



# SELF-PRINTED

*The Sane Person's Guide to Self-Publishing*

CATHERINE RYAN HOWARD



## **Self-Printed: The Sane Person's Guide to Self-Publishing: How to Use Digital Self-Publishing, Social Media and Common Sense to Start Earning A Living ... or Shouting 'Down With The Big Six!')**

*Catherine Ryan Howard*

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***Self-Printed: The Sane Person's Guide to Self-Publishing - How To Use Digital Publishing, Social Media and Common Sense To Start Earning a Living as a Writer Through POD Paperbacks and E-books (And Do It Without Saying "Gatekeepers" or Shouting "Down With The Big Six!")*** Do you think that no one has the right to stand between you and your published writer dreams? That the publishing industry is going down in flames and self-publishers are going to rise like a 99c phoenix from the ashes? That all literary agents are interested in doing is blogging sarcastically about the rhetorical question at the start of your query letter, that editors will just use your submitted manuscript for kindling and that you'll be senile before you hear back from either of them? That once you've uploaded the book you finished yesterday afternoon to Amazon, it'll be mere minutes before the money starts rolling in and you can quit your day job? Do you say things like *gatekeepers*, *The Big Six*, *Dan Brown*, *legacy publishing* and *indie authors* a lot? Are you self-publishing to "show them all"? If you've answered yes to one or more of these questions then I do apologise, but this isn't the book for you. This book is for writers who consider self-publishing to be a good Plan B, or even a sideline to traditional publication. Who want to do it the cheapest and easiest way possible while still producing a quality product. Who understand that much like Starbucks outlets and Nespresso coffee machines, traditional and self-publishing can peacefully co-exist. Who know that they don't have to sell a million copies of their book to start earning a living from their writing, but that they do have to work hard and treat it like a business. Who are blessed with common sense and live in the real world at least most of the time. Who find my jokes funny. If this sounds like you, then SELF-PRINTED: THE SANE PERSON'S GUIDE TO SELF-PUBLISHING may be just the "How To..." guide you were looking for. It will tell you everything you need to know in order to publish a Print On Demand paperback and e-book, and - crucially - sell them, without sounding like anti-Big Publishing propaganda produced by the Ministry of Truth. Be warned: you are now entering a No Saying "Gatekeepers" Zone... Visit [SelfPrintedbook.com](http://SelfPrintedbook.com) to see the full table of contents. **ABOUT CATHERINE:** Catherine Ryan Howard is the coffee-guzzling twenty-something behind the popular blog, Catherine, Caffeinated. In March 2010 she self-published her travel memoir, *Mousetrapped: A Year and A Bit in Orlando, Florida*, using the Print-On-Demand service CreateSpace, Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing and Smashwords. Using free promotional tools like blogging, Twitter and Facebook, she managed to make *Mousetrapped* an Amazon bestseller and sell 4,000 copies of it in a year. Her success story has been featured in *The Sunday Times* and *The Sunday Independent* newspapers, and Catherine has been interviewed on BBC Radio Ulster, Newstalk and RTÉ Radio's Marian Finucane Show. She lives in Cork, Ireland, where she divides her time between her desk and the sofa. She wants to be a NASA astronaut when she grows up. (She's 28.)

**Self-Printed: The Sane Person's Guide to Self-Publishing: How to Use Digital Self-Publishing, Social Media and Common Sense to Start Earning A Living ... or Shouting**

## **'Down With The Big Six!') Details**

Date : Published April 29th 2011 by CreateSpace (first published April 16th 2011)

ISBN : 9781460996287

Author : Catherine Ryan Howard

Format : Paperback 346 pages

Genre : Language, Writing, Nonfiction

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# **From Reader Review Self-Printed: The Sane Person's Guide to Self-Publishing: How to Use Digital Self-Publishing, Social Media and Common Sense to Start Earning A Living ... or Shouting 'Down With The Big Six!') for online ebook**

## **Jim Gibson says**

I'm moving from writing books for traditional publishers, as I have in the past, to epublishing, and my habit is to read widely to educate myself about any new project. This book is, frankly, one of the best for two simple reasons.

