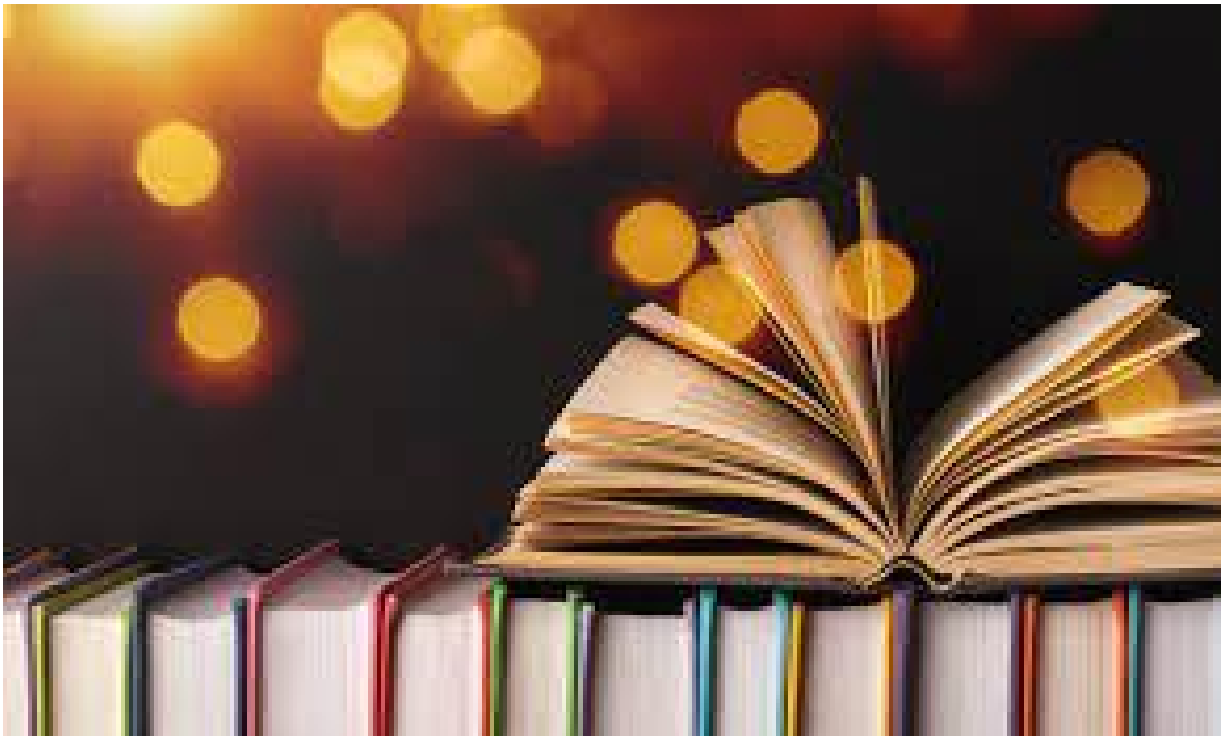


# Writer Quest



**An Imaginary Video Game  
Guide To Publishing By  
Madie Trolinger**

## Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Why I Chose to Be An English Major	3
What I Will Do With My Degree	3
What I Would Have Changed	3
 The Publishing and Editing Industry	
Publishing Definition/Expectations	4
Stages of Development	5
How To Enter The Publishing Industry	7
 NYU Summer Publishing Institute	8
What is the NYU SPI?	8
Admissions Criteria	8
 Top 5 Trade Companies	9
Hachette Book Group	9
HarperCollins	10
Penguin Random House	11
Simon & Schuster	12
MacMillan Publishers	13
 Job Title Wishlist	14
Copy Editor	14
Copywriter	14
Editorial Assistant/Editor	14
 Salaries	15
 Publishing and Editing Terminology	16
 Resume	27
 Cover Letter	28
 Writing Sample	29
 Conclusion	38
 Appendix/Works Cited	39

## INTRODUCTION

Hello there! My name is Madie Trolinger (Trah-lin-ger). I am an English major with a Creative Writing concentration and a music minor. If you're reading this, chances are you're now a senior trying to decide what you want to do after graduation. I once was where you are, and let me tell you, I had no idea what I wanted to do after graduation until I started this class. I had been told many times that I had several options for post-graduation life, but I didn't know what genuinely interested me. I knew I loved writing poems and stories, but that alone (unless you're someone like J. R. R. Tolkien or J. K. Rowling) would not be enough to sustain me. I knew what I could rule out. I didn't want to be a teacher or a lawyer. I did consider going to grad school but ultimately decided against it. I found that after listening to guest speakers, professors, and students talk about grad school experiences and applications I did not believe I would be qualified enough or driven enough to go through more schooling, not to mention the monetary investment required. Once I started this class, I narrowed down my options even further. When Bailey Longman talked about her job in the publishing and editing field, I was sold. I had the interest. I had the experience. Most of all, I had the passion.

What you will read in the following pages is a detailed "video game guide" to Writer Quest, otherwise called the publishing and editing industry. All the "lore" and "easter eggs" are there, including a brief "about the author" page. If you're a gamer like me, you've probably read dozens of wiki pages trying to figure out how to progress in a game, whether that be beating the final boss, unlocking all the achievements, or building a relationship with a character. All of these are worthy pursuits and finding your dream job in publishing and editing is one of these real-life quests. That's what I'm here for. Much like Midna from *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess* and The Guide from *Terraria*, I will introduce you to the publishing industry in all its splendor and help you understand your potential interest in this career area. Without further adieu, read on for my own story!

Best of luck!

Madie Trolinger

## **Why I Chose to Be An English Major**

I've had a vivid imagination ever since I was in kindergarten. At recess, my friends and I would walk to a concrete square in the playground that we dubbed "The Base" and together we would go into battle against imaginary monsters. I roleplayed with my best friends Logan and Michael every day after school while our parents talked. I didn't start writing until 7th grade. I made a fairy tale about my OC (original character) Shadow Morrowblood. One year later, seeing that all my friends were writing stories, I started my first novel: The Elementals. I fell in love with writing from then on. My passion for creative writing blossomed while I was in high school. I created my fictitious persona, Adrienne, and her best friend, Mirror, both of whom I roleplayed virtually when Michael and Logan moved away. I also roleplayed with my best friend Aurora all throughout those four years. Soon, I delved into the world of poetry. Once I reached college, I knew I wanted to be an English major, though I had no idea what it would entail. Now, I am focused on writing Mirror's story, which will hopefully become my magnum opus!

## **What I Will Do With My Degree**

Once I graduate, I will explore my career options. I have found that the Big Five trade publishing companies all have job openings and internship programs, so I may apply for one of those. I am also considering going through the NYU Summer Publishing Institute. The 2023 semester begins June 5th. Otherwise, my plan is to return to Culver's (my first job) and work there until I find a job. I will be living at home until then as well. I'm hoping to find something that's either remote or close to home such as Chicago or Peoria. After I get a job and start my (possibly) lifelong career path, I will move into an apartment and write novels and fanfiction and poetry in my off hours. I hope to be married (I'd love for my spouse to also be a writer) in the near future too. I'm not sure what my dream job would be, but I'm open to working for a major/minor publishing house or a magazine or even a newspaper. Above all, I dream of seeing my novels in bookstores and having my friends and family read them.

## **What I Would Have Changed**

If I had to change anything, I would honestly start over from scratch. First, I would've decided on a career path and done research sooner (late high school years). Second, I would've sought more help from professors and experts. I'm pretty shy, so asking for help can be hard. Third, I would've tried to have more experience earlier on. Looking back, I wish I'd stayed with The Scout and applied to be an evaluator on the Broadside team. Fourth, I would've probably double-majored in Journalism and maybe even double-minored in Marketing. One or both would give me a major advantage as a job candidate. Journalism would also have helped me with my Peoria Magazine internship, as the style of writing for a magazine is different than an academic essay or novel.

Proceed?

- Yes
- No

## THE PUBLISHING AND EDITING INDUSTRY

Welcome to the Writer Quest game guide! If you're a new player, this binder is for you! Here below is everything you will need to know about navigating a career in publishing and editing. If you haven't already, search the table of contents to find what you wish to learn. Otherwise, feel free to start from the beginning. Having officially chosen publishing and editing as your own career area of interest, you will want to understand everything about the industry and those who immerse themselves in it. Much like you, I am a new player of this great game and I want to share with you everything I've learned. Read on for the lore!

