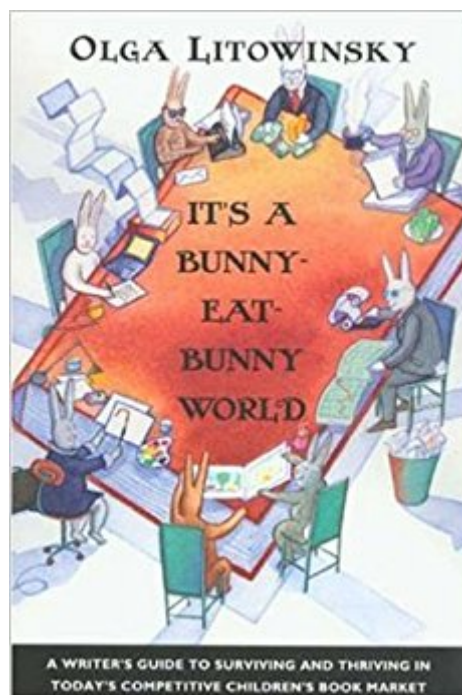




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# It's A Bunny-Eat-Bunny World: A Writer's Guide To Surviving And Thriving In Today's Competitive Children's Book Market



## Synopsis

The business of publishing books for children has changed monumentally over the last decade. Large companies have merged and grown, while well-established imprints vanished one after another. In this tough climate, it's becoming harder and harder to break into the industry. Olga Litowinsky has interviewed children's book editors, agents, and experts in the field and shares their up-to-the-minute advice about what editors are looking for today. Armed with this insider information, aspiring writers will be able to distinguish themselves and succeed in today's highly competitive marketplace. *It's a Bunny-Eat-Bunny World* gives invaluable guidance on how to write and submit a manuscript, revealing what is most important from an editor's point of view. Expanding on her previous book, *Writing and Publishing Books for Children in the 1990s*, Olga Litowinsky includes tips on how an author can edit, market, and publicize his or her own work, with new information on how to deal with agents, editors, contracts, and writers' rights. This no-nonsense guide is the definitive resource for all children's book writers—novice and veteran alike.

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## Book Information

Paperback: 228 pages

Publisher: Walker & Company (May 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0802775233

ISBN-13: 978-0802775238

Product Dimensions: 9 x 6 x 0.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 15 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,367,861 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #17 in [Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Writing > Children's Literature](#) #1288 in [Books > Textbooks > Reference > Writing Skills](#) #4241 in [Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Literature > Creative Writing & Composition](#)

## Customer Reviews

*Bunny-Eat-Bunny World: A Writer's Guide to Surviving and Thriving in Today's Competitive Children's Book Market.* Using rabbit metaphors, the longtime children's book editor begins with a brief history of children's book publishing in the U.S. ("The Bunny Also Rises") and covers brass tacks, including finding the right publisher ("Hop to It!"); points to helpful organizations; and

addresses such issues as rights ("Splitting Hares"). Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Expanding on her excellent *Writing and Publishing Books for Children* in the 1990s (Walker, 1992), Litowinsky includes timely information on current and emerging trends; the marketplace; and useful tips on writing, editing, and marketing a children's book. Novice writers will find answers to many questions about getting published; suggestions for becoming better at their craft; and practical advice as to when, where, and how to submit material. A former children's book editor, Litowinsky has also worked as a literary agent and has published children's books in her own right; her insider insights and candor provide reliable, helpful guideposts for anyone interested in the field. For this reason, the book is also of interest to librarians for its lucid overview of the history and future of children's book publishing, including electronic publishing, in America. Readers can discover why books go out of print so quickly, what defines and fuels contemporary markets (library, educational, religious, novelty, etc.), what packagers do, and the difference between a book doctor and an editor. This is precisely the volume to have on hand for the patron who thinks writing and publishing kids' books is easy: it will quickly put that erroneous idea to rest. A useful and definitive guide. Susan Patron, Los Angeles Public Library Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

OK, I'm exaggerating. There aren't any scenes of cute li'l bunnies ripping out each other's throats, but there ARE true and sometimes terrifying tales of what goes on behind the scenes in the children's book trade. Having seen the biz from three sides (author, editor, agent), Olga Litowinsky gives us a frank, refreshing, and often scary alternative to the glut of "Read this and you WILL get published, GUARANTEED!" tomes crowding the shelves. From editors who steal ideas for successful new book series to editorial meetings where potentially great books meet their end, "It's a Bunny-Eat-Bunny World" takes the reader behind closed doors to see the stuff we're not supposed to see. The book also follows the publishing adventures of a fictionalized author selling his first book and showing the first-time author what to expect after signing on the dotted line. Often, it's another several months of even harder work than writing the manuscript for the book. Beyond being a guide for writers, "It's a Bunny-Eat-Bunny World" will also give parents, teachers, librarians and anyone else who buys children's books a fascinating insider's view. Once you read it, you'll realize that every cute li'l bunny on the cover of a children's book had to claw his way there.

