



# **Publish This Book: The Unbelievable True Story of How I Wrote, Sold and Published This Very Book**

*Stephen Markley*

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**From the author of *Ohio* (Best Books of Summer 2018 Selection in *Time*, *Vulture*, and the *New York Post*) comes a brilliant, hilarious, and deeply touching memoir that blows the roof off the genre.**

Fed up with the complicated quest of trying to get a book published, Stephen Markley decided to cut to the chase and simply write a memoir about trying to publish a book--this book, to be precise. It's the most "meta" experiment he's ever undertaken, and like a Mobius strip in book form, the concept is circular, self-indulgent, and--maybe, possibly, hopefully--brilliant.

For fans of Dave Eggers and David Sedaris, *Publish This Book* is the modern day saga of an idealistic, ambitious, audacious, unyielding young writer who is tired of waiting his turn. Like any work that claims gleefully to be about nothing, it's really about pretty much everything--sex, drugs, politics, pop-culture, ex-girlfriends and sexy vampires. From the hope of early adulthood to the rage of life's many (unavoidable) disappointments, it is a story of overcoming the obstacles and discovering a happy ending at last.

Most importantly, it's a story that will inspire readers to find their true voice in their work and in their life.

## **Praise for Stephen Markley:**

"Markley seems clever and funny, but it may be his "fire" that ultimately makes him worthwhile." -- *Literary Chicago*

"Compelling, emotionally resonant passages . . ." -- *Publishers Weekly*

"Markley is a knockout storyteller" -- *Kirkus Reviews*

## **Publish This Book: The Unbelievable True Story of How I Wrote, Sold and Published This Very Book Details**

Date : Published March 1st 2010 by Sourcebooks (first published February 16th 2010)

ISBN : 9781402229350

Author : Stephen Markley

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## **From Reader Review Publish This Book: The Unbelievable True Story of How I Wrote, Sold and Published This Very Book for online ebook**

### **Marsha says**

Stephen Markley is a twenty-something year old writing about his twenty-something year old life, ex-girlfriend, friends, roommates, jobs. But that was not interesting to me. What I did like about this book was the author's concept. He wrote this book about his attempts to try to get this book published as he was writing it. His concept was unique.

There are a lot of very funny moments in Markley's book. For instance, there is a long monologue about the controversy that followed him when he wrote for his college newspaper, wherein for a short time he became loathed for his bold opinionated views on some politicians.

I did enjoy the author's excessive use of footnotes mostly because I like footnotes and also because I thought it was part of the creative aspect that made this book unique.

However, I had higher hopes for Markley's book. It was disappointing to me in many ways. Twenty-something year olds might relate better than I, but to those who love to write and want to read more about Markley's process of trying to get his book published, that was the gravy of this book.

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### **Erin Christine says**

In a love/love relationship with this book, and not just saying so because Markley happens to be my friend.

Markley has crafted a story that will have you laughing, crying, and laughing until you cry, from the "back cover copy" through the acknowledgments. This story is hauntingly relevant to anyone who has ever been passionate about anything. Markley's voice puts a tangible weight to the nostalgia we all feel for both our past and for our as-yet-untold future. I enjoyed reading this book so much that I didn't want it to end- a true testimony to a book whose very existence gives away the ending. I wasn't reading on to find out WHAT happened; rather, I was reading to find out HOW things happened. I will continue to recommend this book to my twenty-something peers and beyond.

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### **Karen says**

Stephen Markley is self-indulgent. He knows it. The reader knows it. The very concept of the book screams it. But because he knows it, and he embraces it (in a style that calls to mind Dave Eggers' 'A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius') and peppers in amusing anecdotes that he unapologetically admits are barely relevant, it's almost charming.

It took me the better part of 480 pages to figure out if he was actually being charming, or if he was trying too hard. 'Publish This Book' is a book about Markley trying to publish a book. That book, in fact. The one

you're holding. The one you're reading (or about to read). You know how it ends, but it doesn't make the journey less interesting. It's a very cerebral, existential, high concept kind of thing, but it's told in such a down-to-earth manner that you don't feel like you're reading some guy's pseudo-intellectual rambling and wondering why you should care. It was hard at times though, to figure out if his voice was likable or just too full of himself.

There are times when he gets real, when he gets serious. Those are the moments when he shines, even as he's cracking jokes around the heavy issues. Those are the moments where his prose is spot-on, and you stop wondering why you should care. Those are the moments when he charms the pants off of you, and the self-aware self-indulgence is sweet. Those are the moments when I thought, "Okay, I think he's winning me over. I think this is a good book."

