

*Owl Man and Heron Man talk over Sal's problem . . .*

Heron Man stared at Owl Man for a few seconds. The Owl seemed stunned, as if the first body of research Heron Man turned up had multiplied—at least ten-fold—various problems the writers would be facing.

“The plot thickens, wouldn’t you say, Owl Man?”

“No question, Heron, no question,” answered the Owl. “I can’t even begin to imagine how Sal is going to pull out of this potential train-wreck. And yet, that virtually describes our job—theoretically, at least—to help our characters wiggle their way out of such calamities. Doesn’t it?”

Owl Man thought for a second about what he’d just said, then added, “Or does it?”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, you know the old writer’s saw: ‘Conflict, conflict, conflict.’”

“Well, it doesn’t exactly have to be a ‘Rumble in the Jungle,’ does it? But I see what you mean. Maybe you should read my third body of research before we enter the Lion’s Den of Fex’s houseboat, there to subject ourselves to the inevitable grilling from Fex, perhaps even his lionish attempt to bite our heads off.”

“Is there enough time to read it?”

Heron Man checked his watch once again.

“There should be, if you start reading now.”

And with that, Heron Man handed over the third sheaf of papers to Owl Man.