

Simon Rose

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Submitting Your Work

Researching publishers

Most of your research into publishing houses can be conducted online, although books are directories are sometimes still available. The publisher's website will tell you what kinds of books they publish, the genres and so on, and give you an idea of whether or not your work is appropriate.

Some houses only publish certain genres and this is clearly stated in their submission guidelines, along with what they don't accept. The guidelines will inform you if the publisher accepts simultaneous submissions, when the same manuscript is sent to several different houses at the same time, or if they prefer to review your work exclusively.

The guidelines will also advise how long you can expect to wait before receiving a response to your query, which can be as long as six months.

Cover Letter

Once you've determined which publishers you will approach, you can prepare your cover letter and synopsis. This example is based on me having already been in contact with the publisher by email, if only to obtain the person's name to add to the letter and make it more personal.

John Smith
ABC Publishers name
123 First Avenue
Anytown A1B 2C3

Hi John,

As requested in your recent email, please find enclosed an outline for *The Time Camera*.

The story and is an exciting, fast-paced fantasy adventure with cliffhanger chapter endings and will appeal to all middle grade readers.

My previously published seven novels have all gathered fabulous reviews from children and continue to be well received. *The Time Camera* will appeal to the same audience and should prove a worthy addition to an already successful body of work.

You may learn more about my work by visiting my website at www.simon-rose.com.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Synopsis

Depending on the type of story, genre or target audience, you may wish to create a very detailed outline. Some publishers may also request descriptions of the main characters, in addition to an outline of the plot.

However, don't be tempted to include too much. The objective of the synopsis is to get the publisher interested enough to request more. Publishers and editors are very busy people and receive a lot of queries and manuscripts. Submitting your work is best described as negotiating a series of hurdles. Your synopsis should not be more than two or three paragraphs and only be on one page. If the editor is interested in seeing more, they will request sample chapters.

The Time Camera Synopsis

Eleanor Chamberlain and Magnus Sinclair are scientists at Chamberlain Research. They are doing experiments in light and photography and succeed in inventing a special camera that can take photographs of the distant past, well before the invention of photography in the 1830's. They also determine that the technology could be used to take pictures of the future. Eleanor thought this was too dangerous and proposed destroying the camera and all their notes, but Magnus disagreed. When she went to the lab alone to destroy everything, Eleanor was surprised by Magnus and in their struggle over the camera, a fire broke out at the lab. Eleanor was trapped beneath a fallen filing cabinet and although Magnus had the opportunity to save her, he left her to die and took the camera for himself, since no one would now know about the project after the lab was destroyed.

Two years later, Magnus is a very wealthy man, with his own company, Sinclair Enterprises. The company is always at the cutting edge of new technology. However, he has been using the camera to peer into the future and steal inventions before they're made public, claiming them as his own, as well as gambling, to become rich and successful.

Eleanor's daughter Lydia and her friend Jake, discover a strange camera in Eleanor's basement office at the Chamberlain house. There are videos stored on the camera and they learn that this is another model that Eleanor developed in secret. This camera is also able to take pictures of the past and future, but also has the power to send objects and possibly people back and forward in time, after their picture is taken. In the course of their investigation, Lydia and Jake learn all about the camera and also about the secret of Magnus' success and the role he played in Eleanor's death. They plan to tell Lydia's father, Greg, then take the information to the police. However, using his own camera to look at the future, Magnus learns that he is about to be prosecuted for stock manipulation, insider trading and industrial espionage. He always suspected Eleanor was secretly working on another camera, which he thinks Jake and Lydia must have found.

At the Chamberlain house, Magnus and his men interrogate Greg, but he knows nothing about Eleanor's work. In frustration, Magnus sets fire to the house with Greg still inside. The children see this and are forced to flee from Magnus' men. When they are about to

be caught, Lydia decides they must use the camera to escape, even though they know that it has never been tested on humans and could be extremely dangerous.

They find themselves two years in the past, on the day Eleanor died. They go to the lab to warn a confused Eleanor about what is going to happen. The events unfold much as they did before, but this time, Magnus doesn't overpower Eleanor, who is helped by Lydia and Jake. Magnus is knocked out and trapped under the filing cabinet. At that point, Magnus arrives from the future and demands the camera. A struggle leads to an explosion and fire. Eleanor and the children escape, but near the entrance, Eleanor appears to be killed in an explosion, just as the children vanish back to their own time. Magnus is forced to remain to save his other self from dying in the fire, which will cause him to cease to exist.

Back in the present, Jake and Lydia learn that they have changed events. Eleanor is now alive, since she never died in the explosion, while Magnus has been dead for two years.

Sample Chapters

Your cover letter to accompany the sample chapters can be relatively simple, since you now have at least a limited business relationship with the editor and they have requested your work. Don't send in too much material, unless they've specifically asked for it. No more than three chapters is advisable, although this can vary depending the length of the story you're submitting and every publisher is different.

Whatever you submit, make sure it has enough pace to once again keep the publisher interested. If you can keep them reading long enough to reach a dramatic conclusion, they're more likely to ask for the rest of the manuscript and you've surmounted another hurdle. The publisher can still reject your manuscript of course, but remember that some people never even get that far, so you're in pretty good company if the publisher wants to spend time reviewing the whole story.

This is just the first chapter of *The Time Camera*, which is of course a published book, but this should give you an idea of what to submit as sample chapters.

The Time Camera – Sample Chapters

Eleanor Chamberlain frantically deleted all the computer files and tossed any important research notes and documents into the garbage can, soaked them with chemicals from the lab and set them alight. The fire spread quickly. She prayed that the flames wouldn't trigger any alarms, and regretfully watched as all her research turned into ashes.

All that remained was the camera itself.

As she studied the device, Eleanor marvelled that something so unassuming could

possess such extraordinary power. The camera was an incredible discovery, but Eleanor knew that it was far too dangerous to fall into the wrong hands. She knew what she had to do.

All the designs and blueprints had been burned beyond recognition, and Eleanor prepared to drop the camera itself into the fire.

“What do you think you’re doing?”

Eleanor spun around to see her research partner, Magnus Sinclair, standing in the doorway less than twenty feet away.

“I already told you, Magnus,” Eleanor replied, maintaining a firm grip on the camera, “this project is too dangerous.”

“What are you talking about?” he asked, edging toward her.

“You know what I mean, Magnus,” she said sternly. “You said as much yourself.”

“But think of the possibilities, Eleanor! We could both be rich beyond our wildest dreams. You know as well as I do, this isn’t about the past. It’s about the future. About the technology and all the inventions still to be discovered. It could all belong to us.”

“It’s still theft, no matter how you look at it.”

“But no one would ever know,” Magnus retorted. “How could they?”

“I can’t allow it,” insisted Eleanor, shaking her head. “I already burnt all the research notes and deleted all the computer files. We need to end this – right now.”

She turned to drop the camera into the flames still burning in the garbage can, but Magnus lunged at her. In the struggle, Eleanor’s elbow knocked over the chemicals by the computer, spilling them onto the fire, which erupted in a tower of flame.

In the confusion, Magnus grabbed the camera, seconds before an explosion ripped through the lab. When the smoke cleared, he could see Eleanor trapped under a heavy

steel filing cabinet.

“Magnus!” she cried. “Magnus, help me, I can’t move my legs!”

But he put the camera into his pocket and backed away toward the door.

“Magnus!” she screamed. “Don’t leave me!”

Suddenly there was a second larger explosion. Magnus was thrown through the laboratory doorway and landed in the hallway. He struggled to his feet, stumbled into the shattered lobby and rushed outside to safety.