One. She's done it. Recently. I'm appalled and somewhat shocked at the number of 'experts' who really haven't published much, but for Catherine Howard, it's an ongoing process. She's doing it as she writes about it. So she knows what she's talking about. That's good.

Two. She can write. She's funny and perceptive. Sometimes her humor may not be to your liking, but I think she's funny and appropriate---and I'm decades older than she is.

Her books aren't perfectly edited---and really, whose is?--but they are almost perfect. A couple of tiny usage quibbles here and there don't amount to anything.

If you're interested in the reality of self-publishing, a personal account of how it's working out for one young woman (who CAN write, and who DOES have the energy to follow through with all the ancillary stuff), I'd recommend this book.

Finally, I really like her dose of real-worldism. I'm primarily a musician, and in the music world, there are tons of wannabees, many of them with bad attitudes. I'm learning that the same thing is true of writers---and Ms Howard tells them the truth they need to hear. Bravo!

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## **Adam Henig says**

In this new era of publishing, the major houses fear their business models are nearing extinction, eclipsed by the self-publishing industry. Catherine Ryan Howard, the author of *Self-Printed: The Sane Person's Guide to Self-Publishing* (2nd Edition), calls it, "self-printing."

The stigma of being an author who finances the publishing of his or her book has all but ceased to exist, according to Howard, a commercially successful self-published author. *Self-Printed* is a must-have for any would-be writer who's flirting with bypassing the traditional channels of book publishing in favor of going out on their own—emphasis on the word “own.”

Vanity presses or “author houses” are not the solution either, she cautions. In most cases, these businesses charge hundreds, if not thousands of dollars to do a minimal amount of work to produce your book. When the company makes more revenue through its services to the author than on actual book sales, it begs the question of its usefulness.

What Howard ultimately argues, is that money out of your pocket spent sparingly and wisely—for example, hiring a professional editor and a graphic designer to create a book cover. With Amazon serving as your distributor and social media as your promoter, self-publishing has never been so affordable or simple. Don't be fooled, though. There's plenty of work to be done, she advises her readers. And that's what the book is about.

Although at times Howard's book can be a bit overwhelming for a new author, her charm and dry wit makes for an enjoyable read. If ever there was a book designed for DIY authors in these times, *Self-Printed* (2nd Edition) is at the top of the best.

Catherine Ryan Howard  
*Self-Printed: The Sane Person's Guide to Self-Publishing*

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### **R.m. Nicholls says**

I have found this book so helpful. It is now dog-eared, covered in post-it flags and pencil notes. Also the spine is a bit broken from my putting a heavy weight on it to keep it open while formatting my book for kindle. I don't normally treat books this way - only the ones I truly love! I am referring back to it at the moment and have no doubt that I'll refer to it again and again.

I love Catherine Ryan Howard's tone of voice, which is friendly and reassuring. I also like the healthy dose of realism in the book - it's NOT another guide to becoming an e-book millionaire with the usual high-flown promises of instant success. Instead it deals with lots of practical stuff that can all seem overwhelming to a beginner. She deals with questions like: how to blog, what to blog, how to create a mailing list, how to create a Facebook fan page, how do you figure out what trim size you want at CreateSpace, what to do on release day... and so much more. She is clear throughout that she is only telling you how she did it - but for a first-timer it is a brilliant resource.

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### **David Roberts says**

The book I read to research this post was *Self Published* by Catherine Ryan Howard which is an excellent book which I bought from kindle. Catherine has written several other books some of which are reviewed at <http://oldscratbag.com>. One of her books in particular called *Mousetrapped* which is about her experiences working at Disneyworld in Orlando, Florida is a really good book which has been quite popular and this book is about her experiences trying to sell that book & ebook. She suggests if you are looking to self publish a book try <http://createspace.com> who are good value. If you are looking for to sell ebooks try Kindle Direct Publishing at <http://kdp.amazon.com> & <http://smashwords.com> . Kindle of course is the most popular ebook site & smashwords sell your book on loads of different sites like kobo, nook & apple ibooks. You should price your to start with at £0.99 or similiar price in your local currency. Remember to start with people are taking a chance buying your book. As you release more books have the new one at £2.99 and the previous one either free or at £0.99. As people read your books hopefully they will like your writing style and buy other books from you. Also you want your books to be a reasonable length but not something like 900 pages. Stephen King gets away with it because he is an established author but you won't. Catherine writes with a witty style and her personality shows in her writing. I really enjoy reading her books.

