

Writers as Matchmakers

How do I decide where to submit my
work?

Writers are Romantics

- We live in a world of imagination and ideals.
- My book is my baby.
- We have dreams for our books.
- We want a simple life full of writing time.
- If I wanted to be an accountant, I would have gone to business school.



**The Book Fairy
Is Not Coming**

Reality:

Your Publisher Needs to Make a Living

- Even Catholic publishers have families (or religious brothers and sisters) to feed.
- There is no “next book” if the current book doesn’t sell.
- Very few people get wildly rich in publishing. But many people do make a living.
- Making a living requires good business decisions.

To find the right publisher, I need to know . . .

HOW DOES A PUBLISHER STAY ALIVE?

A Publisher Stays in Business by **Meeting the Needs of Readers**

- Publishers specialize in producing one or a few types of books particularly well.
- Even large publishers specialize within each business unit.
- Publishers specialize in getting books into the hands of their type of readers.

If Books Were Food . . .

- You wouldn't order Chinese at a pizza joint.
- You wouldn't expect a five-star restaurant to have the same menu as McDonald's.
- The vegetarians don't serve steak. No matter how nicely you ask.

Choosing the right publisher means matching your recipe to their menu.

Self-Publishers are Publishers

If you make the decision to self-publish, you will be doing the same things publishers do:

- Specialize in producing your type of book.
- Get your book into the hands of your type of reader.

Self-Publishing is Not an Escape Hatch

When choosing where to submit your work,
consider the decision to self-publish as part of
evaluating one of many potential publishers.

Ask yourself the same questions about yourself
as you would about any other publisher.



How do I find my true love?

To find the right publisher, I need to know . . .

WHAT IS MY BOOK?

Make a writing friend right now.

- Introduce yourself to one or two discussion partners.
- Tell your partner(s) about the book you'd like to publish.
- Get ready to help each other problem solve.
- 2 minutes.

To find the right publisher, I need to know . . .

**WHO IS THE READER FOR MY
BOOK?**

Who is my reader?

- Your would-be publisher specializes in reaching certain readers.
- No publisher reaches every person on the planet.
- You are looking for the publisher who serves the type of people who would most love your book.

Examples of Readers

- Teenage girls who like romance, love science fiction, and hate vampires.
- Cash-strapped single mothers who need to figure out why the dishwasher is leaking.
- Boys who want to study martial arts, but their parents won't sign them up for classes.
- Priests who blush when you mention "NFP".



A good story is an art, but it's readable art.

Ellen Gable writes for ladies who want to curl up with a good story. It's not about high literary art. It's about a few hours of good entertainment.

With your new writing friends:

- Think about your book.
- Decide: Who are my readers?
- There may be more than one group of readers.

Example: Tom Clancy – primary market = Men who like military action and intrigue. Secondary markets: Compulsive readers, bored teenagers . . .

Focus on your primary markets. 2 minutes.

To find the right publisher I need to know . . .

WHERE DO MY READERS SHOP?

Places People Buy Books – Online:

- Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Powell's
- Major Catholic suppliers (Catholic Company . . .)
- Publisher or Specialty distributor (Rainbow Resources, CHC, Seton, Kolbe, Taunton Press, etc..)
- Specialty online retailers. (3 Rivers Archery, Williams Sonoma, etc.)
- Direct from celebrity author.

Places People Buy Books – Via Catalog:

- Publishers' circulars (Ignatius Press, TAN/St. Benedict, MTF . . .)
- Books in specialty merchandise catalogs: Fishing, quilting, swimming, toys, etc.
- Educational and specialty bookstore catalogs (Rainbow Resources, Kolbe Academy, Taunton Press)

Sneak into the office and see what's shoved under that stack of files.

Places People Buy Books – In Person:

- Big box book stores
- Independent book stores
- Catholic bookstore or church gift shop
- Museum shops, visitors' centers
- Hardware store, Garden store, Sporting Goods
- WalMart, Grocery store (Tom Clancy, Guns, Inspirational, Cosmo, Crock-Pot)
- Health food store (alternative health, religion, nutrition, cooking)
- Club house or gym (tennis, golf, martial arts, etc.)
- Special Events, Conferences



Bob Jones University Press!

Sells well at historical reenactments. Southern Conservative Christian Parents trust BJU.

To find the right publisher, I need to know . . .

**WHERE DO MY READERS BUY MY
KIND OF BOOK?**

Your readers have go-to locations for the types of books they buy.

