


Getting published

A cheeky review of what authors need to know about publishers



You've spent years hammering away on a manuscript, attending writing groups, classes and conferences.

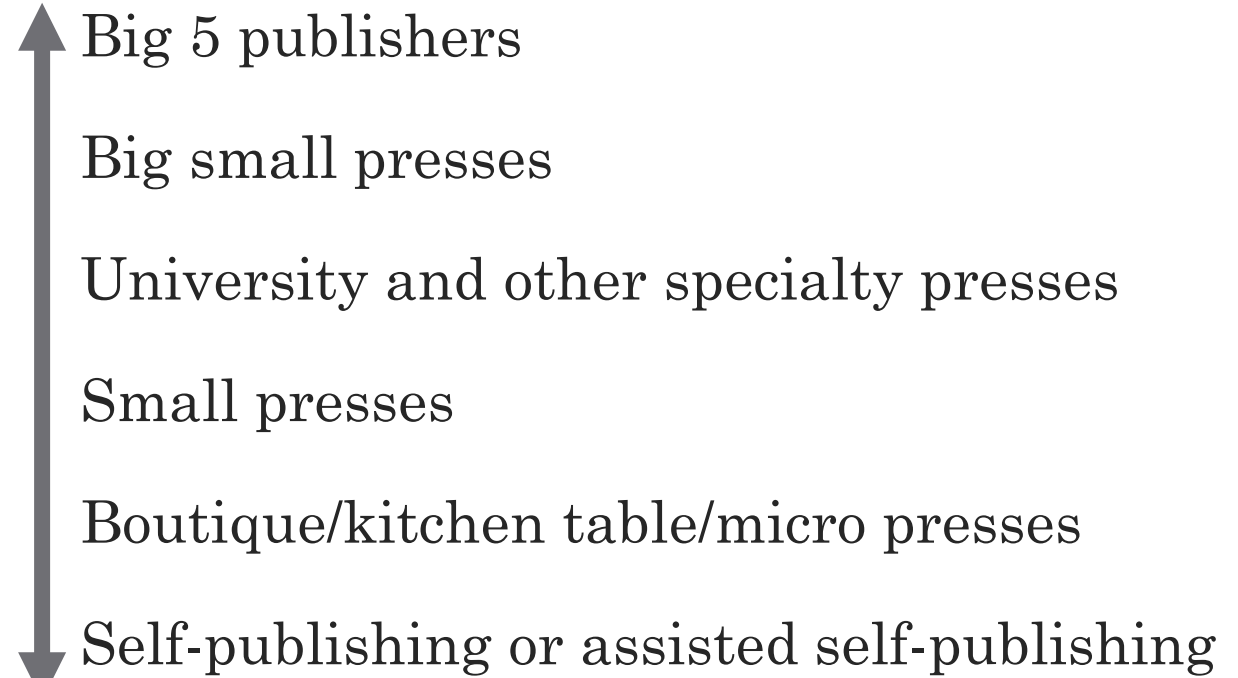
Now it's time to get to work.

Your first step is to learn about the business of publishing in order to avoid disappointment and costly mistakes.



What kind of publishers are there?

The publishing food chain



Big 5 book publishers

- Hachette, HarperCollins, Macmillan, Penguin Random House, and Simon & Schuster
- Authors get an advance on royalties (4 to low 5 figures) and ~7% royalty of trade paperback sales
- Imagine selling 10,000, maybe more
- Pros:
 - Usually the only path to illusive movie deals, fame, fortune
 - Massive sales department
 - Will receive reviews and interviews
- Cons:
 - Very, very, very hard to get into
 - You need an agent, and they are as hard to get as a publisher
 - If your book doesn't sell right away you will go out of print, sometimes as fast as 6 months. Happens all the time
 - Similarly, if the editor that acquired your book leaves to earn more money as a barista, you will be "orphaned," and your book will receive no support