### Publishing Definition/Expectations

Essentially, publishing is the profession of selling or making available to the public books, magazines, newspapers, and more. Book publishing is the plotline I want to play. Editing is the profession of making changes to a manuscript's content and/or grammar in preparation for presentation to the public. With these two concepts in mind, let's discuss what to do should you pursue publishing and editing. Writer Quest story mode is a deadline-driven game that isn't your typical 9-5. As a new player, chances are high that you will end up playing weekends, early mornings, late nights, and/or holidays in order to make sure all your projects are completed according to schedule. If you love reading and writing, however, you will have a marvelous time in this career area. Here's some advice to get you started.

The first thing you'll want to do is design your character. A number of elements go into character creation, but you should keep a couple of things in mind. You are locked as human with a set race, but you have so many customizable options for your appearance. You can give your character tattoos, piercings, crazy hairstyles and colors, unique clothing styles, and more. You can also choose your name, gender and pronouns, personality traits, sexuality label, religion, and more. Depending on which plotline (job position) you choose to follow, some appearance options might be locked for when you play story mode. You'll have to do your research and talk to NPCs to figure out which plot is best for you.

After designing your character, you will build a profile, which will include your experiences and stats. Experiences include a resume, a cover letter, and, depending on where you end up going, a personal statement, letters of recommendation, and writing samples. Imagine the stats as Fallout's S.P.E.C.I.A.L system or D&D's ability scores. You'll sink points into a couple of categories that best suit your established personality and these stats will give you access to "magic" or skill sets. Your network, or "friend list" is also part of your profile. All of these items can be shared across various quest boards such as LinkedIn or Indeed to help widen your search for the perfect career.

Proceed?

- Yes
- No

## **Stages of Development**

Book publishing is a multi-step process that involves a number of professionals along the way. Broken down, the stages are as follows: Acquisition, Editing, Design, Proofreading, and Sales/Marketing. Let's take a look at each of these quest items individually:

**Acquisition:** After an idea comes to light, you are ready to help an author bring it to life. This quest item is divided into two sections, both of which involve reading a piece and figuring out its potential.

➤ **Manuscript Selection**

- Here is the true start of Writer Quest story mode for new players. Earning a publisher's approval is the make-or-break moment for aspiring authors. You are the one who will help them reach their dreams. Ultimately, you and your party are the judges of whose manuscript will be accepted and move on to become a publication.

➤ **Contract Creation**

- Congrats! You have chosen a manuscript and made an author quite happy! Now comes the next quest—signing off on a contract. Here, you will establish an agreement with the author over publication terms. Contracts are basically outlines for what services you and your party (the publishing company) will provide.

**Editing:** Now comes your hardest quest item! Editing is divided up into three categories, all of which have unique features. All must be completed before a piece of literature can officially move onto production.

➤ **Structural Editing**

- Stage I centers around a manuscript's organization. You'll determine if the order of information (academic) or plot points (trade/indie) make sense and if any pieces can be removed or shifted. Your suggestions help the author change the chronology of events as needed.

➤ **Content Editing**

- Stage II delves into the depths of ~~hell~~ (just kidding this isn't DOOM) the manuscript. Here, you explore the content (academic) or story (trade/indie). You can make suggestions about characters or plot or dialogue or worldbuilding or other more technical elements.

➤ **Technical Editing**

- Stage III involves looking at the most minute details of a manuscript. These features include grammar, punctuation, and spelling. You may enlist the help of Grammarly to catch these potential errors as well as suggest rewordings and sentence structure changes.

**Design:** Now that you've carefully checked over the entire manuscript and communicated with the author about all you and your party's suggestions, it's time for the fun parts! Here, you can use your design magic to create a unique look for the soon-to-be book.

- **Cover Art**
  - Graphic Designers and illustrators often work hand in hand with you and your guild to create a special piece of art for either the cover of the book or, in the case of many children's books, illustrations for the story.
- **Font**
  - Many fonts are available for a book, and depending on the style, authors may choose to use italics, bold, underlines, or even more than one font, especially for trade/indie books that involve flashbacks, flashforwards, or internal thoughts. Your job is to help them select one they enjoy.

**Printing/Proofreading:** You're reaching the final steps! Keep going! At this stage, you will be polishing up the book and preparing it for actual printing.

- **Typesetting**
  - Once a new book is edited and designed, you will type up their full manuscript and set up the page layout as well as align the cover and maybe even a summary on the back. By the end, you will have a book ready to go to print.
- **Test Printing**
  - Here, you will print off a test copy of the book to not only check for errors in the actual content of the book, but also the design and layout. Once everything is examined and approved, you are ready to release the author's book to the public!

**Sales/Marketing:** You've done it! You're in the endgame now! At this stage, you have completed everything about the book except for one important thing; introducing it to bookstores across Writer Quest. Your guild will request the assistance of a special group known as a marketing party to make announcements about an author's finished piece. Multiple steps are involved in this final quest item. (Note: Self Publishers have the hardest time with this quest item, so if you plan to take this route for your own books, just be aware!)

- **Advertisements**
  - Most likely, you will run ads in local papers or magazines or journals to show off a new book to the other players and NPCs of Writer Quest.
- **Podcasts/Interviews**
  - You may also choose to share your author's new book by arranging interviews with media companies or popular podcasts.
- **Guild Support Services**
  - Many guilds (publishing companies) often help authors with the distribution and sales element of this final quest item by reaching out to their own connections.

## **How to Enter The Publishing Industry**

Once you start playing the game, you'll have to do a couple of key things. First, be sure to check out a tutorial. A tutorial consists of websites that will introduce you to the basics of Writer Quest. Second, talk to some of the NPCs and other players. Writer Quest is all about connections: the more you have, the better off you'll be. Third, you'll need to attend some magic schools to learn how to use your power. Much like all the other players out there in Writer Quest, you have magical abilities that you will use for your career. Some of these abilities come with your character creation stats and personality, but others are learned through internships and schooling. Finally, you can explore your newfound magic through freelance work. Not only will you become more adept at using your power, but you will also increase your skill levels. Now then, let's take a look at these in some more depth (See Appendix for more).

Starting a tutorial course is an exciting moment for any new player. What you'll learn in the tutorial(s) you select is different elements of how to play the game: using your magic, completing quests, making friends, and more. Publisher's Lunch, Mediabistro, and Bookjobs.com are all great tutorial courses to take. Publisher's Lunch has a bunch of news articles about what's happening in the world of Writer Quest. If you visit the site, you can check out the Publisher's Marketplace, which is made up of news articles, special deals, buzz books, the site guide, and the help page. If you want to get a sense of the current events going on in the world, check out the marketplace. Mediabistro is another great tutorial you can explore. This site will introduce you to quests (jobs) as well as resources for building your experience and stats on your profile. Finally, there's Bookjobs.com. This site has it all: jobs, internships, publisher profiles, programs, organizations, major/departments guides, commonly-used terms, and events. If you're looking for an all-inclusive tutorial, this one will be your best bet.

After completing one or more tutorial courses, you'll finally be able to start exploring the world of Writer Quest. Here, you can meet NPCs (experts in the field) and other players, as well as discover guilds, equipment shops, and other fantasy town locations. Many "taverns" such as LinkedIn and Twitter are perfect places to meet new people. After all, don't most D&D stories begin in a tavern? Anyways, some adventuring parties are already well-established but still look for new members every day. Groups such as the Women's National Book Association and Young to Publishing Group are happy to let you join in their activities. Otherwise, you can check out the town square and quest boards for more information.

Of course, before you go out, you're going to want to do some studying. Apprenticeships and "magic" classes beyond your base college or university knowledge are super helpful to improve your skills and increase your stats. One well-known class is the NYU SPI which is explained below. And finally, you're going to want to build up experience by "fighting monsters" otherwise called freelance work. Some places to find these "monsters" are "dungeons" such as Upwork, Fiverr, All Freelance Writing, and Freelancer.