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### **Lorna says**

I bought this book after stumbling across the author's site and devouring the info there with increased interest. I found it to be a welcome dose of no-nonsense advice, covering the often daunting spectrum of information that a person needs in order to successfully self-publish/print.

Howard covers the editing process (yes, you need one, even if you think you don't), the murky world of vile, amateurish covers, e-book formatting, paperback publishing, pricing, Amazon, US tax issues, and much more. Her advice comes from - often bitter and hard won - experience and from years of research and immersion in the world of self-printing/publishing, on and offline.

While she does crack the whip - and this may put off more adamant, know-it-already, or deluded budding publishers - her advice and strict warnings are always given with a humorous sparkle - unless you really were thinking of not getting your book edited, then she'll break your arm (okay, she won't, but you'd deserve it). As someone who has been there and done it, you'd be well to heed her advice - it makes sense, after all.

Thoroughly enjoyable, humourous, packed with genuinely applicable, easy-to-follow information and advice, *Self-Printed* should be a staple of any newbie self-publisher's bookshelf.

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### **S.L. Saboviec says**

When I give something 5 stars, it means that it's something that changed my life and gave me a different perspective. I reserve the elusive 5 stars for books like *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, which I read when I was young and impressionable, or *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, which made me bawl when I wasn't pregnant. I gave this book 5 stars. That means that if you want to self-publish, you have to read this book. I might make it required reading for everyone who submits a request for a review from me. (No, I won't, but I might start lecturing people with page numbers from this book.)

To be quite honest, I knew most of what was in this book already. This is the book I wish I'd read several months ago, rather than having to scrape together bits and pieces of information from a variety of sources and many, many blog posts. However, as this book so asserts, there's a lot of bad information out there. Because I am terribly untrusting, six-months-ago-me wouldn't have read the book because I didn't want to waste money on something that may just be another "How I Won the Lotto of Publishing/Self-Publishing!" clone.

But believe me when I say this is the book that you need to read if you want some no-nonsense, hilariously delivered, intensely sane advice.

I have two dissenting opinions from Ms. Howard, which I will dispense in a moment, but I want to underline the fact that I agree with 98% of this book. To me, a lot of it is common sense, but as she notes, common sense doesn't seem so common. (Was that her or Mark Twain? Or both? I don't care, we're all correct.)

### **First dissenting opinion: Get Your Own ISBN's**

Now, I will say that my opinion is different than hers because I get ISBN's for free. I've explained this to people before, and they seem confused. By free, I mean, without cost. I mean, I could get one hundred ISBN's, and they would cost me zero dollars. That is because I'm in Canada and I'm self-publishing as a Canadian "publisher." (They see self-publishers/self-employed writers and publishing companies as the same thing.) If you're in Canada and you want to get your free ISBN's, signing up is a simple process. Google the Canadian ISBN Service System and sign up.

That being said, I feel like having your own ISBN makes you seem more professional. Of course, I can afford to be professional since I get ISBN's free. But this is one place I think a self-publisher should be consider carefully. Just as any entrepreneur or self-employed business person, we have to think like the patrons of the big companies and give ourselves maximum discovery potential. I think ISBN's help accomplish that. My final caveat, in a section slathered in caveats, is that I haven't researched this very much because of the whole free thing. So I suggest you do the same and create your own opinion.

### **Second dissenting opinion: Don't use her chapter to format your eBook**

I respect Ms. Howard, but her chapters on formatting your eBook made me cringe. It's not difficult or frustrating. Not even a little bit. But I will forgive her because she hasn't seen The Best Guide Ever Created:

Take Pride in your eBook Formatting by Guide Henkel (To which I also give 5 stars, for anyone interested.)