- DREs buy school supplies at WalMart, but not religion textbooks.
- Catholic fishermen do not visit The Catholic Company for technical fishing advice.
- Lowes and Home Depot serve readers of romance novels . . . When they need light bulbs or 2x4's.

Stores know what kinds of customers they have, and what those customers buy *at their store*.

With your new writings friends decide:

Where do my readers shop for my kind of books?

- At what kinds of stores do they browse for books like yours?
- What kinds of catalogs carry books like yours? Do catalogs come to the house? Office? Clubhouse?
- What kinds of websites do your readers visit? Do they buy books at Amazon or at AllThingsFishing.com?

Five minutes.

To find the right publisher I need to know . . .

**WHICH PUBLISHERS SERVE THE
PLACES MY READERS SHOP?**

Scout Your Territory

- Visit the bookstores where your readers shop. Write down the names of the publishers you see there.
- Request catalogs from distributors in your specialty.
- Browse the library for titles on your topic. Note the publishers.

Talk to Bookstore Owners and Managers.

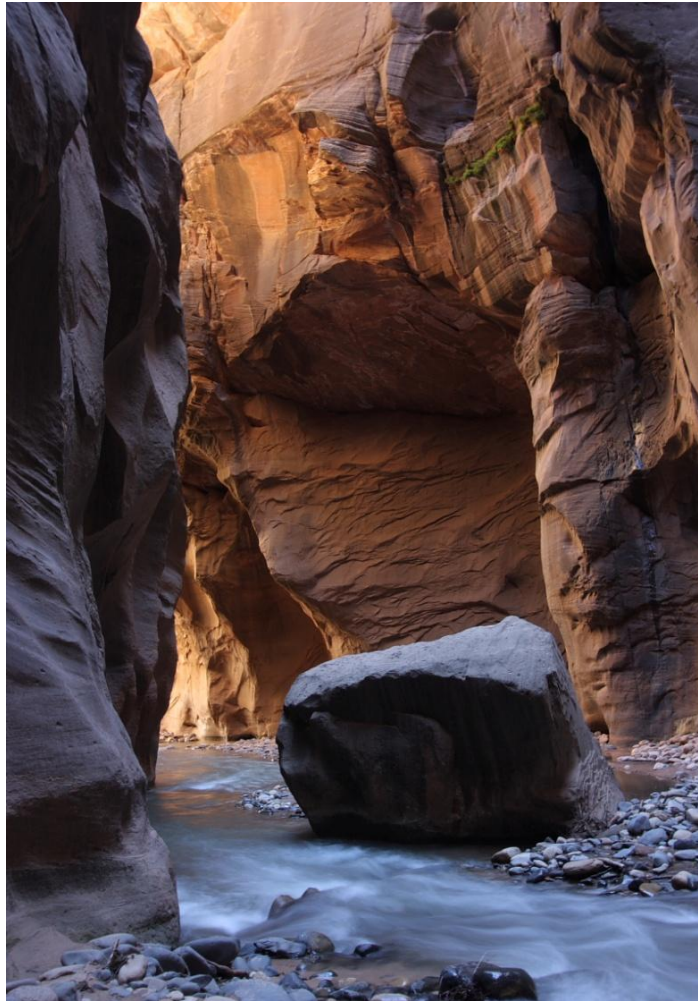
Start a conversation. The owner or manager of your local bookstore can tell you which publishers give them the best terms.

Example: 23rd vs. Liguori.

Publishers specialize in certain types of distribution.

CMN = Scout's Goldmine

- Visit publishers' booths and see what types of books each publisher carries.
- Ask around about distribution – direct to parish? Independent Catholic bookstores? Big box?
- Keep your ears open for ideas from unexpected quarters.



The Scary Part: Asking for a Date

What's around the corner if I submit here? Tips for reducing the chance that you'll meet angry hateful monsters on your long, lonely trek to find a publisher.

To find the right publisher, I must know . . .

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT SUBMISSION
GUIDELINES FOR MY PUBLISHER?**



Look for the tiny print in the bottom corner.

Submission guidelines can be tricky to find, but they are there.

Submissions Guidelines Rule #1

Just because your publisher has printed this genre before, does not mean they want your genre now.

Read and Obey.

Submission Guidelines Rule #2

Stay focused.

- Literary fiction is not genre fiction.
- Epic metered verse is not modern free-form verse.
- A spy novel with a love interest is radically different from a romance novel with a spy in it.

