

Writing Tools

By Nick Tyler

How do I sell this freaking thing? That's all I could think about after having my book published.

Not knowing how to get *Mind Bomb* off the ground, I decided to write Mr. King a letter (one which also included several short stories). And yes, I'm referring to Stephen King. I figured the odds of him responding were similar to the odds of OJ Simpson hosting Sesame Street, but ... to my amazement, I received a response a few days later. Believe it or not, it wasn't wordy. He kept it under thirty pages – single-spaced.

The first thing he wrote about was how to enjoy writing for what it was – story-telling, and not to get too caught up in the business aspect, because that took the fun out of it.

Being that I'd recently experienced that myself, I knew exactly what he meant.

He wrote about other things, such as techniques to scare the reader, character development, what to do if chased by waterfowl, and a brief history of Maine. I don't know why. The guy just likes to write ... and write ... and write. What struck me most

was what he wrote at the end. He stated that I'd be receiving a package the following day. He claimed it would contain items that would help me promote my book.

The next day came, and so did a delivery truck. I jumped from the front steps with childlike jubilation. Once I went outside and got a glimpse of the package, my eyeballs circled their sockets as if approaching the final lap of a neck-and-neck race in the Daytona 500.

"Here you go." The delivery guy handed me a big brown box. That's the first and last thing I heard him say before the truck drove away.

I rushed inside and opened the package.

I first pulled out a cereal box. At the top, it read: Novel Loops. I turned it to read the back. Instead of an ad for a toy, it had instructions. They explained that when you poured the bowl of cereal and took a spoonful of fruity letters, a sentence would form on your spoon. You would eat the first sentence, and then another would appear. Mr. King wrote a note, stating that only a few writers knew about it, but the Novel Loops Company stayed in business and did very well because it took 300 boxes on average for a customer to complete a story. At two dollars per box, that isn't such a bad price.

I pulled out the second item: The Character Trier. The hairdryer-shaped item fit perfectly in my hand. I read the instructions, which stated that it should be used for no more than

thirty minutes at a time. They went on to say that when you blast this high-powered hairdryer on your face, it will change your features into different characters that you can use for your story. The characters will even talk into the mirror so you can hear their voices.

Then, I pulled out the SPAGINATOR. It looked like a toothbrush, but after reading what it was capable of, I realized it was much more than that. Apparently, after you hand write or type your story, you can brush this object across the words on the paper or screen. All grammatical and spelling errors will be automatically adjusted, saving you valuable time and energy.

All amazing stuff, but nothing to help me promote my book.

I reached deeper into the box and pulled out something that resembled an antenna. The painted writing on the metal bar read: Mental Mass Mailing. I read the side note from Mr. King. It stated that this was his greatest marketing tool. The instructions were to attach it to the top of your head and go to the roof, preferably during a lightning storm. *DURING A LIGHTNING STORM?*

I read on. The letter stated that the lightning wouldn't be a threat and that the device was designed to feed off the energy of the lightning. Supposedly, by attaching the device to my head, I would be able to send subconscious messages about *Mind Bomb* to the entire country.

Sure enough, the weatherman predicted thunderstorms that night.

I attached the Mental Mass Mailing device to my head and made my way to the roof.

Within a few hours, the lightning struck all around me, forcing me to jump and dance to avoid getting hit. The lightning had so much force that I hoped the subconscious messages would reach Canada and Mexico.

Next thing I knew, I sat in a hospital bed with dozens of tubes protruding from my body.

“Where am I?”

“You’re in the hospital,” a red-haired nurse wearing blue scrubs explained. She sat next to me and placed her palm on my right arm.

“How long?”

“Three weeks.”

“Why?” I sat up, needing an answer right away.

“You were struck by lightning.”

“But, but...” I was about to explain, but she wouldn’t believe me. She’d probably transfer me to the psych ward.

“Oh, before I forget,” she said with a smile. “Someone came by and left you a note.”

“Who?”

“He said his name was Stephen. Anyway, here it is.”

I took the note and began reading. It started out talking about what types of sharks are in the Sea of Cortez, why Medusa had snakes in her hair, and the importance of being able to make any topic interesting.

“Hmm...” I said aloud, recognizing his talent to do such a thing.

What I read next disturbed me a great deal. He stated that the Novel Loops, The Character Trier, The SPAGINATOR, and the Mental Mass Mailing device were nothing more than a manipulated cereal box, a hairdryer, a toothbrush, and an antenna from an early 80’s television he kept in his garage. He went on to explain that he read my stories and that he had no interest in new competition. He admitted that was the reason he sent me to the roof during a lightning storm with an antenna on my head.

I might have underestimated his manipulative imagination, but I had a plan.

“Excuse me, nurse.”

“Yes?”

“This is kind of embarrassing, but do you have anything for constipation?”

“Of course, would you like something?”

“Yes, I think I’m going to need more than a little ... if you know what I mean.”

“That shouldn’t be a problem. I’ll bring the bottle in.”

I reached over to a notepad resting on the small table to my right. I wrote a letter explaining that this special drink - Twist Juice - would allow him to come up with the most amazing twists ever known to man. To ensure he'd drink it, I signed it: Dean Koontz.