

Selling a story as a picture book if it had already been published in a magazine

Q: I have written several stories that would be suitable for publication either as picture book texts or as short stories in magazines. Would it hurt my chances of selling a story as a picture book if it had already been published in a magazine (assuming I had not sold all rights to the magazine)?

“As long as you have only granted first serialization rights to the story for the magazine and it has been at least a year since it appeared, I think it might actually be a selling point,” said Deborah Warren, Founder of East/West Literary Agency. “For example, you can point out that an acquiring editor thought the content strong enough to publish it already in a magazine or another format.

“Most likely, the story will have to change substantially to make it suitable for a picture book, both lengthwise and to have it accommodate the format for an illustrator to complement it with images that add that other magical layer of meaning, anyway.

“So, especially if you’re a new talent challenged to earn those publishing chops, I say, Go for it! It’s great exposure — after all, agents and editors look to many mediums to find that next ‘perfect fit.’ Being published in a magazine could pave the way to their next discovery. You!”

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