Every rejection hurts. Reduce the quantity of your pain by picking publishers who closely match the kind of work you do.

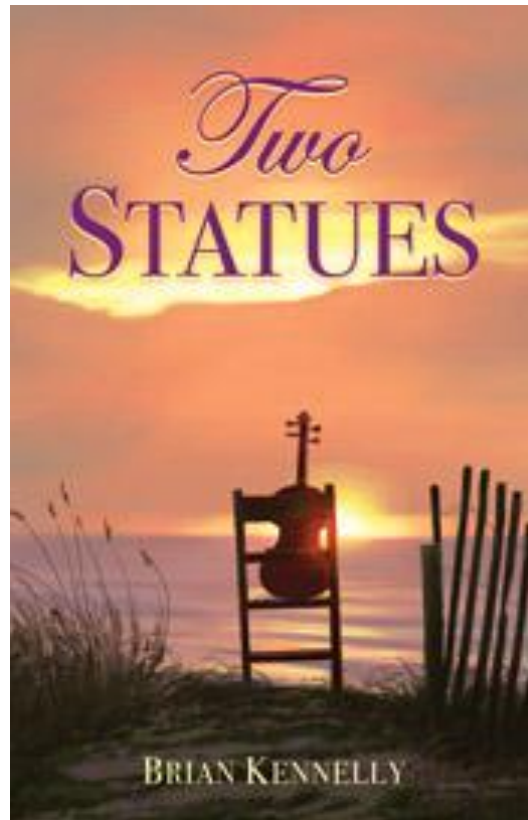
Personality matters. Pay attention to unwritten guidelines.

Submission Guidelines Rule #3

Show a little respect.

Do not submit a “reach” submission to a publisher unless they have expressly told you they want to see it.

In other words: Ignatius Press does not want your paranormal fishing romance epic poem.



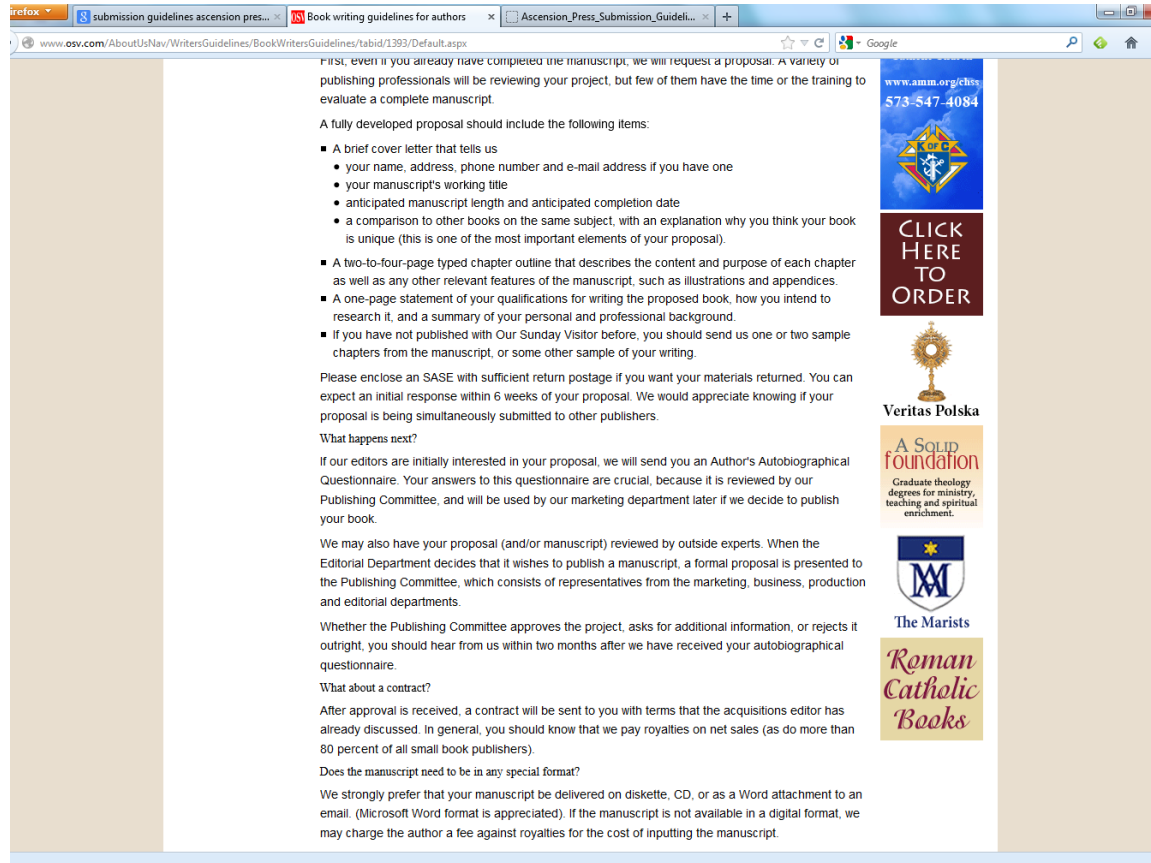
“We do not publish poetry, fiction, short stories . . .”