## **NYU SUMMER PUBLISHING INSTITUTE**

Many schools across the world of Writer Quest, especially “high level” (grad) schools, are great places to start your path toward a publishing and editing career. However, if you’re like me and are not looking to go to school for three or four more years, there is another option: the New York University Summer Publishing Institute. It is a four-week program that teaches you all about the industry secrets you’ll want to know.

### **What is the NYU SPI?**

The NYU SPI is “an intensive study of books and digital/magazine media in the heart of the publishing world—New York City! The program combines workshops, strategy sessions, and presentations by leading figures in publishing. Students hear from more than 150 guest speakers on the content creation, editing, marketing, sales, and digital aspects of the industry. Hands-on projects and dynamic networking events ensure that students gain real-world experience.” One of the best programs for aspiring publishers and editors, the NYU SPI divides up its schedule into two parts. Two weeks are devoted to book publishing and all the stages of development from acquisition to sales. Another two weeks are dedicated to digital publishing (such as audiobooks) and magazine publishing. The program also deals in skill building necessary for your work life. Students will work on assignments as well.

### **Admissions Criteria**

In order to be accepted for this wonderful opportunity, applicants are required to submit a few key documents. First, you will need to write a personal statement. A personal statement describes you—your personality, your interests, your values, and more—in a creative and enticing way. You can find plenty of examples with a quick Google search if you’re not sure how to begin. You will also need a solid resume that details all of your relevant experiences. Since the program finishes with a career fair, you will need something to leave behind for those you interact with. Of course, the SPI program will help you craft your resume and cover letter as well as give you networking advice and host pretend interviews. You will need two letters of recommendation. Letters can be acquired from professors or employers, but you’ll want to choose two people that you have a strong academic or professional relationship with, especially those who have read your work before. They will be your best bet at being accepted into the NYU SPI. Finally, you will need college transcripts. Don’t forget; it also requires an application fee and tuition.

## TOP 5 TRADE COMPANIES

Of all the guilds (publishing companies) in the world of Writer Quest, there are five titans of the industry that are the most renowned: Hachette Book Group, HarperCollins, Penguin Random House (originally Penguin and Random House until their fusion in July 2013), Simon & Schuster, and MacMillan Publishers. Most published books fall under one of these categories, though there are also three other types of publishing companies. Of the other three types of guilds, there are academic publishers, indie publishers, and self-publishers. Each one has a literary specialty as well as benefits and downsides. Personally, I would like to publish with either an indie company or self-publish. What's nice about indie companies is that they feature more niche genres of literature. Since my first novel is going to be a sci-fi romance blend, working with an indie company might be best for me. Self-publishing can be great too as it essentially lets you take control of the process. In other words, you get to choose the cover art, the price, and more. However, self-publishing makes distribution and selling hard. Here below are some details about the "Big Five" trade publishing guilds.

### Hachette Book Group

Hachette Book Group's mission as a company is "to be the #1 destination for authors, agents, customers, client publishers, and employees, to be a respected publisher that values diversity, nurtures talent, rewards success, and honors its responsibilities, to be market focused in all we do, and to lead change in popular culture, and to anticipate change, foster creativity, and encourage risk-taking and innovation." As one of the largest trade publishing companies across the Writer Quest world, Hachette Book Group is an entity you'll want to check out. Hachette is made up of many different notable imprints, which are essentially small publisher titles that fit under the name of the big trade companies. Some examples of Hachette's imprints are Grand Central Publishing (formerly Warner Books) and Little, Brown and Company.

Adventuring with Hachette involves a great deal of benefits. Hachette fosters "a community of belonging" as well as a "diversity of talent." They offer internships for early game players and give their members a safe and fun environment in which to pursue their passion.



## HarperCollins

As the second-largest trade guild in Writer Quest, HarperCollins was founded by two brothers, James and John Harper, in 1817. Undergoing many name changes over the years, HarperCollins quickly became a remarkable entity in the publishing world. Many of the authors who have published under the HarperCollins name (or one of its many imprints) include “winners of the Nobel Prize, the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, the Newbery and Caldecott Medals, and the Man Booker Prize.” Even to this day, HarperCollins provides aspiring authors with “unprecedented editorial excellence, marketing reach, long-standing connections with booksellers, and industry-leading insight into reader and consumer behavior.” With imprints such as Broadside Books, Harper Books, and William Morrow, HarperCollins has a vast reach over many genres of books. Even more impressive, HarperCollins has an environmentally friendly initiative called HarperGreen that seeks out methods of sustainability for everything they produce.

Adventuring with HarperCollins features “corporate social responsibility,” “diversity and inclusion,” “HarperGreen,” and “innovation.” Born from a strong passion for literature, this guild is committed to providing the very best experience for new players of Writer Quest. Regarding their benefits packages, they include premium healthcare, life and disability insurance, adoption assistance, employee discounts, 401k programs, tuition reimbursement, job/career training, and more. HarperCollins is open for internships and beyond.



## **Penguin Random House**

Since the 1800s, Penguin Random House (originally two separate companies) has become one of the most popular publishing guilds in Writer Quest, especially after their fusion. Ultimately, their mission was “to ignite a universal passion for reading by creating books for everyone.” Even now, “by leveraging [their] global reach, embracing new technologies, and collaborating with authors at every stage of the publishing process—from editorial and design, to sales and marketing, to production and distribution—Penguin Random House aim[s] to provide them with the greatest platform possible.”

Penguin Random House has a rich and extensive history reaching back over two centuries. While Bennett Cerf and Donald S. Klopfer didn’t found Random House until 1927 and Allen Lane didn’t found Penguin until 1935, their two companies would soon become one of the biggest guilds. With nearly 275 imprints, they have a wide reach.

Penguin Random House offers three different levels of jobs: experienced, entry-level, and fulfillment. They also offer internships. Their approach to diversity and inclusion involves “leadership investment,” “diversity and representation,” “career growth,” and “psychological safety and belonging.” Penguin Random House is also perhaps the most charitable of the five, having made generous donations to many different projects, such as the Black Creatives Fund, the Book Trade Charity Fundraiser, and the Indigenous Literacy Foundation. They have also awarded college scholarships, donated books to children in need, and supported healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

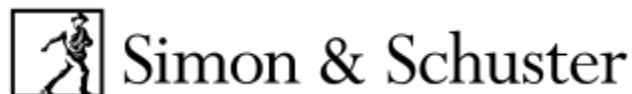


## **Simon & Schuster**

Simon & Schuster may very well no longer be on this list in the near future, as some predict they could be bought out by one of the four other titans. With that being said, Simon & Schuster's mission statement is as follows: "a leading international publisher dedicated to sharing a broad range of works that educate, entertain, and inspire readers of all ages. We publish books that represent many perspectives, to stimulate readers' curiosity and intellectual exploration, and have the capacity to both inform and challenge our views, and to create change in the world. Our passionate commitment to excellence in all aspects of publishing is reflected in our unceasing effort to bring our authors' works to the widest possible audience."

Simon & Schuster's rise began in 1924 with Richard L. Simon and M. Lincoln Schuster. Since then, they have become widely acclaimed all across Writer Quest. They publish over 2000 titles annually and tons of original audiobooks. Their authors have won many prestigious awards: "57 Pulitzer Prizes, 18 National Book Awards, 13 National Book Critics Circle Awards, 6 Andrew Carnegie Medals and 9 Grammy Awards" to be precise. They are partnered with industry titan Paramount and are composed of many imprints such as Avid Reader Press and Folger Shakespeare Library.

Simon & Schuster has a great employment package that involves not only "learning and career development" programs, but also many benefits and perks. For the former, they offer online courses, seminars, guest speakers, events and workshops, and more. For the latter, medical plans, life insurance, paid time off, free books, discounts, and more are available to new players who join the guild.



## **MacMillan Publishers**

Macmillan Publishers was also established by two brothers named Daniel and Alexander Macmillan in 1843. Since then, they have risen to new heights. With several unique imprints, Macmillan produces a number of different genres, including comics, fantasy, horror, romance, science fiction, children's books, and young adult books.