If you got at least a B- in Computer Science in high school, you should be able to figure it out. If you're not technically saavy, well, go ahead and hire him. He knows what he's talking about. But it's not hard. It took me a few hours on a Saturday to figure out how to do it. And now I'm sure it will take a lot less time now that I've been through it once. (As in, half an hour to an hour ... if that.)

### **In conclusion: Read this book**

You will laugh. You will learn stuff. You will feel not so alone in this whole self-publishing journey. You'll go forth into the world, confident and professional and convinced of the importance of a matching blog color scheme.

Also posted on my blog, Magic & Mayhem Book Reviews.

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### **B.R. Maycock says**

They say that 'On Writing' is the Bible of writers. I would argue that there (for Irish readers anyway) is a holy trinity-three MUST READ books. The first, yes, is 'On Writing,' the second is The Writer and artist's yearbook, the third is Catherine Ryan Howard's Self Printed. I cannot recommend this book enough. It gives in depth detail on the nuts and bolts of the self publishing process(though I think even if you weren't self publishing, this would be invaluable), telling you exactly how to put your book up on Amazon and Smashwords, how to promote, how to set up a blog, basically the whole journey. Purposely waited until I had finished putting the book up myself before I posted this review and I can tell you now that I used her step by step guide to get the book up, and she had every eventuality in terms of what someone could misinterpret fully covered. The guide for formatting of the document for e-book was excellent, though I will admit that although I have read it twice I haven't started working on the print version of the book. The promotion section contains a world of common sense, and the humour throughout means you actually

WANT to read it-it's not like a how to guide at all. I would definitely get this a few months before the end of your book, and you can't go wrong(well you can, but only if you decide not to follow the advice given here). In summation: On Writing for the writing part, Self Printed for publishing and promotion, and The writer and artist's yearbook for a list of all publishers and agents and advice from industry heads. Cannot recommend enough.

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### **Demelza Carlton says**

I stumbled across this book (like most marketing books) and figured I'd take a look at the beginning. Catherine's style and no-nonsense approach as she published her first book in the same way I chose to made it automatically of interest to me, so I bought the whole book. After all, if her Createspace, Smashwords and Amazon experience was yielding her higher sales than mine, I wanted to know what she was doing right that I wasn't.

Now, she doesn't answer all the questions I had as clearly as I'd have liked, but there's still plenty to start working with. Perhaps this additional information is in her blog or another book - which I'm definitely going to hunt through after reading this book.

I only wish I'd seen this book a year ago - but now is better than never, as a lot of her advice is still relevant after publication.

I'd highly recommend this book to anyone considering traditional or self-publishing, as it's very much about building an author platform, which every author needs.

Her advice on website design alone is worth the purchase price.

Of all the marketing books I've ever read, this also had to be the most entertaining.

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### **Joël Linger says**

The second book I'm reviewing in a short while of a writer I recently met. Well, I met and interviewed Geoffrey Robertson QC. As for Catherine, I can only say that I was present at a seminar where she was speaking. Nevertheless I did very much like this book.

It's very informative, exactly what I needed and the only thing I needed on this subject. She very kindly supplies a variation of other books and blogs you could visit but for me this isn't necessary. The seminar plus this book is more than enough. And it's funny as well.

For me a book or a film should either touch/move you or it should be highly entertaining. So for me The Dark Knight is entertaining, Selma got me blinking a few times and my favourite film Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind makes me laugh and gets me sad at the same time. Self-Printed achieves exactly what it sets out to do and that's great. But somehow I still feel I can't give it a 5 star rating. Maybe because Catherine didn't make me cry nor can I say that she has entertained me as much as say Birdman did.

So in the end I would recommend everyone who is considering self-publishing to read this book. It's and

absolute must!

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### **Sarina Langer says**

As with so many books these days I came across this one in my library. The only difference being that this time, I was actively searching for a book on how to self-publish. Since we don't have many books on the subject this one stood out rather easily so I took it out, read the whole thing and went on to buy my own (updated) copy.

