ForeWord Reviews

REFERENCE

How to Publish Your Novel: A Complete Guide to Making the Right Publisher Say Yes
Ken Atchity
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Writers eager to make an impact in the billion-dollar book industry will benefit from this latest installment of the publisher's "How to" series. It's a handy, plainspoken manual with a creative approach to the literature industry. The author—with assistance from co-authors Andrea McKeown, Julie Mooney, and Margaret O'Connor—pinpoints simple steps for writers seeking publication.

Each of the book's three sections is well structured with simple examples and matter-of-fact explanations that are easy to understand and embrace. The book will help writers to gain entrance into local and national publishing houses; the motivational format will inspire both new and experienced writers to perfect their craft.

The section on "The Basics" covers the principles of publishing, literary genres, and the history of the industry. Careful not to overwhelm, Atchity details what a writers' motivations, what type of audience they should cater to, and how to choose an appropriate publishing house: "as an author, it is vital that you understand your book in terms of its category, audience, and marketplace. And it is equally important to communicate this information to the publisher."

"Getting a Novel Published" focuses on literary representation—preparing a query letter, handling a submission package, deciding on a literary agent, drafting an agenda, and understanding contracts. The author suggests that publishers and imprints court literary works "out of sheer love for the craft. They're more likely or give a fledgling author a shot, whether she's represented or not." Atchity also clarifies the difference between a literary agent and literary managers.

In "Building a Writing Career," Atchity provides tips on perfecting the novelist's craft, emphasizing motivational conflicts, character relatability, and convincing back-stories. He counsels, "the crucial thing to remember is that too much back-story provided too soon impedes the forward-moving action of your novel." He also explains the roles certain editors play, as well as how to write letters to book reviewers, revise manuscripts, set marketing plans, and most importantly, how to move beyond the notion that very few first-time writers are actually

published. According to Atchity, one way writers can improve their novels is to keep the "dialogue brief. Paragraph after paragraph of 'speech' seems unnatural and forced."

Whether a writer has composed a novel or is simply flirting with the idea of it, *How to Publish Your Novel* offers valuable advice on how a manuscript can survive in the strenuous world of book publishing. Atchity is the best-selling author of fourteen books, including *The Classical Greek Reader* and *Homer's Iliad: the Shield of Memory*, and the founder of AEI, a literary management firm. He has crafted a user-friendly guide filled with facts, expert advice, easy-to-understand strategies, and an extensive glossary and resource list. This Cliff Notes-style manual is a tool every writer needs.

Nicholas Addison Thomas