Macmillan Publishers takes a special approach to diversity, equity, inclusion & belonging. Above all, they remain committed to their work, no matter what challenges may arise. They believe in avoiding surface-level activism. In other words, they won't do something simply because it makes them look good. They will do things because they care and because they want to be the best and most genuine they can be. They have set objectives when it comes to this important aspect of their guild. They enforce positive behaviors in the work environment and express incredible support for their employees, authors, and talent. Their values can ultimately be summed up in five words: inclusivity, respect, trust, sustainability, and impact.

Their mission statement is as follows: "to create and sustain a culture of inclusion and belonging that inspires people to do their best work and grow personally and professionally. Our organization is working to increase diversity in the content we produce, the authors we work with, and the talent we acquire, retain and develop. As a community, we are dedicated to this journey. Plain and simple, we have more work to do. We know that we won't get everything right, but we are determined to do this thoughtfully, together."



## **JOB TITLE WISHLIST**

Okay. I'm sure by now you're wondering what kind of plotlines (job positions) are out there. Many options are available to new players like you, but I will show you the three that I am most interested in pursuing. As much as I want to be a published author myself, I cannot rely on that alone to make me money. And so, I have selected the three (technically four?) storylines that I want to play. Each one has unique features, but also some commonalities. Read on to find out more!

### **Copy Editor (Trade/Indie Books)**

What is a copy editor? Simply put, they are the ones who create, edit, and proofread a manuscript. Not only do they use magic to explore content such as characters, plot, and dialogue, but they also check grammar, punctuation, and spelling. All in all, they make sure that a manuscript is readable and reflects the guild's values and audience. In order to become a copy editor, you will need a Bachelor's degree in English, Journalism, or a similar area. Skills you will need include strict adherence to deadlines and a keen eye for detail.

### **Copywriter (Trade/Indie Books)**

What is a copywriter? While this plotline sounds quite similar, it actually has a different focus. Copywriters create promotional content for an author's work. Examples include social media posts, packaging, brochures, author bios, and more. Copywriters also follow a set brand voice from their guild and apply it to everything they work on. Much like being a copy editor, players will want to have a Bachelor's degree. For this plotline, however, your degree can range from English and Journalism to Marketing and Communications. You will want to have a portfolio to demonstrate your work when you play this story. You will also want to have points in collaboration and passion stats.

### **Editorial Assistant/Editor (Trade/Indie Books)**

What is an editorial assistant or editor? As the name implies, editorial assistants are helper characters to the main editor. Editors, meanwhile, do exactly what their title says. They edit. As an editor or editorial assistant, you will be in charge of using your magic to create and plan written manuscripts for publication. Both positions identify ways to improve a manuscript's content as well as smaller details. You will also be responsible for some of the customization options when bringing a book to print. Editors are the main players in this plot, of course, but assistants are quite helpful as well and can see things that editors may miss. Like all the others, you will need a Bachelor's degree in English, Journalism, or Communications.

## SALARIES

As I've mentioned many times throughout this binder, money is a key part of Writer Quest. Your salary can be used not only to purchase food and other necessities, but also new equipment, books, and more. Here, I'll share a quick story with you. My father is a chemical engineer. When I first came to Bradley and met Dr. Katz, who I ended up having my first semester of freshman year for LAS 101 and will have for my final semester at Bradley as we collaborate on my sci-fi romance novel, I decided I wanted to be an English major. My father, of course, was concerned that I would not make enough money to support myself. Much like him, I had no idea what my story would be after I graduated. When I started English 181 with Professor Newton in my first semester, I learned more about Writer Quest and the great opportunities available to me. I wanted to reassure my dad that I would be able to make it out there, no matter how long it might take me. I had Culver's to fall back on while I job-searched. Now that I am a semester away from graduating, I want to show him this binder (obviously not the one I've turned in) so he knows that my life story is a strong one. Now then, let's get to the money, shall we? In Writer Quest, you're paid in gold pieces (as in just about every video game and D&D campaign I know), but in the real world, you'll be paid in salaries. Here below is a brief list and of the salaries for the jobs I want to have.

Copy Editor: Approximately \$50,000 a year

Copywriter: Approximately \$52,000 a year

Editorial Assistant: Approximately \$46,500 a year

Editor: Approximately \$57,000 a year

As you can see, salaries for publishing and editing jobs aren't super low but aren't incredibly high either. All that matters to me is that any one of these salaries will sustain me. I plan to live a simple and quiet life (much like a certain Yoshikage Kira). I want an apartment (more likely than not) or a small house. I want a spouse I love. I want pets. I might even adopt a child. With a career in this area, I think that's all possible.



## **PUBLISHING AND EDITING TERMINOLOGY**

Of course, where would we be without understanding all of the strange yet interesting new words you as a new player in the game will use in your everyday life? Here below is a comprehensive list of everything you'll want to know the meaning of (the meaning of life is 42).

### **Editorial**

**Agent:** A book industry professional who represents authors and illustrators, helping them to place their work with publishers, collecting their payments, and performing other duties on their behalf.

**Acquiring Editor:** An editor who buys a specific book. The acquiring editor will then pass the manuscript on to the development editor, unless the acquiring editor and the development editor are the same person, which is often the case.

**Book Proposal:** Description of a proposed book that an author sends to a publisher, often including sample chapters and an outline.

**Critique:** An evaluation of a manuscript, touching on issues such as structure as well as character and plot development.

**Development Editor:** The editor who does the substantive editing of a book, with particular attention paid to overall style, pacing, plot, and structure. The development editor works with the author on revisions.

**Draft:** The book's manuscript at a particular stage. The first draft is followed by rough drafts, which are unpolished versions. The final draft is sent to prepress.

**Editorial Board/Publishing Committee:** A group at a publishing house that approves the acquisition of a book, that is, purchasing an author's work for publication. Editorial boards are typically comprised of an acquisitions editor, as well as representatives from the sales, marketing, and finance departments.

**Errata:** A loose sheet detailing errors found in a printed book.

**Line-Editing/Copy Editing:** Line-by-line editing of a manuscript, concentrating on style, punctuation, spelling, grammar, flow, sequencing, clarity, consistency, and content errors.

**Manuscript:** An author's written material before it is typeset and printed. MS and MSS are the shorthand designations for "manuscript" or "manuscripts."

**Proofreading:** A final proofing of the manuscript, usually focused on cleaning up any typographical errors before the manuscript is typeset.

**Query Letter:** A letter from an author or agent to an editor that briefly describes a manuscript and asks whether the editor is interested in evaluating the manuscript.

**Reading Fees:** Fees charged by some agents to evaluate a prospective client's manuscript. The Association of Authors' Representatives, a major trade association for book agents, prohibits its members from charging reading fees.

**Revisions:** Changes, sometimes extensive, to an original work.

**Slush Pile:** Manuscript submissions that are received by publishing houses, but are unsolicited or do not come through agents. Some publishers do not consider unsolicited manuscripts, while others do review them.

**Submissions:** Manuscripts sent by an author or agent to a publisher for consideration.

## **Legal, Finance, Rights & Permissions**

**Advance:** A payment made as an advance against royalties by a publisher to an author or illustrator when the author's book is acquired by the publisher. The advance is often paid in two parts: half upon the signing of the contract, and half upon the delivery or the publisher's formal acceptance of the manuscript. The advance is charged against royalties and must "earn out" (that is, accrued royalties must amount to the size of the advance) before any royalties are paid.

**Boilerplate:** A publisher's standard contract offered to an author and used as a starting point for negotiating final terms.

**Contract/Publishing Agreement:** A legal document detailing an author or illustrator's agreement to sell to a publisher some or all rights to a creative work. Contracts specify what rights under copyright are being granted, the author's and publisher's respective obligations under the agreement, the author's compensation, and other provisions. Agreements can be thick with legalese and typically include anywhere from 3 to 20 pages, with up to 100 clauses.

**Copyright:** The exclusive, legally-secured right to, among other things, reproduce and distribute works of original expression. Expression is your own unique way of expressing an idea, telling a story, or creating a work of art. Under copyright law, creators hold copyright in a book or other literary work from the moment they put the words down on paper, into a computer file, or into some other tangible medium. Copyright protection in works created after January 1, 1978 generally lasts until 70 years after the death of the creator. Copyright in works created by

businesses or before 1978 can last for 95 years from publication. After a work is no longer protected, it falls into the public domain.

