

Part One

*Winning the Hearts of
Agents*

By Hope Bolinger



Chapter 1

Introduction to Winning the Hearts of Agents

This book first started as a class I presented at a writing conference.

I'd noticed how publishing tends to have four different gatekeepers—agents, publishers, editors, and readers/reviewers. And all of them appear to want different things. Or do they?

The class walked conferees through how to win the hearts of these gatekeepers and create a book that checked all the boxes, increasing the aspiring author's chances of getting published.

But before the conference, this book began with experience. I've done all four roles in the industry.

- **Agent**—I worked at two different agencies over the span of four years, helping seventy books find their forever homes at publishing houses.
- **Publisher**—I worked on the pub board of several publishers. Now, I am the acquisitions editor of End Game Press.

- **Editor**—I freelance edited the works of two hundred-plus authors, including bestsellers, such as Jerry B. Jenkins and Michelle Medlock Adams. Working as a developmental editor, copy editor, and proofreader, I've spanned the gamut in terms of experience.
- **Reader/Reviewer**—For four years, I served as a reviewer for a library association. As an avid reader, I continue to read and review books.

When Linda Fulkerson, who wrote the publisher section of this book, suggested I turn my presentation into a book, I thought, “Why not?”

When I first dove into the industry as a writer, I had no idea which publishing professional wanted what. It seemed like agents wanted authors with platform. And publishers? Well, they asked for books that hit market trends. Editors desired polished manuscripts, and readers begged for something entirely different.

So, why not ask the industry professionals to lay it out for writers in one book?

Why not hear from an agent, a publisher, an editor, and a reviewer about how to woo them and their industry colleagues?

Linda and I reached out to Rowena Kuo, an editor, and Carrie Schmidt, a reader/reviewer, and this book was born.

We sincerely hope this guide helps you in your publishing journey. Although every industry professional operates differently, and at first glance, it appears as though each one wants something different, we are actually all searching for the same thing.

We're rooting for you, and we hope this book gives you the next steps you need to win over the hearts of the publishing industry gatekeepers, time and time again.