

# Submission Tips

## **Poll of Ellora's Cave Editors: Top 10 Things We Look for in Submissions**

Professional cover email. "This is the first impression. If the cover letter is riddled with errors or sounds very immature, I assume the story is the same way."

Clear synopsis. "I want to know before spending the time reading the submission whether the story meets our guidelines, is appropriate for our market."

Correct grammar and word usage, no typos. (It is not an editor's job to be your proofreader, or to teach you grammar. Most editors will not even consider submissions that clearly need massive work of this type.)

Is this something I would buy to read for myself?

Believable and likeable characters.

An emotional connection between the characters, and the sensuality worked into the development of the romantic relationship.

Good blend of dialogue and action.

Intriguing and believable plot, no major holes, no "and a miracle occurred" resolutions.

Originality: not the same plot elements and character types I can find in a hundred books on the store shelves right now.

Clear POV, no head hopping.

NOTE: Ellora's Cave is a publisher of electronic books (although many of our titles are also issued in print). We also do almost all our work electronically. No paper submissions or hardcopy edits. Very little snail-mail; we communicate via e-mail. Editors and authors exchange electronic files (rtf or doc format) of the manuscript at all stages. So authors wanting to publish through Ellora's Cave do need to have basic proficiency in e-mail use and in word processing software.

# How To Be a Savvy—and Successful—Submitter

*by Raelene Gorlinsky, Managing Editor, Ellora's Cave Publishing Inc.*

## Before Submitting

1. Become a pro at your profession.
  - Learn your trade: join writer organizations, attend conferences, go to book signings
  - Learn the industry: magazines like Publishers Weekly and RWR; publisher websites
  - Know your “customers”: readers. Reviews, discussion lists, bulletin boards
2. Be sure your “product” is ready for sale.
  - Critique partners and proofers (family members or close friends do NOT count!)
  - Contests: A way to get feedback on your work. Especially consider those that use editors as judges. Nice for authors to mention wins in cover letter.
  - Story needs a great “grabbing” start to get and keep the editor’s attention. You only have a couple of pages to convince the editor to keep reading your submission.

## Where to Submit

Know the publisher, what they are looking for. Be familiar with the books they publish. Check out their websites. Ask questions. Send only to appropriate places!

## Submission Guidelines

Read them, follow them. Use common sense.

## Cover Letter/Email

Customize each submission letter. Make it easy to read; a quick summary of you and your story. Always be polite, don't be too aggressive, don't sound overconfident.

## Be Patient

Response times are often longer than stated. At least you know it wasn't rejected at first glance.

## When You Get a Response

Your story could be accepted or rejected, or the editor may ask you to revise it and resubmit it.

Reject: Don't argue, it is pointless. A thank you note (brief, professional) is not necessary but is a nice touch; you may want to submit something else there in future. Face reality. Publishers are companies, they have to turn a profit. They determine what is selling in their market and offer readers what, in that publisher's judgment, they want to buy.

Revise and Resubmit: Yes, it's a rejection, but the door is still open. The editor took a lot of time to analyze your story and explain what needs to be changed—so she must see a good bit of potential in it. Really think about the advice. If you don't agree, or it doesn't match what you feel for your story, you don't need to take it; try submitting elsewhere. But if you keep getting similar advice...

Accept: Joy and celebration! Ask lots of questions early. Find out the process, the timeline; develop realistic expectations. This is your chance to be a “newbie”, your editor will be more tolerant now than later. Be friendly with your editor, but keep it professional, not personal. Be professional and realistic in contract negotiations. Be responsible for understanding all the ramifications of your contract.

## Get Published

Meet your deadlines. Be reasonable and cooperative about revisions. Don't turn into a prima donna. Remember that your editor has a lot of other books and authors to handle, and that your editor is not your mother or your psychiatrist or your best friend, she is your “coworker”.