**Kill Fee:** A payment that may be made to an author or illustrator when a publisher cancels a project.

**Option Clause:** A clause in a publishing agreement giving the publisher the right to consider acquiring the author's next book before other publishers can do so.

**Permissions:** Agreements from copyright holders granting the right to someone else to reproduce their work. Authors who want to excerpt someone else's work in their own book may be obligated under copyright law to secure permissions.

**Public Domain:** Products of the human mind such as books, inventions, computer programs, songs, movies, and other works are often owned by the creator as "intellectual property," meaning that the creator may have control over uses of the work such as reproduction. Intellectual property is recognized under copyright, patent, trademark, and other laws. If a work is not legally protected as intellectual property (possibly because its protection has expired), it is said to be in the "public domain." Anyone may reproduce, sell, or otherwise use a public domain work without having to obtain permission.

**Rights/Subsidiary Rights:** Some of the many different ways in which a book can be distributed include through book clubs, as foreign translations, through excerpts in newspapers and magazines, or as a movie adaptation. The rights to distribute a book in one of these or other extended forms are referred to as "subsidiary rights." If the publisher licenses the subsidiary rights to another company to exploit them, the license proceeds are shared between the author and the publisher. Sometimes the publisher exploits subsidiary rights directly, such as by selling its own book club edition of the work. If the author withholds these rights from the publisher and the author's agent licenses the rights directly to a third-party company, the author keeps all of the proceeds minus the agent's commission.

**Royalties:** A percentage the author or illustrator receives out of the proceeds from the sale of each copy of the book.

## **Marketing & Publicity**

**Book Signing:** A publicized event, often held at bookstores or book fairs, featuring an author reading from and discussing the author's book and autographing the book for customers.

**Direct Mail:** Promoting books by sending a brochure, flyer, postcard, or other printed material directly to a group of potential buyers.

**Fantasy:** A type of fiction that bends or transcends the rules of the known world, allowing such conventions as time travel, talking animals, and super-human creatures.

**Fiction:** Writing that comes from the imagination, or writing that does not adhere to the facts related to true events.

**Genre:** A specific category of books, such as historical, romance, or science fiction.

**Historical Fiction:** Works in which the characters are fictional, but the setting and other details are rooted in actual history.

**Marketing:** A concerted effort of promotion and advertising by the publisher to maximize sales of books to the public and to distributors.

**Media Kit/Press Kit:** A folder of promotional materials used for announcing information about a forthcoming book to the news media and other targeted outlets. Media kits may include excerpts, reviews, quotes from individuals praising the work, and a press release.

**Monograph:** A scholarly piece of writing (often book length) dealing with a detailed, yet often limited, subject.

**Niche Marketing:** Marketing and promoting a book to a specific group of buyers, such as people in a certain geographical region, or people with a specific hobby or interest. Books published for a niche market may be sold nationally, but mainly are sold through specialized retail outlets.

**Nonfiction:** "True" writing in which the author retells actual events.

**Press Release:** A written announcement that seeks to draw media attention to a specific event or product launch.

**Target Audience:** A specific group of readers likely to be interested in a particular book.

## **Parts & Kinds of Books**

**Afterword:** Closing remarks on the topic of the book or the process of writing the book. This material can be written by someone other than the author.

**Appendix:** Supplementary information at the end of a book, which can include tables and statistical information.

**Author/Illustrator Biography:** Personal information and accomplishments of the author and/or illustrator.

**Back Matter:** All printed material that appears in the back of the book after the body copy. Back matter can include an afterword, an appendix, a bibliography, a colophon, a glossary, and an index.

**Bibliography:** A list of books or articles cited as resources by the author.

**Binding:** The back cover, spine (center panel which connects the front and back cover to the pages and faces out when the book is shelved), and front cover of a book. A binding is what holds a book together. Types of binding include case binding, comb binding, perfect binding, saddle stitching, spiral binding, and velo binding.

**Board Books:** Small, often square-shaped books intended for infants and toddlers and consisting of a small number of thick pages.

**Body Copy:** The majority of the text of the book, appearing between the front and back matter.

**Colophon:** A brief listing of production information, often including typeface details and information related to any artwork.

**Copyright Page:** A page toward the front of the book which indicates that the book is protected by copyright, and that permission must be obtained to reproduce all or part of the book. Typically this page also includes cataloging data for libraries.

**Dedication:** An author's statement of appreciation or compliments to a specific person or group of people to whom the book is dedicated.

**EAN Bar code:** This bar code is the ISBN number transferred into machine-readable form. The electronic scanning lines printed on the back cover or book jacket are encoded with information about the book product, such as the title, publisher, and price.

**Foreword:** An introduction to a book, usually written by someone other than the author of the book.

**Front Matter:** All of the pages in a book that appear before the body copy. Types of front matter include the title page, copyright page, dedication, table of contents, foreword, preface, acknowledgment, and introduction.

**Frontispiece:** An illustration appearing before the first pages of a book.

**Glossary:** A list of terms and definitions particular to the subject of the book.

**Hardcover:** Usually sewn and glued, hardcover books are then bound with cardboard covers that are reinforced with a stiff cloth before being covered with a paper dust jacket.

**Index:** An alphabetical listing of specific topics and key words in a book (especially names, places, and events) and the pages on which they are mentioned.

**ISBN (International Standard Book Number):** A worldwide, numbered identification system that provides a standard way for publishers to number their products without duplication by other publishers. "ISBN" also refers to ISBN numbers themselves. The first part of the ISBN identifies the language of publication ("0" for English), and the second part identifies the publisher. The next string of digits in the ISBN identifies the book product itself, and is followed by a digit specifically calculated to ensure the integrity of the ISBN.

**ISSN (International Standard Serial Number):** A worldwide numbering system for periodicals and other serially-produced products.

**Library Binding:** A more durable hardcover binding with cloth reinforcement and often a different sewing method.

**Mass Market Paperback:** A smaller (4 and 3/16" x 6 and 3/4") paperback book usually printed on low-grade paper and released in high quantity at a lower price than a trade paperback. The subject matter of these books typically fit current popular market needs. In addition to bookstore placement, these so-called "rack sized" books are often distributed through drugstores, airports, and supermarkets.

**Preface:** Introductory section of a book, usually written by the author. May contain information on why the book was written or how to use the book.

**Table of Contents:** A listing of the topics covered in the book as arranged by chapter and/or section, including the corresponding page numbers.

**Title Page:** Odd-numbered right-hand (or "recto") page that lists the book's title, subtitle, author's name, publisher, and city where it was published.

**Trade Paperback:** Trade paperbacks are larger than mass market paperback books and are bound with a heavy paper cover. They are often the same size and bear the same cover illustration as the hardcover edition. Trade paperbacks are usually bound with glue only.

## **Production & Design**

**Bluelines:** Also referred to as "Blues." This printer's photocopy generated by the printer is a blue-print mock-up of all of the pages of the book printed from the final plates. Bluelines allow a final opportunity to detect errors and make minor corrections before the book goes to press. If changes are needed, they have to be made to the film, which can be expensive.

**Book Manufacturing:** The entire process of typesetting a book, printing it, binding it, and then packing it for shipping.

**Layout:** The overall design of a book's pages, including the arrangement of text, illustrations, graphics, title, page numbers, and font/typeface usage.

**Overrun:** The excess quantity of books when a print run is larger than the one ordered. These additional copies are printed to offset possible spoilage. If the estimated spoilage does not occur, the publisher is sometimes required to purchase the additional copies from the printer.

**PP&B:** Paper, Printing, and Binding. Accounts for the bulk of the total cost associated with manufacturing a book.

**Prepress:** The various steps necessary to prepare a book to be sent to a printer. May include scanning of images, creation of proofs, conforming color specifications to the printer's requirements, and many other activities.

**Printer's Errors:** Mistakes made by the printer during manufacturing, such as smudges, smears, and ink-blots on pages.

**Proofs:** The complete typeset pages of a book for review before the book goes to press.

**Spoilage:** Planned paper waste. Printers estimate ten percent spoilage.

**Stripping:** Positioning all of the layout components on a signature (large sheets of paper that are printed in multiples of four that when folded and trimmed become the pages in the book) to construct the templates for platemaking.