There are also times, though, where he gets gimmicky. For example, there is a point where he's driving to see an old friend when they're both in their hometown for Thanksgiving. Lamenting the dreary Ohio landscape, Markley decides to invent more exciting backgrounds, like a space station orbiting a black hole or the edge of a volcano. And he provides dialogue to match. This was a point where I thought, "Okay, cute, but what's the point? What the hell?" However, when he transferred back to the real scene -- he and his friend outside his friend's grandfather's house, he was serious and it was beautiful. All that crap preceding it? Not necessary. Occasionally the gimmicks work, with a stretch of the imagination. One chapter creates elaborately far-fetched "life experiences" as a vehicle for reflection on fabricated memoirs and the fine line memoirists tread when dealing with the truth. A little detracting, but overall amusing (and fitting). Another happens when he reconstructs e-mail correspondence with his writing mentor, in which he receives feedback on the book, and places the two of them in settings of literary importance. It doesn't flop, but it doesn't work quite as well as I think he would have hoped, and at times the lush setting distracted from the meat of the story. The gimmicks drag down the quirkiness of his self-deprecating charm and just makes it seem like he wants to be clever oh-so-badly. Too badly.

It's amusing, witty, and unlike anything else out there, and the weak points are outweighed by its strong points. I would read it again, finding (and being slightly irritated by) the same issues I had the first time. I also found the insight into the publishing process interesting. As an aspiring writer myself, I continually found myself alternately inspired ("If he can do it, I could, too!") and depressed ("Except everything, I mean everything, is a long shot!"). Markley is at his best when he lets his wit shine effortlessly or when he's tackling heavy subjects in his life, rather than when he's trying to dress things up with bells and whistles. A reader has to have patience getting through this book, and an appreciation for its style -- the one that says "I'm writing this for me. If you don't like it, or you don't care about what I have to say, don't read it. If you want to hear me talk endlessly about my life, my friends and my experiences, then come on; it'll be a fun ride."

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## Rima Jean says

I just got done tearing through this book, and I can honestly say that Markley had me at "scrotal goiter." Ok, he had me way before that -- on account of his honest, approachable style of writing and wicked sense of humor. Writers are not a cheerful lot, generally speaking, and the long road to publication is often told in dramatic, "woe is me" sort of way by authors, even after success. Markley proves that you don't have to drown in sorrow to be a struggling "artiest," and he does so in a thoughtful yet entertaining manner.

I would recommend this book to anyone who writes or wants to write for publication. It's a totally refreshing take on being young and invincible, on graduating from college and entering the real world, and on the publishing industry.

If you aren't into Comedy Central / Jon Stewart sort of humor, this may not be for you. But if you can relax and let a book just hit you with laugh after laugh, I highly recommend it.

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### **Rachel says**

At first, I thought that this book was going to be easy to review, because I just flat out didn't like it. Markley initially struck me as an intelligent Tucker Max. I was afraid that I was going to waste my time reading 500 pages of inside jokes and nonsense improved only slightly by the fact that Markley is actually a talented writer. Now that I've finished it, I can say that I didn't hate it, though to say that I enjoyed it might be a stretch too. Markley seems like he is a genuinely nice person, as to be evidenced by the stories he shares on his journey to get this book published. He may be sarcastic and use far more "potty humor" than my taste, but the parts that I enjoyed most were the parts that showed his emotional side. This is definitely a man of layers, which is what makes him so much different (and much, much more likable) from Tucker Max. The book was a bit too long for me, and I definitely felt that there were a number of parts that were unnecessary and kind of weighed the book down, but I won't discount Markley's talent for writing at any point. There are a number of references to his talent for writing fiction and I'd be quite willing to give it a try. This isn't a bad book per se, but when faced with almost 500 pages, you want to love what you are reading, and that just didn't happen for me.

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### **Alberto says**

The book is all over the place. In a good way. He wrestles down the admittedly silly premise and manages to tie the writer's struggle to write and to be heard into a very enjoyable read. And at the same time bring in his own story in a very insightful and balls out honest way. I finished in a day. Literally could not put it down.

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### **Tom says**

Stephen Markley's book is filled with tangential asides, most of them amusing, many very funny, a few boring or irritating, but the book is merely entertaining until the lengthy chapter on the fate of a high school friend, where Markley truly hits greatness and inspires the reader to cast aside his reservations and look forward to consuming his future work.

This review contains no specifics. This review would not be helpful to Stephen Markley.

