

# “What-The-Hell?” Mail Day

By Holly Lisle

Okay. I'm boggled. Confuddled. Bewildercated. I'm up at four AM, so that might be part of the problem, but the e-mails I received this morning range from the sublime (thank you, Natasha Altorio, and a response is on the way) to the utterly confounding. Usually the e-mails I get are of two varieties – comments on my books, or comments on the site.

But these ...

Here. I'll share. These are cut-and-pasted and uncorrected. Names withheld.

Title this one “Lamb to the Slaughter”, or maybe “I have no clue what this site is about.”

*Hi,*

*My name is [WITHHELD] and iam a new writer. iam 20 years old. I will be done with my book in two months. The book is for kids from 13 to 17 and iam looking for a publisher.*

*My book is called mothers secrets, the title tells it all. Its my first book, so i would like to know more about your publishing company and how much you charge?*

*God bless*

Call this one “Huh?”

*Hi! I got a problem with subscription center on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) . The story is on February the 25-th I placed an order to subscribe “The Opra”magazine. I've payed , but never got any issues of this magazin. I don't know who else could help me .Looks like they just forget about my order , I never get any e-mail from them to explain the situation. They said the order take 4-6 weeks to get it by mail . But now it's more than 4-6 week, it's about 4,5 months. And I still did not get anything. What I suppose to do? Please, help. My e-mail is: [WITHHELD]*

And then there is this one – “Professional, but Very, Very Lost”

*Hello:*

*I currently work for several publishing companies from my home. I am looking to expand my business to other areas. I have extensive word processing knowledge and can type 90 wpm. I also have copy editing, proofreading and transcription skills. I have worked on rare books, short stories, manuscripts, and how-to books, putting them on disks and CD. I also typed from micro tapes onto disk. I would very much like to work for another company or individual author, doing similar work, so I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your time and consideration.*

This one also came with a very professional resume – the big question here is “Why did she send it to me?”

In case any of the authors of the letters read the site – which seems unlikely considering the content, (or in case anyone who does read this site is considering writing an e-mail like one of these), I’ll post replies here.

To writer number one –

*Writers do not pay to write – WRITERS GET PAID TO WRITE. But only after they learn to spell, punctuate, write, market, and research who publishers are and how to contact them. And “iam” is not a word. At least not in English. Really.*

*I am not a publisher. I am a writer. But before you contact any publishers, read this – because if you are offering to pay to write, you are about to get robbed.*

To writer number two –

*Huh? I’m a writer. Customer service is waaay outside my domain. All I can suggest is e-mail Amazon. Or the customer service number on the masthead of*

*Oprah Magazine. Or write the Better Business Bureau. Or all three.*

To writer number three –

*Huh? I appreciate the nice resume – it was very professional – but why did you think I would want it? I'm bootstrapping here; my big challenge is keeping **me** paid. I'm going to pay somebody else? To do things I do for myself for free? Writers are, in general, their own best cheap labor. Publishers hire folks with your skills. Authors make do with whatever skills they themselves possess.*

(In case you're as worried about the fate of poor Writer Number One in the hands of the evil vanity publishing industry as I am [and what person with a soul wouldn't be?] – rest assured that I also sent personal responses to these folks.)

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