**Transparencies:** Photographs or images appearing on transparent material (such as slides) rather than on opaque material (such as paper.)

**Trim Size:** The outer dimensions (horizontal and vertical) of a finished book.

**Underrun:** A finished order containing fewer books than requested. An underrun may result from excessive spoilage during printing or from printer's errors.

## **Publishers**

**Advance Copies:** The first finished books (before the book is widely distributed) that are designated to fill advance orders and special requests.

**Backlist:** Books from previous seasons that are still in print. A publisher's backlist provides a significant source of revenue, as sales of backlist titles often prove to be more stable than frontlist sales.

**Division:** A branch of a publishing company. Some large publishing houses consist of several divisions.

**Dummy:** A rough mock-up of a book that usually shows where all front matter, text and illustrations, and back matter will appear. Some dummies include actual sketches and images.

**Frontlist:** All of the books released in the current season and featured in the publisher's latest catalog.

**Galley or Advanced Reader's Edition/Copy (ARE or ARC):** Formatted in book form, bound galleys are generally produced after a manuscript has been typeset but before it has been proofread. These editions are used by publicists to send to book reviewers, distributors, and book clubs that like to see copies of books three or four months before their official publication dates. Some publishers classify books with full color covers as ARCs or AREs, and those with plain cardstock covers as galleys.

**Imprint:** The identifying name of a specific line of books available from the publisher. Publishers may have many imprints.

**In-Store or On-Sale Date:** The date that a product arrives in the stores and is shelved for consumers to purchase.

**List:** The books designated for publication in a particular sales season (such as the Fall season, Winter season, or Spring/Summer season).



**Midlist:** Books with a strong intellectual or artistic bent which have a chance of significant success but are not assumed to be likely bestsellers.

**OP/Out of Print:** When a publisher has no copies of a book on hand and does not intend to reprint it.

**OSI/Out of Stock Indefinitely:** When the publisher has no copies of a specific title on hand, but may wish to reprint it in the future.

**Pre-Publication:** This term is usually used in conjunction with other terms such as pre-pub costs or pre-pub offers. Pre-pub offers may be made with special incentives to hype initial demand or to learn enough to project post-publication response rates.

**Publication Date ("Pub Date"):** The date when the publisher announces that a particular product will be available. Typically, the pub date is set for a few days after the book's arrival in stores to help ensure that marketing and publicity can begin on schedule.

## **Sales**

**Chains:** Large companies that own many bookstores under the same name. The two biggest chains in U.S. bookselling are Barnes & Noble and Borders. A "superstore" carries 100,000 or more titles and can include a coffee shop and other amenities.

**Co-op Money:** Expenditures by a bookseller to promote a publisher's books. Co-op monies are then reimbursed by the publisher.

**Distributor:** A company that warehouses, catalogs, markets, and sells books to bookstores, libraries, and wholesalers on behalf of a number of small publishers, consolidating those costs.

**Publishers Group West ([www.pgw.com](http://www.pgw.com))** is the largest exclusive distributor of independent publishers in North America. One of the top ten vendors of books in the country, Publishers Group West represents over 150 independent publishers.

**National Book Network ([www.nbnbooks.com](http://www.nbnbooks.com))** is the largest independent distributor in North America. NBN provides sales, marketing, order fulfilment, and credit and collection services to independent publishers of commercial fiction and non-fiction books.

**Independent Booksellers:** Retail shops, not owned by large companies, selling books to the general public.

**Institutional Sales:** Book sales primarily to schools and libraries, especially by children's book publishers.

**List Price:** The cover price of a book, also called the "retail" price.

**Remainder copies:** Copies of a book that are deeply discounted for fast turnover, often due to slow-moving sales or an overabundance of stock.

**Returns:** Unsold copies of a book that are returned to publishers from booksellers. In most cases the bookseller is allowed to return any unsold books to the publisher for a complete refund.

**Sales Call:** Regular appointments between the publisher's sales representatives and potential buyers. A catalog of front list titles is used during this meeting and a Purchase Order (PO) is issued.

**SAN (Standard Account Number):** A number assigned to libraries, schools, and other organizations that buy, sell, or lend books.

**Special Sales:** Non-traditional sales in outlets that do not specialize in book retail (anything from gift stores to pet shops to organizations, etc.).

**Trade Bookseller:** A bookseller which distributes books to the general public. Some trade booksellers include superstores, chain stores, independent booksellers, and online retailers.

**Wholesaler:** A company that buys books in large quantities from publishers at high discounts, and sells them to bookstores and libraries at a mid-level discount.

Baker & Taylor ([www.btol.com](http://www.btol.com)) is a leading full-line wholesaler of books, videos, and music products to libraries and both traditional and Internet retailers. The company has been in business for over 170 years and ships more than 1 million unique ISBNs annually.

Ingram Book Group ([www.ingrambookgroup.com](http://www.ingrambookgroup.com)) is a leading wholesaler of books, audiobooks, and periodicals to booksellers, librarians, and specialty retailers. The company's database contains more than 1.8 million titles.

## **Types of Childrens Books**

**Chapter Books:** A category of books aimed at children ages 9-12. While chapter books often display one line drawing per chapter, they primarily use text to tell a story.

**Concept Book:** A picture book for preschool children that attempts to teach a basic concept. Many concept books display illustrations or other art and contain only a few words per page. Concept books frequently focus on introducing children to subjects such as the alphabet, or colors, shapes, and sizes.

**Early Readers/Easy Readers/Beginning Chapter Books:** These books are intended for kids ages 8-11 who are growing out of picture books. The books typically run about 64 pages and feature a substantial amount of illustration and controlled vocabulary aimed to help children move on to chapter books.

**Hi-Lo Books:** These books combine a high interest level with a text that is less challenging. Hi-Lo books are often used to coax hesitant middle-graders into more active reading.

**Middle Reader:** Books geared for readers aged 9-11.

**Novelty Book:** Books with special built-in features such as pop-ups, foldout pages, liftable flaps, or hidden sound chips.

**Picture Book:** Primarily aimed at children from preschool to age 8, picture books display pictures or illustrations on every page, telling the story through images that are accompanied with a few lines of text. Most picture books are 24 or 32 pages.

**YA Books:** A relatively new category, Young Adult (YA) Books are most often targeted at readers ages 12-18.

Wow, that was a long list! Can you remember everything? I'm only kidding! As a player of Writer Quest, many of these terms will soon become second nature for you. As you adventure, you will learn so many new things that will improve your writing skills, editing skills, and much much more. Now then, onto the easter eggs! Check out the next few pages for some samples of a resume, cover letter, and even a special writing sample that features some of the characters of my novel! Mirror, the alien shapeshifter protagonist, who has gone through hell and back during her time on Briri III. Dr. Adam Graves, the kind scientist and leader of his team who will stop at nothing to save humanity from Echthra (the antagonist) and her space factory, the Red Machine (also the title of the book). Sage and Eden Graves, Mirror's twins who had to be given away at their birth. And of course, a small snippet of Echthra, a member of the genocidal alien race called the Illixi who wishes to exterminate humanity in the most gruesome way possible. Enjoy!

**Madeleine Sue Trolinger**  
(815) 830-7233 — msttroll21@gmail.com

---

## Education & Credentials

**Bradley University, Peoria, IL** — Graduation in May 2023

Bachelor of Arts in English: Creative Writing Concentration

- GPA 3.52
  - Dean's List (Fall 2019—Fall 2021)
  - Presidential Scholarship
- 

## Field Experience

**Tokyo Journal International: CA (Remote)**

Summer Intern (May 2022—August 2022)

- Edited and reviewed articles and interviews with leading cultural figures from Japan
- Provided comments on other editors' work

**Peoria Magazine: Peoria, IL**

Fall Intern (August 2022—December 2022)

- Wrote articles about people, places, and activities in the Peoria Area
- Interviewed Peoria residents and leaders
- Edited articles after receiving feedback

**The Scout (Bradley University School Newspaper): Peoria, IL**

Reporter (August 2019—January 2020)

- Wrote articles on games, movies/tv shows, and more
  - Attended weekly meetings to discuss progress and new stories
- 

## Activities

**Admin:** Interactive Narrative Club (August 2019—May 2023)

**Member:** Write House Ink (April 2021—May 2023)

**Member:** Common Ground (August 2022—May 2023)

---

## Skills

**Technology:** Google Docs/Sheets/Slides/Forms, Microsoft Word/Powerpoint, Zotero, Zoom, YouTube

Madeleine Sue Trolinger  
776 Prairie Street — Marseilles IL, 61341 — (815) 830-7233 — msttroll21@gmail.com

Penguin Random House LLC  
New York, NY, US, 10019

Dear Penguin Random House Hiring Manager,

I found your entry-level Editorial Assistant job posting on your website. Having read through the job description, I am greatly interested in this opportunity. I love reading, writing, researching, and collaborating with others on projects. I believe I satisfy most of the qualifications sought in a potential candidate for the position.