You are not Brian Kennelly. Genuine relationships + lots of re-writes => the occasional acceptance of an out-of-genre work. Do not submit your fiction to TAN unless they ask you. Don't cold-call a reach submission.

And when you submit . . .

You have to follow the publisher's rules.

Read and obey. Read and obey. Read and obey.
Read and obey. Read and obey. Read and
obey. Read and obey. Read and obey. Read
and obey. Read and obey. Read and obey.
Read and obey. Read and obey. Read and
obey. Read and obey. Read and obey . . .



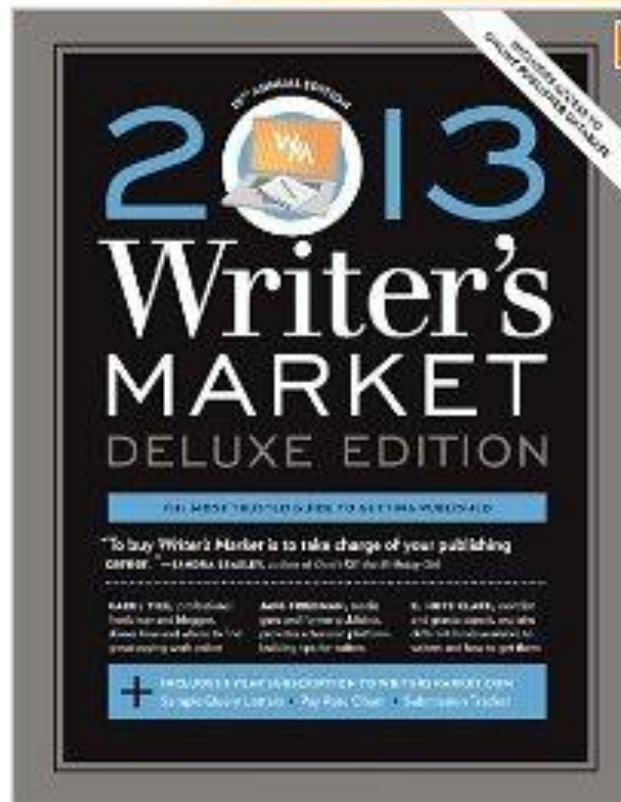
Do it exactly like they tell you.

(Example – OSV's Writer's Guidelines.)

To find the right publisher I need to know . . .

**WHY WON'T ANYONE ACCEPT MY
BOOK?**

Click to **LOOK INSIDE!**



Five pounds of publishers, and still can't find one? Now what?

Reality Check #1:

How Good is my Book?

- Pretty good books are worthwhile books.
- Some publishers will only print the best of the best.
- Be honest with yourself about the caliber of your writing.
- It is okay to be a growing writer producing an early work for a smaller audience.

Reality Check #2:

Platform Matters

- Barak Obama can afford to be a lousy writer.

Editors and ghost-writers must be paid. The less name-drawing power you have, the less your publisher can afford to invest in editing behind you.

- The Pope can get away with long sentences.