If you're a writer and you want to self-publish your book, this is the guide for you. It's informative, covers everything you need and it's funny. She has a brilliant sense of humour and speaks the same dialect of sarcasm as me, which made this entertaining on top of informative. It's a great combination, let me tell ya!

Self-Printed was and still is a treasure-cove of information for me. It takes you through everything – from what to do once you've got the first draft done, over how to use Amazon to self-publish (and how to know whether you're ready to take that huge step in the first place) right on to what to do afterwards. There are great ideas in there, including how to promote your book, how to use social media to your advantage, how to design your blog so that it doesn't hurt the eyes of your readers, and how not to look self-published even though you are. Readers can be suspicious of self-published writers and often with good reason, so the last thing you want to do is look like you don't know what you're doing. You want to look like you've put in the same amount of effort a traditional publisher would put in, and this book tells you how to do that (without spending more money than necessary).

Oh, and did I mention she's hilarious? It's worth reading every single page just for the humour alone.

This book has answered a lot of questions for me. I'm pretty sure I owe her a coffee should I ever meet her in person, as well as a voucher for Starbucks. So, if you're a new writer unsure about this self-publishing thing, this is the book for you. If you can't afford to spend the money maybe you're lucky and your local library has a copy or two. Having said that I do recommend you get your own copy – this is the kind of book you'll keep coming back to and that's much easier to do when you have a copy handy.

(it's also pretty funny)

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### **Darryl Pendergrass says**

Catherine, in her book 'Self-Printed', provides solid advice to aspiring authors and independent publishers. The lessons she shares from her experience paralleled my personal experience closely. I just had to learn the harder way because I was unaware of her book at the time I worked on my own. I recommend that those aspiring to publish independently first read this book. You will minimize your headaches and get a big picture view along with some details for delivering a successful product.

In the chapter, How to Sell Self-Published Books, she answered some questions that I could not locate through other searches or material. The topic about the relationship between print-on-demand and brick and mortar bookstores.

The only minor shortcoming that I noticed, probably because of my technical bent, was coverage about graphics. Rather than provide details, Catherine relied on her graphic designer. Although available elsewhere, coverage of graphics (resolution, conversion, and other topics) would prove useful to those new to independent publishing.

I recommend Catherine's book for those considering taking the plunge into the independent publishing area.

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### **Amelia says**

I wanted to love this book, but I just didn't. I wound up skimming most of it. The author is extremely opinionated, and in some cases I agreed with her opinions. Other times, not so much.

The good points:

1. Catherine Ryan Howard is funny as heck. There were some laugh-out-loud moments, an uncommon find in how-to books.
2. The author covers publicity and marketing much better than most of the other how-to-self-publish books I've read.

The bad:

1. The book is too long. At least twice, the author mentions writing in front of the TV, and it shows. She rambles. It's copy-edited, but a good content edit could have cut ½ to 1/3 of the length of this book, leaving the important information – and humor – intact.
2. Formatting. Ugh! Yes, you can get a reasonably well-formatted book by uploading a Word file to Smashwords and Kindle, but you can do so much better by using a good ebook formatting program or service. My version of this book lacked a navigable table of contents, a serious problem in a how-to book. I wouldn't recommend this as a primer, but it's good if you want to up your marketing game or have a laugh about certain types of self-publishers and cheesy self-promoters.

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### **D. says**

I loved this book and wish I had read it BEFORE I tried getting my first ebook published as a hard copy through Createspace.

Catherine walks you step-by-step through all the processes of self-publishing: writing, editing, cover design, interior formatting, blogging, marketing, social media, and so on.

And she does so in a way that is clear and witty.

She even tells you what typefaces and font points to use, whether to choose white or cream paper, and so on. Just her recommendation of free cover-design software is worth the whole book.

I got a lot out of this book even though significant chunks of it don't apply to me, because I:

-use Weebly instead of Wordpress.

-was using Open Office instead of Microsoft Office (although I have since acquired Word Office 2007 as Open Office requires too much tinkering for self-publishing).

-am not into any social media whatsoever.

