

And after a furor by chain booksellers

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle

It would be lovely if people would learn to read what was written, or would perhaps not so closely identify themselves with their jobs that they believe a hostile comment about a bad corporate business practice was a hostile comment about themselves.

For the record, then, to those of you who are chain booksellers:

Read what I wrote, dammit, and not what other sloppy readers tell you I wrote. Someone actually had the balls to state that I hate chains, putting words into my mouth that were never there. Idiot. And to state baldly that I said chain booksellers are evil, which I never have and never will. (Actually, there's a term for what that writer did when claiming I said things I did not say, and it isn't "idiot," and it would best be explored by lawyers.)

No, I don't think chain booksellers are evil. Good Christ!

But the practice of buying books to the net, WHICH IS WHAT I WAS DISCUSSING, AND ONLY WHAT I WAS DISCUSSING, is destructive of careers and books and futures, and chain employees' employers at the highest level are involved in that practice. If dedicated chain booksellers can overcome the corporations' bad business practices by overriding computerized ordering in order to keep good books from disappearing from the shelves, then do it. We'll cheer them for it. Having watched many wonderful series that started to great acclaim and died because of the practice, including several of my own, however,

I can tell any reader now that however many chain booksellers there are out there who are actually paying attention, handselling, putting favored books on Our Picks Shelves, and everything else, it still isn't enough to stop the tide that has killed so many wonderful careers.

As yourselves, what DID happen to Barry Hughart, and why didn't anyone save him? Or Alis Rasmussen with her earliest works?

I can tell you exactly what happened to THE WORLD GATES, and ARHEL, and THE SECRET TEXTS.

Ordering to the net.

You may, if you like, call me a terrible person for having said it (though be goddamned careful not to put words in my mouth that I didn't put there myself when you do it), but that does not make what I said untrue, and it does not magically transform selling to the net into some brilliant bit of corporate goodness. It is what it is.

All articles in this series, in order:

- The Tonk need a rescue
- Selling to the net
- Bookseller furor
- Hughart, Rasmussen, and little guys versus the juggernaut
- DearAuthor.com Behaving Badly

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