If you are just learning to write for publication, you need this book. Though it's Out-of-Print, you can buy a paperback copy for a penny plus postage. My first book was published in the mid-seventies, but I still had much to learn about the business of writing and finding a publisher. In the early nineties, I discovered this author's book, *WRITING AND PUBLISHING BOOKS FOR CHILDREN*. It answered many of my newbie questions and moved me forward into the list of authors of children's books. Then in 2001 this experienced former editor and author of children's books, expanded on her first book to cover the entire publishing process. Today I have 32 published books, thanks to much of what I learned from the "bunny book." Children's book publishing has changed considerably since my first book was published and it's a challenge to keep up with what is going on. But you need to learn the basics first. I re-read this book last week and found my time well spent. Granted some things have changed, but if you are just starting out, I highly recommend you get your own copy, sit down with your highlighter, and read it carefully. Once you have absorbed its pages, you will be ready to move on to *Writing for Children 201*. -Hope Irvin Marston, author of *EYE ON THE IDITAROD: AISLING'S QUEST*.

I have been writing children's books and articles about children's books for approximately twenty years. (I am a former teacher and school librarian.) When I began writing full time, I read *THE WRITER* and *WRITER'S DIGEST* cover-to-cover each month. And I ordered many of the books those magazines published about writing, preparing mss., querying, marketing etc. I knew that I knew nothing about building characters and plots and less about the publishing industry. Three years after beginning my new career, I was fortunately offered a contract by Franklin Watts for a nonfiction book, *PIRATES*, now out of print. Well, the publishing industry has stayed the same in some ways but has become even more difficult to break into these days. As much as I've learned about publishing companies over the years, *IT'S A BUNNY-EAT-BUNNY WORLD* gave me insight into many things I was unaware of. Ms. Litowsky has been an editor, agent, and author and provides a realistic inside look into publishing houses. (I have read at least 3 of her well-written insightful books.) I am grateful for the new information she gave me. But when she revises this *BUNNY BOOK*, I hope she will add a chapter on the accuracy of and BN.com sales rankings and best-selling lists as well as book tracking information. Thank you, Ms. Litowsky. K.J. McWilliams, author of *The Journal of Darien Dexter Duff, an Emancipated Slave*, *The Diary of a Slave Girl*, *Ruby Jo*, and *The Journal of Leroy Jeremiah Jones, a Fugitive Slave*

While there's some good material in this book, there's a lot that I skimmed over, and could have been omitted. Litowinsky seems eager to prove that she's earned her way (and she has). But she does this by writing pages on subjects that are of dubious value to the budding author. For example, we all know of the massive numbers of mergers in this field, but the book droned on for several pages about who bought whom, most of which will be out of date by the time it is read. Again, near the end, there's a lot about the production process that seemed less than valuable, with the one tidbit about books with multiple of 32 pages buried in a bunch of minutiae. The guidelines for composition and editing are superb, though, and alone merit the reading of this book.

Olga Litowinsky gives writers and aspiring writers exactly what they've long hoped for: a totally honest, realistic picture of children's book publishing with good, solid suggestions for submitting and promoting their books. She offers the evolution of children's book publishing from the early days, in which editors made publication choices, to the present time, in which marketing departments play a large part in the selection of what is published. In my opinion, this is the finest, most helpful book ever written for readers who are writers or who hope to be published children's book writers.

This is easily one of the best books available about writing for children. It provides a clear explanation about the factors that acquisition editors consider when evaluating manuscripts and explains how to avoid looking like one of those writers who believes that children will read anything so long as it is cute. It also shows how to make a submission look professional and describes the proper etiquette of approaching editors and agents. Several books are available about this subject but this one, in my opinion, gives the most specific, helpful, and realistic advice.

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