

# The Fortune Cookie Writer

Robert W. Williams



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The first book in The Peter Durant Series.

Written by Robert W. Williams

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Caution: Please do not read this book if you are pregnant and riding a bicycle.

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## Chapter One

Peter Durant was a failed painter and clockmaker in a digital era in which people despised both of his art forms. Well, not his art forms, per se, but rather those products directly resulting from his personal efforts with regard to artistry. Those they despised.

Hung on the walls of his office, as they were, and although frequently seen by many, no one ever commented. His paintings left a lot to be desired.

Time and again Peter would try his hand at selling them, but no one ever paid his work a second glance.

His paintings were always of clocks. That is to say, he did portraits of clocks both old and new.

But Peter Durant also went a bit further, purchasing older clocks, antiques in many cases, which he would refinish. No one ever purchased any of those either.

There was also a period of time in which Peter would go so far as to create his own clocks, or at least construct the wooden shells that housed their inner workings, but no one ever wanted any of those.

“Why are you making clocks?” His wife would say to him during the unhappy years before she left. “No one buys clocks anymore. Who needs a clock when everything in the house comes with one built right in? Hell, from right where I am standing I can tell the time on the stove, the microwave, the Keurig, on my laptop and on my phone. Time is everywhere, Peter. You’re

obsessed with this stuff. You're... Ugh! And who, please tell me, wants to buy a painting of a clock to hang on their friggin' wall? That's lunacy, Peter, lunacy! You're wasting your time."

Shrugging off her comments, Peter would then return to his lair beneath the basement stairs of their modest home and tinker away the hours until long after she'd taken her Ambien.

*"What I know for certain is that one day I will find the secret,"* cocksure, he would say to himself, most often out loud, *"and I will devise a clock of such unfathomable beauty, with such delicate simplicity of style, that every other household will desire one."*

Lost in his own form of brokenness, Mr. Durant fostered a sense of quiet misery that only the dankness of a musty basement and desperate longing can conjure.

But he wasn't always quiet.

At work he would chastise everyone loudly and on social media forums he would often grandstand as champion of one rubbing against the grain.

“Keep this up and your children are all going to grow up to be fucktards! While you are laughing about your four year old taking ghetto, ducky faced selfies and developing a proficient knack for slang, her brain is slowly congealing into an irreparable worm ball of unemployable goo!”

Everyone would laugh at him, in secret, behind his back. Some thought he was nuts, while others found his antics most humorous. “Out of touch,” was the phrase many often applied, and he was, in myriad ways.

One could say he’d spent way too much time alone down there in the basement, breathing in paint fumes while dreaming of clocks.

Peter Durant wanted to be famous more than anything else he could think of, rich and famous, and he desperately wished that he could quit his job.

Peter loathed his job.

“Working for this company is like meeting your perfect mate only to discover that he or she has a very polite and well behaved child with an extra head growing out of its neck that isn’t polite and well behaved and constantly taunts you and asks for stuff. And you have to buy it ice cream. Both heads. So that’s two cones, every time.”

And two presents on their birthday.

And the extra head always wants to sit next to you.

During his frequent daydreams, Peter would imagine that one day he would get so famous that he would have to quit his job so that he might grace the covers of art magazines, dare he dream, even to one day to see a caricature of himself on the coveted cover of the fabled New Yorker, to be hailed as the incomparable master of clocks and all things clocklike, borne of canvas, acrylics and wood.

He wanted respect and admiration.

Due to a lack of sex on the home front, he craved a form of societal intimacy, but often shivered at the implausible thought that not only would his work, which was quite obviously way ahead of its time, not sell during his lifetime, but that no living soul would ever truly know his genius. His work, he feared, might go, as two friends had told him, unappreciated until long after he was dead.

Almost daily, he would take out these frustrations on Facebook:

“You are all ignorant fucktards! Have you not seen my posts and the photos of my work?”

“Edith Potstern got forty-seven likes for a picture of her cat playing with a crumpled piece of aluminum foil and not a single one for me?”

“None of you show any appreciation for the finer things in life! You trample one another in storefronts in a mad race to purchase video games, yet offer dull respect for my masterpieces?”

“You’re swine, all of you! I hope you get psoriasis of the genitals!”

“You are no better than some twisted bacterium with an over inflated perception of self-worth generating disaccharides on the bottom of a pond!”

“Dullards! Do you not understand good art when you see it?”

“Curfew breakers, all of you!”

No one could understand a fucking word he ever said.



## Chapter Two

Peter's wife, Cheryl, never understood a word he said either, and during the years of their marriage, paid little attention as he prattled on. She grew to care even less.

Eventually, she left him for three very large black men who collectively owned own a bakery. She then found herself living happily for the very first time in many years.

Beginning shortly thereafter, Peter would stalk her on Facebook using a fakebook profile he'd generated so he could slyly peer into the open windows of her newfound bliss, as well into the

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