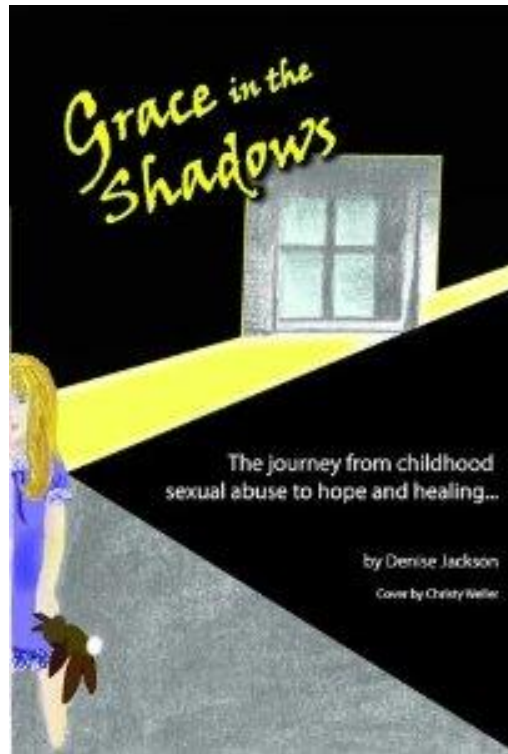
The less name-drawing power you have, the less people are willing to work to make sense of your message.

The best way for ordinary writers to build a platform is to write very, very well.

Reality Check #3:

Some Markets are Emerging Markets

- Catholic fiction is an emerging market. It is still hard to find publishers for Catholic fiction.
- Unusual genres are hard to sell. Center-of-genre Sci-Fi, Mystery, and romance have a large, hungry market. You have to be a much better writer to sell to a quirky genre.
- Sensitive topics are . . . Sensitive.
- Poetry is a very difficult market.



Poetry, memoirs, practical advice . . . An unusual combination.

Self-Publishing can be the right choice for very personal works.

Should I Self-Publish?

Do I need the services of a publisher?

- Editing
- Cover Design
- Layout
- Marketing

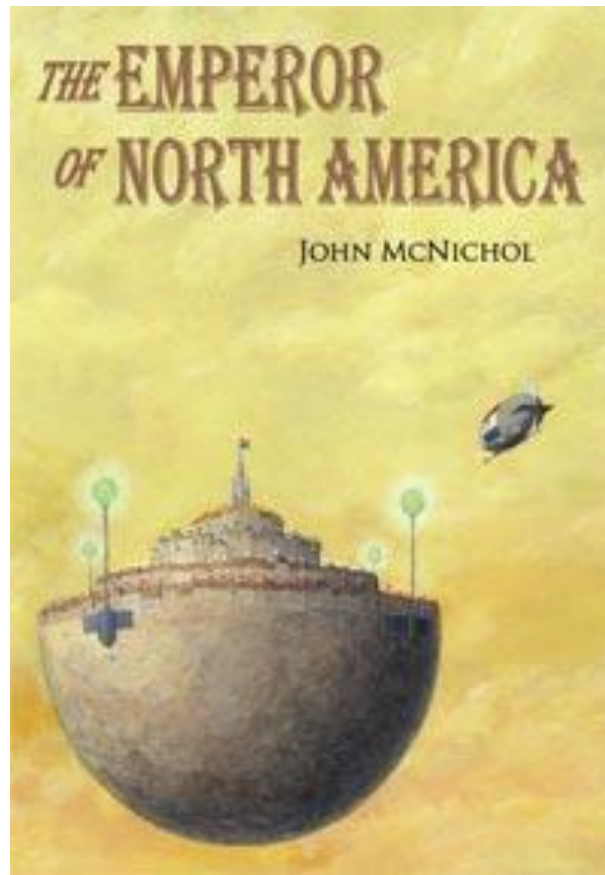
Can I reach my readers?

- Kindle-genre books
- Circuit Speakers

Self-Publishing as a last resort?

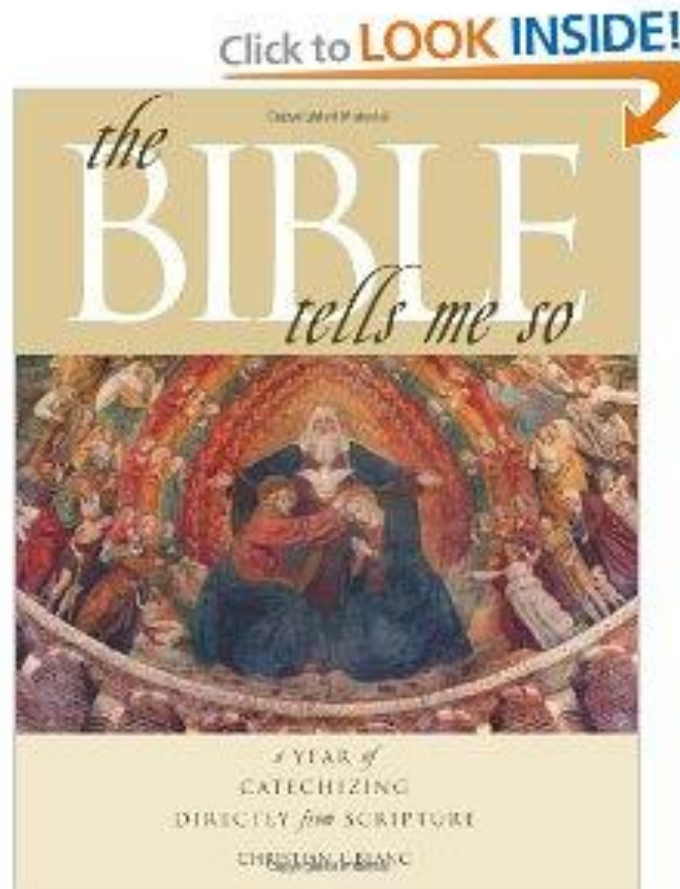
You are not a bad person if you self-publish for the simple reason that you have no other choice.

