

SEPTEMBER 2017 BEHIND THE CURTAIN JOURNAL ENTRY *IS YOUR PICTURE BOOK WORTH \$50,000*

BY CHILDREN'S AUTHOR JENNIFER PHILLIPS

I'm almost through my second year doing the 12x12 Picture Book Challenge. I've learned so much, and I still have so much more to learn.

The challenge involves writing 12 picture book drafts over 12 months. I'm in the Golden level this year. That gives me the opportunity to submit polished works to agents. There's a wonderful online critique community and monthly webinars with editors, agents and authors. That brings me to the point of this journal entry.

A recent webinar presenter asked a provocative question that has stuck with me: Is your picture book worth \$50,000? She explained this is the average minimum expense for a publisher to bring a book to market.

I'm not new to the reality that publishing is a business. I know editors usually must create a profit and loss statement projecting book costs and sales.

It's just super easy to put that all aside when you're writing. And, to a certain degree, you need to.

But the starkness of a dollar figure made an impression. If I was in the position of the publisher, would I invest at least \$50k to get my book to readers?

Put another way, how can I strengthen the crafting of my stories so the answer is a quick and confident yes?

I am now asking myself that question with every manuscript, picture book or not. It's not about trying to make something "commercial." For me, it's a great provocation to ensure I'm doing the best I can with how I tell a story.

Right now, I have eight picture book works I'm in love with. That's a \$400,000 investment. It's up to me to make sure they're worth it.

If you're interested in learning more about how profit and loss statements influence publishing decisions, [here's an informative blog post](#) from Jane Friedman about it.

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