-definitely use terms like "the Big (fill in current number)."

-am a firm believer in the concept of "Gatekeepers."

-had already read the 2nd edition.

-can't spend that much money on all the things she says you should.

So even if you're like me, you can still get tons out of this worthy 3rd edition.

She is so right about so much and if you follow her advice to the letter AND you're writing non-fiction, it seems to me that you will likely meet with her kind of success.

Her process will also work with fiction, but non-fiction is easier to sell and get started in (with maybe the exception of Romance and Mystery).

The only thing I disagree with is her preference for matte covers as opposed to glossy covers. But she explains WHY she prefers matte (because it doesn't show fingerprints), even though I personally feel books look significantly more professional with glossy covers.

But that's exactly what makes her book so useful: She not only tells you HOW she did everything but also WHY she did it.

So then you can figure out what's best for your book and your style.

Finally, she addresses the issues that non-Americans really need to know, like getting a tax discount and which English to use ("color" vs "colour," quotation mark placement, hyphenated words) and so on.

To sum up, *Self-Printed* is very clear and detailed and helpful - and most reassuringly of all, a pleasant and easy read.

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## **Roewoof says**

So let's start about what this book is: This book is a guide and inside look at what it means to self publish. This is not a book on how to write, what to write, what sells, what doesn't sell, and it's not a book that shits on traditional publishing. Howard makes it very clear that this guide is for authors that want to self publish and also follow more traditional avenues of publishing.

As we all know, this interests me. ( Shameless plug: And I am a Goodreads author: Rodopi Sisamis )

One of the things that I was afraid of when I bought this book was that Howard was going to be one of those authors that was going to recommend that I sell my novels out of the trunk of my car, which I have absolutely no desire to do. I was delighted to find this book was right up my alley, and fit my purposes perfectly.

This book is incredibly informative. Most of the social media stuff that Howard writes about, I had already done, but there were many chapters that I found incredibly helpful. Publishing is a machine that consists of many small moving parts, and as an author when we go Indie, we are essentially our own everything. It pays to be informed and educated about how publishing works in general, from organization to money, to working with designers and editors. She covers where not to spend our money, and where we must spend our money.

I didn't agree with everything she said, but that's the beauty of this book. It isn't a how to, but a guide showing you how everything works and is supposed to work and what's expected of you as an author and your own publisher. It's a lot. Howard doesn't shy from detailing how much work and hours and how much PATIENCE, is needed to publish a book. Not to WRITE a book, but to "simply" publish it.

This is a gem of a reference book, Howard is funny and a bit sarcastic and harsh in some areas, but I think that's necessary because new authors are knuckleheads. We all were. We don't know what we're doing, and usually what we think we know about the industry is completely wrong, and we need someone to knock our

heads together and get us back down to Earth.

I've been fortunate throughout the years to have mentors to guide me and burst my BS bubbles, so by the time I got my hands on this, I was beyond that point, but, I really did laugh along with Howard, and knew that she wasn't ball busting but being extremely honest and down to earth.

I'm recommending this book to anyone that is interested in publishing, or going the Indie route.

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### **P.C. Zick says**

This book had been on my kindle for a weeks. Two days ago, I finally opened the book to see if it was one that would help me. I had no intention of reading it because I was simply going to organize all my self-publishing help books. Instead, I found myself engrossed in the advice (once I became used to the author's sense of humor, which can be a distraction at times). I began incorporating some of the advice immediately especially about Wordpress. I learned about things that have puzzled me in my journey as a self-published author. I finished the book last night and have pages of notes on things I can do right now to help increase my presence online. The advice put things into perspective for me and drilled into me that the focus of my workday should be on creating that presence and writing my next book. The tasks I plan to begin incorporating today will not increase my work load, but simplify it. I don't always follow the advice given in the books and blogs I read, so the difference here is the down-to-earth way it is explained. It makes sense and helped me clear the fog I've been in since I started my self-publishing journey last March. I only wish I'd read the book back then. Some of the stories bogged down the reading for me, but I learned soon enough which ones to read and which ones to scroll through quickly.

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