Writing is a hard market. It's okay to start small.



Quirky Specialty Fiction. Your readers thank you.

Emperor, released with a hybrid-publisher, is the sequel to *Tripods Attack*, from Sophia Institute Press. After *Emperor*, McNichol published *The King's Gambit* with Hillside press. Next on plate: Text for a Catholic action-adventure graphic novel.



Good Writing is the Best Way to Build a New Market.

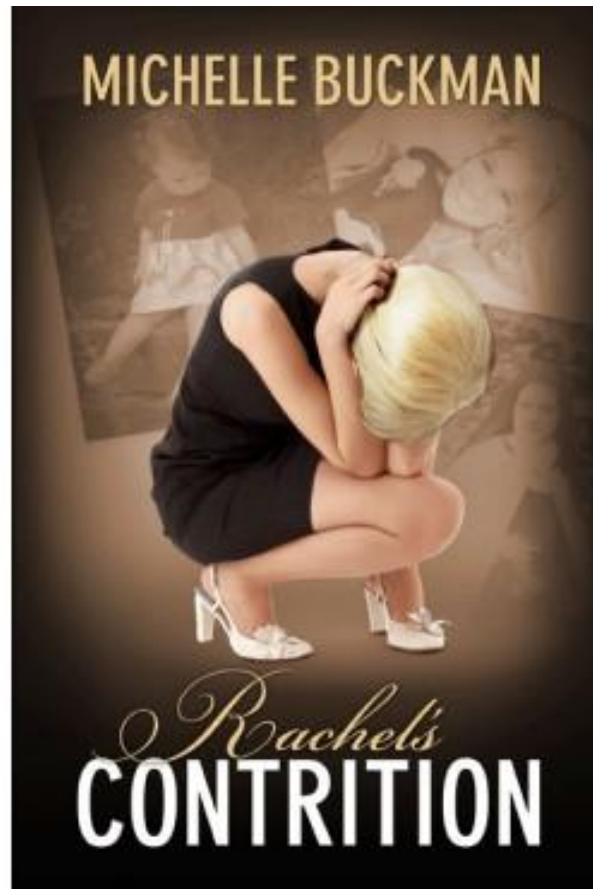
First came the book, then came the platform.

To find the right publisher I need to know . . .

**HOW MUCH AM I WILLING TO CHANGE
MY BOOK TO PLEASE A PUBLISHER?**

Am I willing to . . . ?

- Edit word choice, action, or setting to meet publisher's guidelines for style and market-appeal?
 - Example: No smoking!
- Change the size of my book? Add chapters? Remove chapters?
- Shift my topic to specialize in my publisher's market?
 - Catholic vs. Christian vs. Secular?
 - Make a character older or younger?
 - Add a sidekick or romantic interest?



Good Catholic fiction is worth the wait.

Michelle Buckman built her career writing Catholic stories, but editing them for the general Christian Fiction market.

Book by Book

Choose your publisher based on the readers for *this* book.

Have an open mind about what kinds of publishers might be willing to accept your work.



Catholic writers do horror.

Karina Fabian, the least sexy writer at Damnation Press.

You are the Author. You decide.

- Who are my readers?
- Where do my readers buy books?
- Which publishers serve my readers?
- What changes am I willing to make?
- What are the most important goals for my book?



Be Your Own Book Fairy.

It's a lot more work. But it gets your book into the reader's hands.