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5 MILLION MANUSCRIPTS REJECTED ANNUALLY

“Why was my novel rejected?” Millions of writers don’t have a clue, says Chris Roerden, a veteran book editor. “Most rejections are the result of average writing skill, such as putting quotation marks around a sentence and calling it dialogue, or using repetition as insurance against imprecision, which I call malpractice.” Editors and agents spot the clues to ineffective techniques and immediately stop reading. Roerden wants writers to know all the clues.

"What's scary," she says, "is how writers sabotage their submissions in identical ways."

Roerden bases her estimate of 5 million rejections a year on the industry average of one in a hundred manuscripts becoming a book, and on Bowker’s report of 50,000 new adult fiction titles published in 2007.¹ To improve the average writer's 1-in-100 odds for publication, Roerden takes her workshops (open to the public) to libraries throughout the country. Audiences play games designed to reveal body language illiteracy, the buried agenda that causes a tension deficit disorder, and hooks and prologues that lead to low-tension, backstory ache.

In anticipation of retiring from 44 years of editing but wanting more writers to discover the secrets of how manuscripts are really evaluated, Roerden wrote *Don't Murder Your Mystery*. Last year it won the Agatha Award for Best Nonfiction Book and became a finalist for one other international and two national awards. Published by a small royalty press, Bella Rosa Books, it received no major reviews but much buzz on the Internet. A site for readers, *CozyLibrary.com*, called it a “well-written and often funny lesson in author appreciation.” June 1, Bella Rosa Books released the all-genre version, *Don't Sabotage Your Submission: Save your manuscript from turning up D.O.A.*² In it, Roerden analyzes 230 examples from 215 authors to show how they got right the techniques most writers get wrong.

New York Times best-selling author P.J. Parrish says that after hearing Chris Roerden present a workshop, then reading her book, “I went back and rewrote an entire first page.”

When that book’s ranking on Amazon led to acquisition by the Writer’s Digest Book Club, Roerden knew she was reaching thousands more writers than in her 44 years of editing, 15 years of university teaching of writing, and 200-plus workshop presentations.³

1. <http://www.bowker.com/index.php/press-releases/66-corporate2008/526-bowker-reports-us-book-production-flat-in-2007>

2. ISBN 978-1-933523-31-6, available from all major distributors, published by Bella Rosa Books

3. <http://snurl.com/editorspeaks>