

92 Vine Lane, Hillingdon, Mddx - 'Phone UXBridge 33063 - 17.4.64

Dear Mr Chapman,

Many thanks for your letter of the 14th, which for some obscure reason only reached me to-day (Local postie having a go-slow of his own!?)

Very interested in your new publication. I have felt for a long time that there is a big gap since the days when magazines of mystery stories flooded the bookstalls. Here's hoping the E.W. M.M. is a winner!

I shall be grateful if you can spare a few moments to let me have a few further details. Is it aimed at any particular age group? Is it to belong to the "Sex & Sadism" school (a la Bond, etc, bottle of the hard stuff in the sleuth's drawer)? How much feminine intervention? (Must every ~~new~~ "Blake" have his "Paula"?) And is the main aim Action, or are you interested in the Who-done-it?-- problem story with trick ending?

With regard to the last query, I remember I had an idea for a series that I put up to the A.P. years ago, which never came to anything except for one or two "shorts". The detective was an immensely fat crime-editor, who seldom left his desk (Rumour had it that if he ever slept it was at the desk), where he sat like a huge spider sending out his team of experts to gather information, which he fitted together like the bits of a jigsaw puzzle, and so produced the solution-- his men taking all the risks etc. In each story we followed these men on the various angles, reporting back to Hilary Brayne, who gave them starting orders, seeming ~~them~~ to send them off on crazy tangents--and in the end showing how all fitted together ~~to~~ in the solution.

Just wondered if this character would stand a chance now. A variety of "private-eye" types would be involved as his staff, including (if we are to play up the femine<sup>h</sup> angle) one or more dames.

If you are publishing in July you'll want stuff in fast, so I'll turn my hand to something simpler as a shot for the first issue, while introducing a new sleuth in a long-complete could perhaps be worked up.

I am in a different situation as regards time from when I wrote before. Writing markets became so scarce that I have had to take a job with E.M.I. in the factory. Needs must-- beggars can't be choosers, etc, etc.-- 7.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. 5 days a week. This means considerably less time for writing, but it also means that I have some steady lolly coming in to keep the Hardinge head above water, and so can wait for payment on publication without panic at the bank. Frankly I hate the ordeal. I have been a whole-time writer for so many years. And just as soon as I can see

a writing programme mapped out that I can count on to bring me in a living wage for 6 to 12 months ahead, I shall go back to the old typewriter whole-time. That is my big hope, but there seems to be so little doing other than the odd scripting job (and a few Romances for Dundee, etc, seem to be all the prospects there). Even so I am inclined to wonder if I am not throwing away more than I can hope to gain by starting a new career in a factory at my time of life, and won't take much incentive in the way of writing jobs cropping up to 'hand in me cards'. X X

Here's hoping to hear from you about the new venture.

Hope all well with you.

Yours sincerely,

*Re Hardinge*

REX HARDINGE

PS If it would be easier to phone re my queries, and you care to do so, any evening after 6 pm I'll be home (allday Sat/Sun).

Could be your letter is the first "swallow" message  
a Handinge literary "Summer" !! Jobing aside,  
I have a bunch things are stirring - people two  
of the "joggle-box" and going back to reading.  
Perhaps another Golden Age like the Twenties  
and early thirties (the vintage years away for weeks,  
monthly, and even fortnightly, periodicals of all kinds),  
is just around the corner. I have always felt  
there is a big market for an Adventure-Trouvel  
tober (fact + fiction combined), and Sea stories.  
Either of these incidentally would go over well  
in picture books. I think if I won a football  
pool I'd lose it all badly on gambles like that.

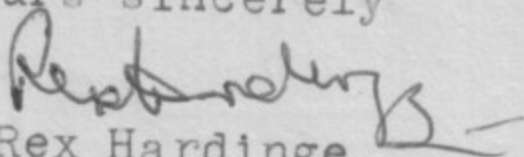
92 Vine Lane, Hillingdon, Mddx 27.4.64

Dear Mr Chapman,

There is a hoodoo on our negotiations always it would seem. Immediately after your call I received one from Canada to say my daughter-in-law was killed in a road accident, my son and the 3 children in hospital. I am rushing down forthwith to my wife in Torquay, to get her off to Canada on the first possible plane.

Conditions naturally chaotic and do not know how long various arrangements will take, so thought I had better let you know that I may possibly have to give up any idea of doing a story in time for the first issue, although I shall get down to it just as soon as I can, still hoping to do that cover story. But if you prefer to put that out to someone else, it would be safer, as one never quite knows how long these emergencies take to sort out. I may have to hustle round and lay on family accommodation. There is no knowing.

Yours sincerely

  
Rex Hardinge