

Kaja Blackley introduces Maggie MacCormack

by Kaja Blackley -

<http://greatstorybook.com/kaja-blackley-maggie-maccormack/>

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*In this fascinating read, author-artist-comics-creator Kaja Blackley shares some of the personal reasons he chose to write his latest novel, **Maggie MacCormack and The Witches' Wheel**, the challenges he faced, and how even though one of his stories has been adapted into a Hollywood movie he decided to self publish.*

Artwork by Kaja Blackley.

Introducing Kaja Blackley

My father was a noted jazz musician and teacher. I spent many of my formative years in New York City surrounded by artists from all disciplines. Central Park was where I first searched for giants, elves and faeries. In a fortress of towering concrete, this island of green was my oasis.

When I was young, school infringed on my daydreaming. I knew that there were greater adventures to be had. I felt that there are never enough hours in the day to draw.

Early on, words came to me easily but, I thought, they too easily got in the way of my drawings. It was only in high school, when teachers would comment favourably on my syntax or my storytelling ability

that I started to consider a marriage of words and pictures. It's been a wonderful union.

Career and Family.

In my career I've done everything from painting murals to making comics. One of my stories was made into a Hollywood movie. Yet, the most profound and inspiring experience of my life has been the births of our two children. Through them, I rediscovered the power of magic.

Our daughter was born first, in 1997. At that time, there really wasn't a girls' adventure story that resonated as universally for young women as did the boys' adventure series, Harry Potter, so I decided to write one. I didn't expect it would take me as long as it had to begin penning my tale in earnest.

When everything changed.

A mysterious hiccup with my health became the catalyst I needed – but didn't really want. Over the next two years, partially paralyzed, with only my two index fingers free to type, I spent hours a day writing and rewriting Maggie's first adventure, sending my daily pages to my editor. The next day I would make adjustments and continue.

I shared chapters with a few careful readers. As I regained physical mobility, I found myself in possession of a completed, professionally edited, manuscript: **Maggie MacCormack and The Witches' Wheel**.

The question was what to do with it?

Getting help, deciding to self publish.

I let a friendly publisher read a portion of Maggie, and [an editor from another publishing company](#) read the same chapters. They both expressed interest in it. I have good relationships with some effective agents, so, as I had done with other projects, I considered enlisting an agent to represent me.

What I discovered:

- It can take several years from the sale of a manuscript to the time the book reaches the bookstore shelves.
- Furthermore, book advances are – to say the least – nominal.
- And many publishers discourage authors from participating in their book's design.

I chose to self-publish. I have 30 years' experience in printing, publishing, shipping and distribution. I have relationships with overseas printers and have successfully sold my own work to independent bookstores and book chains in North America, the UK and Europe.

What's involved in self-publishing? It begins and ends with organizing production.

The steps of self publishing: starting with production.

- I start by choosing the size of my book—Maggie is 5.5” by 8.26” — and then carefully select a typeface that fits the personality of my story.
- I use InDesign to set the pages and drop in the illustrations to get an exact number of interior pages (I need this number for my printing quote).
- I select the paper stock, binding, number of colours for printing (four-colour for the covers, two-colour for the text), and my shipping method: by sea.
- I guesstimate how many soft- and hardcover editions I can sell and, based on that number, I request quotes from a selected list of printers in Asia.
- Once I receive a representative number of quotes and choose my printing company, I know my unit cost, and I set my cover price, taking into account the discounts I offer distributors and retailers, and set forth developing my marketing plan.

Going with Indie Shops

[Social media](#), traditional media, press releases and press packages are an integral part of any good marketing plan. However, opportunities for getting media exposure are limited by the marketability and topical relevance of your product. **A beautifully-designed postcard sent to key independent bookstores is much more effective, I have found, than an email blast.** Emails should only be sent to your list of subscribers.

Get *Maggie MacCormack* and support the environment!

Here's how:

Maggie MacCormack and The Witches' Wheel is being *pre-sold on Indiegogo* now, until May 19, 2018: <https://igg.me/at/maggiemaccormack>

Maggie MacCormack and the Witches' Wheel is an environmental fantasy based on a daunting reality: there are no magic remedies for ecological degradation. So, 7.5% of Maggie's gross revenue will be donated to the following three non-profits: [Sea Legacy](#), [One Tree Planted](#) and my local food bank, for those nearby who live under the threat of hunger. The more support I receive, the more support I can give these worthy organizations.

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