

SHORT STORY COVER LETTER

Steven Piziks
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July 1, 20XX

Pauline Eddetor
Editor
Wonderful Stories Magazine
4321 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10001

Dear Ms. Eddetor,

Enclosed please find the manuscript for “The Brilliance of My Words,” a fantasy story of approximately 4,200 words. I have enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope for your convenience.

By way of introduction, my fiction has appeared in *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, *Analog*, and in Esther Friesner’s *Chicks in Chainmail* anthologies. *Tiger’s Dream*, my fantasy novel, is scheduled for release in September, 20XX by Fantastical Books.

I hope that you will be able to use “Brilliance” in *Wonderful Stories*. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Steven Piziks

Enclosures

SHORT STORY SAMPLE MANUSCRIPT

Steven Piziks

Approximately 2,200 words

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PATTERNS IN THE CHAIN

by Steven Piziks

Knit one, purl two. Knit one, purl two.

A shadow drifted across the mouth of Mother Berchte's cave. She waited and rocked, careful to keep her tail away from the stone rockers of her chair. White sparks snapped from her needles.

Knit one, purl two. Knit one, purl two.

The shadow drifted closer, and Mother Berchte lost patience. "I see you," she growled. "Get in here."

The shadow froze.

"Yes, I mean you. Move it."

Knit one, purl two. Knit one, purl two.

The shadow hesitantly stepped into the light thrown by the fireplace. The girl was young, not yet twenty. She held a short sword before her with a fairly competent air, though her grip was so tight Berchte was sure she was leaving permanent fingerprints on the hilt. The girl’s red-blond hair had recently been hacked off. Probably with a blunt dagger, if Berchte was any judge.

“Well?” Mother Berchte prompted in her harsh voice. “What’s your name, girlie?”

Knit one, purl two. Knit one, purl two. Berchte’s needles glowed like angry volcanos. The girl tried not to recoil, and Mother Berchte grinned. Berchte knew full well she was an imposing sight, almost eight feet tall with horns on her head and fangs in her mouth and claws on her fingertips. And a tail, of course. The latter was a bitch if she wasn’t careful with the rocking chair.

“Jeweline,” the girl said timidly. “My name is Jeweline.”

Of course it is, Mother Berchte thought. “And?” she said aloud. “You didn’t climb all the way up here just to tell me your name.”

Jeweline took a deep breath. Although the inflation of her chest did nothing for Mother Berchte, it earned an admiring snort from Nassirskaegi in his corner. Jeweline’s head snapped around and her eyes widened for a split second before she could

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THE DOOMSDAY VAULT (synopsis)

by Steven Harper

Nearly a century ago, the clockwork plague changed humanity, killing millions and allowing a tiny handful of others to create fantastic inventions of steam and brass. These inventions allow Britannia to rule the west and China to rule the east. Alice Webb wants nothing more than to live a normal life in this abnormal world, but years ago the clockwork plague destroyed most of her family and turned her into a social outcast. And then Alice's estranged Aunt Edwina leaves her an odd inheritance, an inheritance that attracts the attention of the Third Ward, a clandestine London organization that hunts down mad geniuses affected by the clockwork plague in order to harvest their inventions for the good of the Empire. They ask Alice to join them, along with Gavin Michael, a cabin boy stranded in London after pirates attacked his airship, and who turns out to have startling talents of his own.

But the Third Ward has secrets. There's a cure for the plague, and the Ward fears it will destroy the Empire rather than save it. And when the plague infects Gavin, Alice must choose between her country, the world, and the young man she's grown to love.

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THE DOOMSDAY VAULT (synopsis)

by Steven Harper

Nearly a century ago, the clockwork plague changed humanity, killing millions and granting a tiny handful of others an unearthly intelligence that lets them create fantastic inventions of steam and brass--even as it drives them insane. These inventions allow Britannia to rule the west and China to rule the east. Alice Webb wants nothing more than to live a normal life in this abnormal world, but when she was very young, the clockwork plague destroyed most of her family and turned her into a social outcast.

And then Alice's estranged Aunt Edwina vanishes, leaving behind an odd house filled with strange devices. When Alice explores the place, she finds among the odd inventions a prisoner--a young man named Gavin Michael.