Big small presses

- Milkweed, Coffee House, Greywolf, Algonquin, etc.
- Authors usually get an advance on royalties, albeit smaller than the big 5
- ~7% royalty of trade paperback sales
- Imagine selling 5,000
- Pros:
 - More personal attention than big houses
 - Mission-driven and dedicated to good literature
 - Active distribution (in-house salesforce or outsourced)
 - Will be on their backlist for a long time
 - Should receive reviews and interviews
- Cons:
 - Usually need an agent
 - Unlikely to achieve fame and fortune or movie deals

University and other specialty presses

- University of Minnesota Press, North Dakota State University Press, Minnesota Historical Society Press
- Probably no advance, and ~7% royalties
- Imagine selling 3,000
- Pros:
 - More personal attention than big houses
 - Mission-driven and dedicated to good literature
 - Active distribution (in-house salesforce or outsourced)
 - Will be on their backlist for a long time
 - May need an agent, but probably not
- Cons:
 - You will not achieve fame and fortune or movie deals
 - Possible but unlikely to get any media attention

Small presses

- Tin House Books, McSweeney's, Akashic Books, Bellevue Literary Press, Copper Canyon Press, etc.
- Probably no advance and maybe 7% royalty of trade paperback sales, maybe more
- Imagine selling 3,000
- Pros:
 - Lots of personal attention and probably more control over your work
 - Usually mission-driven and dedicated to good literature
 - Active distribution (salesforce outsourced)
 - Will be on their backlist for a long time
 - Usually no agent needed
- Cons:
 - You will not achieve fame and fortune or movie deals
 - Your book is unlikely to be in bookstores
 - You will not get many reviews or interviews, if any at all

Boutique/ kitchen table/ micro presses

- Flexible Press, Small Beers Press, Holy Cow! Press, Rocket Science Press, etc.
- Usually focus on one genre
- No advance, but probably more than ~7% royalties of sales
- Wide range of quality—do your research!
- Probably no active distribution but should be available to bookstores through Ingram (a must—ask!)
- Imagine selling 1,000
- Pros:
 - Lots of personal attention and more control over your work
 - No agent needed
 - Still a publisher and you will be a published author
- Cons:
 - You will not achieve fame and fortune or movie deals
 - Your book is unlikely to be in many bookstores
 - You will not get many reviews or interviews, if any at all

Self- publishing or assisted self- publishing

- Kindle Direct, Lulu, BookBaby, IngramSpark, etc.
- Lots of companies offer a variety of services—developmental editing, copy editing, covers—toward publication. Or they can just print it for you, for the complete self-pub experience
- Average sales: 93 (as of a few years ago)
- Pros:
 - Easy and fast
 - Complete control of the final product (for better or worse)
 - You keep the profits
 - It will be a book
- Cons:
 - No distribution, no bookstores, no reviews
 - Expensive to buy cover art and proofreading (but you have to do it!)
 - It will be published and you won't be able to publish it again
 - You get bragging rights with your relatives, but bookstores, reviewers, the media, agents, and publishers will not care one bit

Important:

- **Watch out for bottom feeders and grifters.** First clue that something's wrong: they want *you* to pay *them*. With a small army of desperate authors trying to get published, there is a corresponding small army of people looking to rip you off. Examples include:
 - Vanity presses who charge big fees in exchange for big promises
 - Agents who charge a fee—never ever ever should an agent charge a fee (they get 15% of royalties)
 - Unscrupulous marketing agencies and publicists—there are good ones, but there is a lot who can't keep their promises

Beware!

What's an author to do?

We recommend starting at the top. This means looking for an agent.

If that doesn't work (after at least 50+ submissions), submit directly to small presses

At the same time, you can look for contests. Maybe you'll be lucky!

What about self-publishing? Sales/fame/fortune are about as likely as winning the lottery

Why publish with Flexible Press?

- We may be small, but we are a **traditional publishing house** (in other words, we pay you, you do not pay us).
- **We publish only the highest quality literature**, and we are driven to make each work—and all our authors—successful.
- We take great pride in our **editing, proofreading, layout, and cover art**.
- **Authors have a great deal of input throughout the process**, far more than typical or traditional.
- From the start we've focused on **supporting the community by supporting nonprofits**.
- Since we can't pay advances, we do pay **generous royalties**.
- We are very **proud of the books we've published** and **proud to have worked with so many fine authors, many of whom we now call friends**.



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