I graduated from Bradley University in May 2023 with a bachelor's degree in English with a Creative Writing concentration. In my four years at Bradley, I completed a great deal of coursework regarding both oral and written communication. Having taken these classes, I learned and applied skills such as note-taking, researching, peer-reviewing, critical thinking, and active listening.

Additionally, I was a member of a number of clubs on campus. I was involved in both Write House Ink and Interactive Narrative Club. In Write House Ink, I wrote poems and fiction and then submit my work for peer review. I also had my writing published in both The Scout and Broadside. I was a reporter for the Voice section of The Scout. I wrote articles on video games, music, and more.

I took up an internship over the summer with Tokyo Journal International. My main area of work was editing interviews and articles, providing feedback on others' edits, and creating titles for said articles. All of the interviews were with iconic Japanese cultural figures. I also completed an internship with Peoria Magazine during the fall of my senior year where I wrote journalistic articles on people and places in Peoria and submitted them for editing.

If you have any questions, contact me via email or phone. I am always happy to provide more information about my qualifications and experiences as well as some samples of my work.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,  
Madie Trolinger

## Dreams

“Goodbye, Genesis.” She laughs maniacally, then falls silent as she is killed.

\*\*\*

Mirror woke with a start. How long had it been since she murdered Echthra, the genocidal, psychopathic megalomaniac and mastermind of the Madness War? How long had it been since she destroyed the Red Machine, Echthra’s space factory equipped to rip apart human flesh? How long had it been since she lost all control over her powers and caused her universe to collapse? She buried her face in her hands as tears streamed down her cheeks. Ten years. That’s how long ago all of this had happened. She counted the anniversary every year; not because she wanted to, but because she couldn’t forget. One whole decade. She thought of her children. Where were they now? Could she still see them again?

\*\*\*

Another late summer night in the small town of Modon on Gemia MM0 had passed. As the twins sat on their beds, they took a moment to pray. Michael and Hannah Gardner, their adoptive parents, prayed every night before they went to sleep. Once they finished, the twins turned out the lights and pulled the covers over themselves. Only the sound of the fan could be heard, until...

“Sage?”

“Yeah, Eden?”

“Do you remember our real mother?”

“A little. Why?”

“I have no memory of her.”

“You don’t?”

“No.” Eden paused. “I wish we could see her.”

“We should ask Mom and Dad,” Sage said.

“Yeah! I think it’s worth a shot.”

“We can ask them at breakfast tomorrow.”

“Okay.”

Soon, the twins drifted off to sleep and their memories began to bleed into their dreams.

\*\*\*

A young woman and a middle-aged man are alone in a hospital room. Her children are in her arms: a girl with a tuft of brown hair and grey eyes and a boy with light blond hair and green eyes. She smiles, tears sliding down her face. Her son looks just like his father. Black clumpy blood is caked into her skin. Her battle against Echthra had taken everything from her. She lost Castor, her true love, mere days before they were to be married. Her beloved father was ripped apart piece by piece in the Red Machine after defying Echthra. And now?

“What are you going to do?” the man asks her.

“I... I don’t know. I can’t raise them, not after everything that’s happened. Dad, I... You can’t understand the things I’ve seen, the things I’ve done.”

“I know.”

“Can you take them?”

“I wish I could, sweetheart, but... the doctors said I’ll be disabled for the rest of my life. Our new universe is much less advanced. I couldn’t possibly give them a good life on my own. I’m sorry.”

Both of them are silent for a moment.

“Adoption is the best choice. A good family will care for them.” She breaks down and tears flow down her face once more. Her newborn children stare up into her eyes curiously.

“I-I... I d-don’t want... want to... g-give them up...”

“I know, honey.” Now, tears are starting to well in his own eyes. She doesn’t deserve any of this. What can he do? He’s useless. After Echthra burned his flesh from the inside out, dissected him alive, and shattered his spine, he sustained severe nerve damage and became paralyzed from the chest down. Could doctors in his previous universe have restored his body to its previous state? He wished they could, but even with all of science’s advancements, there was no chance. And here? Impossible. After their universe collapsed, both he and his daughter traveled back in time nearly 1000 years. He couldn’t understand how. Neither could she. She must’ve made a wormhole.

“I’m... I’m s-so sorry, Dad. I ruined e-everything.”

“What? Sweetheart, no, you saved us all!”

“I d-destroyed the... wh-whole universe... I c-couldn’t... s-save Castor. I couldn’t... protect you from h-her.” Her chest rises and falls as she sobs.

“I’m really sorry about Castor, sweetheart. I didn’t know. If I had, I would have done something to help him.”

“You... You c-couldn’t have known. I... I haven’t told you much about what I went through these past several years.”

“And you don’t have to. Get some rest, okay? I’m going to speak to the doctor about what we can do next.”

“O-Okay...”

“I’ll be back shortly.”



He leaves her alone in the room. Her sobs subside. She raises her eyes to the ceiling as though Castor were looking down upon her.

“I’m sorry, Castor. I love you,” she whispers.

\*\*\*

Once morning broke through their window, the twins awoke from their slumber, confused. Such a vivid scene. Almost... prophetic?

“You saw her too, didn’t you?” Eden asked.

“Yes. Who were they?”

“I don’t know. Maybe Mom and Dad could help?”

“Let’s go ask.”

Together, the twins descended the stairs and walked into the kitchen. The smell of sizzling bacon wafted into their noses.

“Good morning, Sage and Eden. Did you sleep well?” Hannah asked.

“Yeah,” Sage said, yawning.

“Why, Eden, you look troubled.”

“Mom?”

“Yes, honey?”

“Who was our real mom?” Eden asked. Hannah paused her cooking. Just then, her husband entered the room.

“Hello everyone,” he said.

“Michael, the children have just asked me a very interesting question.”

“Oh? And what would that be?”

“We want to know about our real mother,” Sage said.

“Ah. I see. Let’s talk after breakfast.”

“Okay, Dad,” Eden said. All four of them ate together and spent time talking about school, work, the weather, and other simple topics. After they finished eating, Hannah collected and cleaned the dishes while the twins climbed up to their bedroom and changed. Now ready, they walked back downstairs and sat on the couch in the living room.

“So,” Michael began. “Gosh, I knew this day would come and I’m still ill-prepared,” he mumbled to Hannah.

“It’s okay, honey,” Hannah said.

“All right, well, where to begin?”

“I can start if that would help.”

“Sure. After all, the story of how we adopted you kids begins with you, Hannah.”

“Right. Okay. Your real mother’s name was Mirror Juno Graves. She was the daughter of Dr. Adam Graves, your grandfather. They lived in the city of Showell in Trueca, if you know where that is.”

“That’s not too far from here!” Eden said.

“That’s right.” Hannah smiled. “Anyways, I held you both while Michael talked to Adam about adopting you.”

“What did she look like?” Sage asked.

“We didn’t see her for long, but she was young, only in her late teens. Her eyes were purple; I remember that the most. She was beautiful but sad. And she was crying while we talked. She didn’t tell me much, but she did say that you, Eden, looked just like your father,” Hannah said. Eden looked down at his hands for a moment, then smiled a little and hugged himself. Michael then picked up where Hannah left off.

“I talked to Adam while Hannah talked to Mirror. He wanted to take care of you, but he’d been severely injured in a factory accident and became physically disabled. He loved you both very much,” Michael said.

“And Mirror did too,” Hannah said.

“Why did she give us away?” Eden asked.

