make a point of fully Americanizing my spelling in the stories I post, but I usually leave my other MB posts with my mixed spellings.)

My apologies to anyone named Thaleia, Talia, or any other variant on the Muse’s name.

Thank you to my wonderful beta readers. Darth Michael, some of your comments provided pointers to help improve the story, the rest had me on the floor laughing, and all were much appreciated. Anti-Kryptonite, I am honoured that you chose a story of mine for your beta-reading debut; thanks for all of your comments and your encouragement. VirginiaR, were it not for you, this story would have far fewer descriptions of actions; thank you for helping make this story a bit less dialogue-heavy. My thanks to all three of you for all of your help.

And last, but definitely not least, I want to wish Female Hawk a happy birthday. Corrina, I hope this bit of silliness brought a smile to your lips.

THE END