Gavin Michael has worked as a cabin boy aboard an American airship since he was a child. A few months before his eighteenth birthday, pirates attack. They take the ship and the crew, intending to ransom the airship and sell the crew into slavery. Gavin escapes, but is stranded in London, thousands of miles from home. He scratches out a living playing fiddle on street corners

until he is kidnapped by a mad genius who imprisons him in a high tower of a very strange house. Gavin wants nothing more than to escape the chains binding him to the earth so he can fly again.

Gavin is talented with music, and Alice is talented with machines, and both abilities seem to be necessary to get out of Aunt Edwina's house. Gavin's music intrigues Alice, and Gavin marvels at Alice's ability with machinery.

The devices in Edwina's house also attract the attention of the Third Ward, a clandestine London organization that hunts down mad geniuses affected by the clockwork plague in order to harvest their inventions for the good of the Empire. Once Alice and Gavin escape Edwina's house, the Ward offers both of them positions as agents. Gavin accepts, but Alice refuses--it isn't a proper occupation for a woman of her station, and Alice feels bound by societal expectations.

But as Alice tries to rebuild a normal life, events conspire to bring her into contact with Gavin and the Third Ward. Zombies under the control of a rogue mad genius attack the city, and the attacks seem to center around Alice, who finds herself forced to investigate.

Ultimately, Alice joins the Third Ward, where she begins to admit her love for the unconventional Gavin. Together, they discover that Alice's Aunt Edwina, now a mad genius infected with the deadly clockwork plague, has been manipulating events all along to bring Alice and Gavin together and get them to join the Ward.

For the Third Ward keeps many secrets. There's a cure for the clockwork plague. The cure would save millions of lives, but it would also halt the creation of more mad geniuses--and their fantastic inventions. This, in turn, would upset the delicate balance of power between the British Empire and China. Edwina wants to release the cure into the world, but the Ward has hidden the cure in the Doomsday Vault, where it keeps all forbidden technology.

Edwina wants Alice and Gavin to steal the cure from the Vault and use it to save the world, even if it means destroying the British Empire. Alice is torn--she doesn't want to betray her country--until Edwina says that she, Edwina, infected Gavin with the clockwork plague while he was captive in her house. That was the reason Edwina brought the two of them together--she knew they'd start to care about each other. If they don't release the cure, Gavin will die.

Alice and Gavin set out to betray the most secret organization in the world, uncertain whether their actions will save the Empire or destroy it.

NOVEL QUERY LETTER FOR EDITOR (OR AGENT)

Bram Stoker
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July 1, 20XX

Melinda Smythe
Editor
Wonderful Books, Inc.
5555 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10005

Dear Ms. Smythe,

Hot young attorney Jonathan Harker just wants to marry his beloved Mina and run a legal practice in peace. Unfortunately, a terrible monster has followed Harker back from a recent trip to Transylvania, a monster that visits Mina at night and drinks her blood. In desperation, Harker enlists the aid of Abraham van Helsing, and, using clues supplied by a lunatic imprisoned in an asylum, they set out to track down the evil vampire Dracula before he turns her into an undead slave.

I love the novels of Robert Louis Stevenson, especially *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and my work follows a similar vein. When I learned you represented Mr. Stevenson, I thought you might be interested in seeing my work as well.

By way of introduction, my romance novel *The Primrose Path* was serialized in *The Shamrock*, and *The Shoulder of Shasta* came out just last year. I do have a complete manuscript for *Dracula*, and I'm working on another gothic romance.

If you're interested in seeing *Dracula*, please let me know. I have enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope for your convenience. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Bram Stoker

Enclosures

FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR EDITOR (OR AGENT)

Bram Stoker
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August 1, 20XX

Melinda Smythe
Editor
Wonderful Books, Inc.
5555 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10005

Dear Ms. Smythe,

Thank you for your interest in *Dracula*. I'm pleased to send you the synopsis and the sample chapters you asked for. I do have the full manuscript, if you're interested. I have enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope for your convenience. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Bram Stoker

Enclosures

NUDGE LETTER FOR EDITOR (OR AGENT)

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October 1, 20XX

Melinda Smythe
Editor
Wonderful Books, Inc.
5555 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10005

Dear Ms. Smythe,

On August 1 per your response to my query, I sent you a snyopsis and sample chapters for my novel *Dracula*. About two months have passed and I just wanted to check on the status of my manuscript. I have enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope for your convenience. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Bram Stoker