“She wouldn’t say. She was still quite young for a mother, so I figured that was part of it. Honestly, we... didn’t know much about her and her father’s situation.”

“What about our Dad?” Sage asked. Hannah and Michael looked at each other, then back at her.

“Sage, honey... Your father...” Hannah began. How could she tell them the truth? She didn’t know the whole of it; only that he’d been brutally murdered.

“He unfortunately is no longer in the picture,” Michael said.

“Oh.”

“Anyways,” Hannah continued, “was there anything else you wanted to know?”

“Do you have a picture of them?” Eden asked.

“Yes, actually. Let’s go look at your baby books.”

“Okay.”

Sage and Eden followed Michael and Hannah to their bedroom while Michael reached under the bed and pulled out a box. Inside were two scrapbooks, one with Sage’s name and one with Eden’s name.

“They should be in here,” Michael said. He opened Sage’s book first. On the inside cover, a loose picture fell out. Michael picked it up, then handed it to the twins. A young woman and a middle-aged man’s face peered out at them. Her purple eyes reflected the sunlight. Her son was

in her arms. Beside her, he was in his wheelchair, the baby girl in his arms. Both of them were smiling. His green eyes were crinkled at the corners. Sage and Eden looked at each other, then at their parents. They continued looking through their baby books. Little did the four of them know that Mirror had connected with her children telepathically.

\*\*\*

Mirror silently slid out of bed and entered the bathroom. She looked at her reflection. Her abdomen had stretch marks coursing across it like lightning. Luckily, she still kept her athletic figure by exercising and maintaining a healthy diet. She rubbed her eyes and stepped into the shower. She had to visit her father today. He had been in the Charity Medical Center ever since Mirror's twins were born. She finished in the shower and dried herself off, then put on a warm red turtleneck sweater and jeans. As she dried her hair, she realized it was nearly Christmas. Castor celebrated Christmas with her many years ago. He would always get her the most amazing gifts. No. No more thinking about him. Go see Dad. That's all she had to do today. She finished drying her hair, then braided it, put on her coat, and left.

After driving to the medical center, she made her way to the front desk.

"Hello. Who are you here to see?"

"Adam Graves."

"Ah, yes. He's in his room right now. You may go see him."

"Thank you."

Mirror walked down the familiar hallway to her father's room. She knocked on the door.

"Come on in," Dr. Graves' voice called from behind the door. Mirror entered the room.

"Hey, Dad."

"Ah! Hello, Mirror. You look lovely today."

“Thank you.”

“How are you doing, sweetheart?”

“I’m okay.”

“Just okay? What’s on your mind?”

“Nothing. It’s just...”

“What is it?”

“It’s been 10 years now.” She looked away. Adam’s smile faded. He sighed.

“So it would seem. Have you heard anything back from Hannah or Michael?”

“Yes.”

“Did you answer?”

“No. I... I’ve been too afraid to.”

“What did they tell you?”

“They said I could visit at any time, but...”

“But?”

“I don’t know if they’d want to see me.”

“I have a letter that says differently.”

“You do?!”

“I received it this morning,” Adam said. He held the unopened letter in his hand. Mirror walked over and sat on the edge of his bed.

“What does it say?”

“I haven’t read it. Here.” He gave her the letter. She gently opened it and read it.

\*\*\*

*Ms. Mirror,*

*How are you? I hope you are well. It's incredible to think that we met ten years ago. Michael and I are reaching out to let you know that Sage and Eden have asked about you and their father. They want to meet you or have you meet them. They're really wonderful children. I know there's so much you never wanted to tell us, and that's okay. We would love to have you and your father visit for Christmas. I bet that would be the greatest gift we could give them. Anyways, just know that we care about you and your Dad. You know where to find us if you wish to stop by.*

*Happy Holidays!*

*Hannah, Michael, Sage, and Eden*

\*\*\*

Mirror's eyes filled with tears upon finishing the letter.

"I... I'm h-horrible..."

"Why do you think that?" Adam asked.

"They've been s-so nice to me... and I've been h-hiding from them."

"It's okay, sweetheart. Here." Adam sat up slightly and gestured for a hug. Mirror leaned over and hugged him. Tears slid down her face and onto his shoulder. Right then and there, she made a promise: she would go see them at Christmas, no matter what.

## CONCLUSION

Welcome back! Hopefully, by now, you have a good idea of how to play Writer Quest. I know I learned a lot after completing this project! If you do end up choosing a career in publishing and editing, I hope you remember this guide and all the others stored away for your benefit. I just have some final words of advice for you.

First, you should read all of the binders you can on this career field. There are so many good ones stored away from past students I have never and may never get to meet. They all worked so hard to introduce you to a scary part of life and how to navigate it. Such has been my own purpose in creating this binder of mine. Second, interact with as many people in your life as you can; not just your professors and classmates, but also your friends and family. I don't know about you, but everyone in my life has been so supportive of me and all of my accomplishments. I truly wish that you have that same kind of system in your own life. If not, just remember that I am here for you, even if we never meet. You are wonderful and I think you can do anything you put your mind to. Third, be sure to take care of yourself and listen to what your heart tells you. It's almost always right about everything. Whether you're looking for love or searching for your lifelong career, do what makes you happy and pursue your passions and dreams!

I am quite proud of this project, though it took me so long to complete. I have included pictures of pages of websites I visited since you can't open links on a piece of paper. All of the sources are also listed on the last page. I would be sure to check them all out! As always, if you have any more questions, ask people around you and search the internet. We are lucky to have so much information available to us in our modern era. I promise, there are no stupid questions. I have anxiety, so I worried about that all the time, but trust me. It's better to know than to assume.

Sadly, this is where I leave you. Whether you are graduating in the winter or the spring, I wish you the best of luck in all your endeavors! If you're an aspiring author as well, I do hope to see your books in stores someday!

Congrats!

Madie Trolinger

## Works Cited

- “All Freelance Writing - Your Secret to Freelance Writing Success.” *All Freelance Writing*, 15 Mar. 2013, <https://allfreelancewriting.com/>.
- “Copy Editor Job Description.” *Glassdoor*, <https://www.glassdoor.com/Job-Descriptions/Copy-Editor.htm>. Accessed 10 Dec. 2022.
- “Find the Best Global Talent.” *Fiverr.Com*, <https://www.fiverr.com/>. Accessed 9 Dec. 2022.
- “Hachette Book Group.” *Hachette Book Group*, <https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/>. Accessed 7 Dec. 2022.
- “HarperCollins Publishers: World-Leading Book Publisher.” *HarperCollins*, <https://www.harpercollins.com/>. Accessed 7 Dec. 2022.
- Hire Freelancers & Find Freelance Jobs Online*. <https://www.freelancer.com/>. Accessed 9 Dec. 2022.
- “Home.” *Macmillan*, <https://us.macmillan.com/>. Accessed 7 Dec. 2022.
- “---.” *News and Corporate Information about Simon & Schuster, Inc.*, <http://about.simonandschuster.biz>. Accessed 7 Dec. 2022.
- “Penguin Random House.” *PenguinRandomhouse.Com*, <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/>. Accessed 7 Dec. 2022.
- Publishing Industry: Career, Outlook and Education Information*. <https://collegegrad.com/industries/publishing#conditions>. Accessed 9 Dec. 2022.
- “The Stages of the Publishing Process - Enago.” *Enago Global*, <https://www.enago.com/author-hub/the-stages-of-the-publishing-process>. Accessed 9 Dec. 2022.



“Upwork | The World’s Work Marketplace.” *Upwork*, <https://www.upwork.com/>. Accessed 9 Dec. 2022.

*What Does an Editor Do? Role & Responsibilities.*

[https://www.glassdoor.com/Career/editor-career\\_KO0,6.htm](https://www.glassdoor.com/Career/editor-career_KO0,6.htm). Accessed 10 Dec. 2022.

*What Does an Editorial Assistant Do? Role & Responsibilities.*

[https://www.glassdoor.com/Career/editorial-assistant-career\\_KO0,19.htm](https://www.glassdoor.com/Career/editorial-assistant-career_KO0,19.htm). Accessed 10 Dec. 2022.

“Women’s National Book Association (WNBA).” *WNBA-Books*, <https://wnba-books.org/>.

Accessed 9 Dec. 2022.