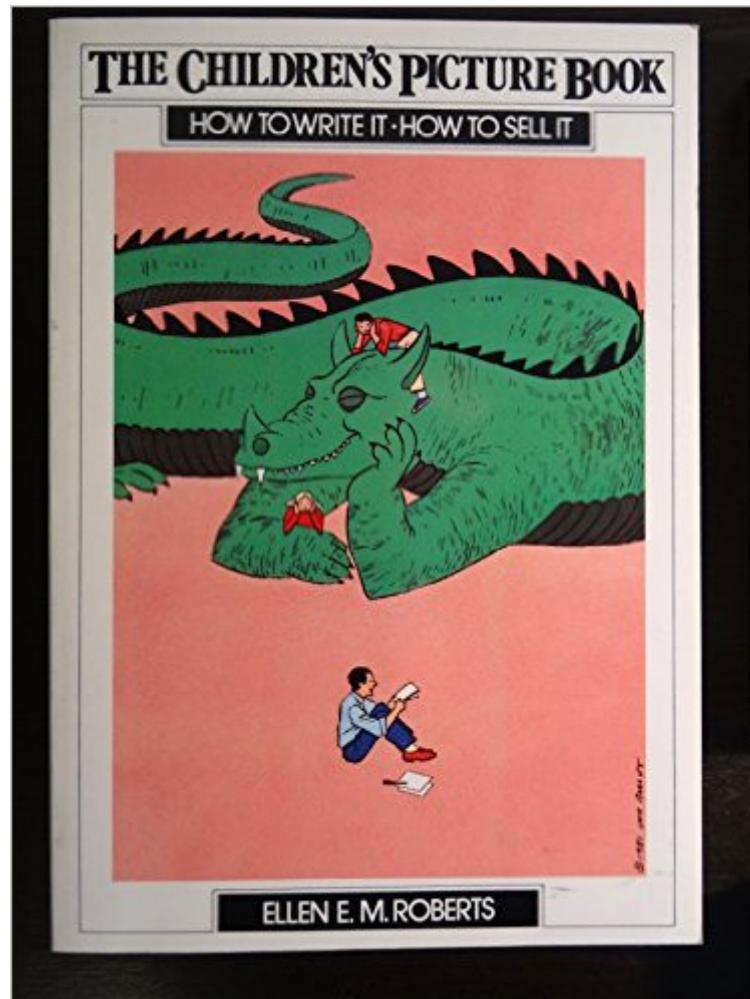


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The Children's Picture Book: How To Write It, How To Sell It



Synopsis

The Children's Picture Book: How to Write It, How to Sell It

Book Information

Paperback: 189 pages

Publisher: Writers Digest Books (March 1987)

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Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (4 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I ran across this listing and the one other review offered for it when I was checking to see if by any chance the book was still available. I was delighted to find it was. Yet the first reviewer was correct: the sections on selling your book are now in important ways dated. But back in 1953 when I was trying to enter a world about which I knew nothing and in which I had no friends yet, the "mentoring editor" voice of an experienced, wise, and plain-speaking editor like this work's author was exactly what I needed. I ignored the book's advice on how to write a picture book. (I was confident of my familiarity with the genre -- I must have read over a 1000 picture books aloud to my children by that time -- and sure I had a publishable text.) But I knew I needed to learn how to find this story a publishing home so I could share it with others. I was so naive I had thought it might help if I had a artist friend create illustrations for my tale. Fortunately, this friend went straight to the library, found this very book there, and showed me the passage in it that explained with crystal-clear logic why offering my text and another newcomer's pictures together would be a terrible idea, diminishing chances of acceptance. "You have a great story," she advised me, "and I don't need to be its illustrator. Just go for it!" So I read the whole book, learned how to research publishers and present my work, and sure enough, within a year I had found a publisher for my story, and signed my first book contract. Back then authors writing for adults had to use agents, but writers for children didn't

really need one. They had little chance of getting an experienced children's agent until they already had a successful book or two out.

Those who can't afford the latest how-to-write-it publications on picture books will do well to purchase a used copy of Ellen Roberts book and absorb the practical information she shares. It's based on twelve years' experience as an editor and publisher. Some methods for producing stories that editors can't resist haven't changed any more than our methods for teaching a child to walk. This author names many cut-and-dried rules, regulations and formulas that have been successful in the past...and gives examples of authors who followed them. But she also is quick to state that there is more than one correct way to write for kids. Beginning writers have to start somewhere, with some direction, and I recommend the first half of Ellen's book as a guide for doing that. The second half deals with getting published and that's where the rules of the game have changed. But there's still worthwhile information to be found in these pages. The end matter has an excellent glossary of production terms which is followed by an extensive bibliography of the author's selection of the best children's picture books published beginning with THE TALE OF PETER RABBIT, 1902. Last week I pulled this book from my personal library to pass on to another writer. Since my next project is a picture book, I decided to reread it first. I am glad I did. Speaking as the author of a series of eight wildlife picture books that have sold 130,000 copies, I highlighted or flagged a number of passages that reminded me of things I never knew or had forgotten. One had to do with not being to move on in a story one is writing. This author says if you "are stuck and can't squeeze another pertinent word out of your head without changing the subject, retype your previous sentence.

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