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## **THE LITERARY FOOD CHAIN**

### **By Sharon Horton**

In the world of acting, the Food Chain is well defined. Theater actors look down upon movie actors, movie actors look down upon television actors, television actors look down upon commercial actors, and I suppose commercial actors look down upon infomercial actors. Everyone has an opinion as to what is legitimate within the Thespian World.

It is the same within the Literary World.

Often I have encountered the curious and intrigued expression when I announce I am a writer. And often I have encountered the "looked down upon" expression when it is discovered I am an unpublished writer.

The first question after they learn I write is always, "Are you published?" They don't care if I've written a charming tale about an artichoke that talks and teaches the meaning of life to children, or if I've written a complete manual on how to split atoms over a campfire. All they care about is whether they can enter a bookstore and see my name in print.

Will seeing my name in print validate my craft? Maybe. Will it ensure I am a writer? No. I am a writer pure and simple, and struggling with the best of them. The dream of creating our stories and characters is what makes us strive to perfect ourselves. The dream of being published keeps us striving. And yet, we are all still writers.

As the well read person may have seen in print by another writer, "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." Those who are actors, act. We, who are writers, write. If the reading world views the unpublished me as being at the bottom of the Literary Food Chain then I shall accept it proudly, for I am in good company.