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### **Sheli Ellsworth says**

Described as "a premature memoir" on the book jacket, Stephen Markley's book is more along the lines of an immature memoir. Markley definitely has talent, if only he would use his powers for good. To say that

"Publish this Book" is about publishing a book would be like saying a pancake is like a triple-layer-fudge tort. The story is young Markley's journey on the road to publication, but with frequent stops at Profanity Place, Sit-On-My-Face Fountain and the Democratic National Convention.

Set in Chicago, most of action takes place in Markley's head. Existential anxiety expressed as bathroom humor and endless, but creative uses for the f-word, hide most of his genius. However, an occasional passage gives hope. Underneath the bravado, there may be a sensitive and brilliant voice that needs time to mature. The loss of a high-school friend and the importance of companionship are noteworthy themes in Markley's screed that also seem to get lost in his gimmicky style. I hope to review his next book and describe it as an insightful and riveting glimpse by a new generation of writer.

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## Amar Pai says

UGH can't believe I purchased this. It's a book length version of a shitty high school paper that starts out, "The topic of this paper is procrastination. In this paper I will discuss how much I procrastinated while writing this paper. Where to begin. Well, Webster's Dictionary defines procrastination as..."

So like a bad term paper, except it's a \$15 book!! Which I paid for! Why? Cos the title made me laugh? Is that all it takes? (Answer: yes-- see also: "My Booky Wook")

You have to admire the sheer gall of this guy. I admit, he got one over on me. I feel like I just got fleeced by a 3-card monte dealer.

Ooh but-- Amazon returns! Yes. I think this book is so bad I'm actually going to return it

Put that in your pipe and smoke it, Markley

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## Megan says

A book about publishing the book you're holding. What a concept.

With a voice partially reminiscent of Tucker Max, Stephen Markley illustrates how his hair-brained idea of writing a book about publishing a book was born, (with a little help from his friends). Not only does he go through the writing and publishing process during the length of the book, but he writes a larger story arc about how his quest for getting published coincides with his odd string of jobs, his relationship with his long-term girlfriend, and the continuous interaction and support (or lack of) he gets from his friends. There is a lot of explaining that goes on with his friends within the book, and a lot of, "Okay ... so does this mean that this conversation will be in the book?"

Probably one of the more creative books I've ever read, *Publish This Book* gives a first row seat to the trying ordeal of getting published, from someone who's been in your aspiring-writer shoes. Even though it does lag a little in the last half of the book, the overall work is a humorous venture that will get most people laughing.

Fair warning: an appreciation, or tolerance, of college boy humor is advised, as some parts of the book deal with the misadventures of Stephen and his rambunctious group of friends.

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## **Jerry Levy says**

Very amusing book/memoir about trying to get published. There have been a number of similar books in recent years, Steve Hely's 'How I Became A Famous Novelist' comes to mind. I couldn't finish Markley's book however, simply because I 'got it' after about 200 pages. It is simply too long and could have used a major edit; some chapters are superfluous and don't add anything to the story (like Chapter 7, for instance).

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## **Samuel says**

I don't like reading long-ass reviews and I don't like writing them either. So here's the gist:

Anyone interested in writing and publishing their own book should read this. It's not a how-to manual, but it captures the trials and tribulations of aspiring authors in a unique way. (Also, if you're not interested in writing you should still read it. If only for the toilet humor.)

If nothing else, you can probably learn a thing or two from Markley's writing style. He's talented, insightful and has a way with words he doesn't even know yet.

It's laugh-out-loud hilarious. Especially during the first few chapters I found myself snort-laughing like a thirteen-year-old boy and professing to random strangers that "This Markley guy is a goddamn genius!"

There were some parts where I felt he was trailing off a bit and I started wondering if all of it had a point or if he just got stuck recounting his own life. It all made sense in the end, though, and I can say that this is definitely one of those books that will stay with me forever.

I for one am very thankful this book got published.

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## **Jacqui Hencsie says**

I'm loving this book so far. Completely has me in stitches. I can't wait to get to the end, even if I know the brilliantly happy ending that this book is published and will be available in any book store very soon. Cool concept.

Update:

The book delivers what it says and more, it becomes shockingly poignant at times near the end. I laughed out loud way too many times. Very satisfying.

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## **Kat says**

If you:

1. are chasing your dreams
2. went to miami university
3. live in chicago
4. remember what its like to have an impossible love
5. or you simply enjoy laughter

then, by god, this is the book for you.

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## **Georgette says**

A huge, funny help to anyone trying to get published

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