

# WRITER GUIDELINES

## Our Current Needs

Before submitting writing proposals to OWC, prospective writers should familiarize themselves with the type and content of OWC's publications. If you want to submit a sourcebook idea, we stress the need for a query letter of some sort (email, snail mail, etc) explaining the general topic to see if we have already commissioned a book of similar nature. OWC has numerous projects in the pipeline at any one time, and we strive to keep authors from duplicating their efforts.

Please see the writers submission guidelines (below) for further instructions on how to submit material to OWC.

Any further questions can be sent via email to our Director of Operations, Dave Webb, at [dave@otherworlds.cx](mailto:dave@otherworlds.cx).

## Computer Submissions

OWC relies heavily on computers, currently we are using both Macintosh and IBM-compatible PCs for text editing, and Mac's for our production work. Our word processing is handled in Microsoft Word for both the PCs and the Macs. On the Mac, we use Page Maker and sometimes Quark for layout. Please submit all words in a format that we can use, anything that requires us to do converting delays the final draft and such delays payment to you. All submissions should be accompanied by a legible printout, that is high quality and on 8 1/2 x 11. We will be making copies for play-testers and editors and like to get them out as quick as possible, so the draft copy is important. Make sure that each page of the printout should have a footer with the author's name, manuscript name, date of draft, page number, and a header with the file name from the diskette.

If your file is a large one (more than 20,000 words) please break it up into chapters, as this makes editing and layout easier. Use a labeling system that is easy to understand, such as BLOODCH1, BLOODCH2, BLOODCH3, and so on. Please include a cover letter to your work explaining what files should be there and what each one covers. And make sure you keep copies of everything, for your safety and ours. If a file gets corrupted, and they do occasionally, we may need to get another from you.

## Typed Submissions

Typed submissions are acceptable for magazine articles, for proposals of any length, and for preliminary drafts of games and supplements. First drafts and final drafts should be in computer-readable format. (see above.) Typed material should be double-spaced, in black ink on white letter-sized paper, using a readable ribbon. Type on one side only. Each page should be numbered. Indicate italics by underlining italicized words. Indicate

boldface by a squiggly underline. For boldface italics, use a straight line and a squiggly one.

## **Correspondence and Submissions**

Send all material to:

**Writing Submissions**  
OtherWorld Creations, Inc  
1424 12<sup>th</sup> ST #B  
Santa Monica, CA 90401  
attn: R. Hyrum Savage

If you don't include an **SASE**, it is highly likely you won't get a reply.

We can take text files and proposals via the Internet. Please send all email to [hyrum@otherworlds.cx](mailto:hyrum@otherworlds.cx)

## **Proposals**

A proposal lets us judge a game adventure or supplement before you write the whole thing. It should include a detailed outline, with the number of pages allotted to each subsection, the complete introduction, (if the product will have one), a sample chapter at least 5,000 words long and your draft of the advertising blurb for the back cover. Each proposal must include a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE). If you want your manuscript returned, include a second SASE large enough to hold it. We cannot return manuscripts that do not come with large SASEs. The package should include:

- A cover letter introducing yourself (if we haven't worked with you before) and discussing your gaming and writing experience.
- A complete outline, with the number of pages for each item.
- At least one sample chapter (more is better). We will never sign a contract unless we have a good writing sample on hand.
- Your address, phone number and Social Security number. We cannot issue payment without your SSN.
- A complete, notarized Waiver form.
- An SASE sufficient to hold the whole manuscript, if you want it returned.

## **The Game Evaluation Waiver**

This release form is not for your protection. It's for ours. It lets us look at your material without fear that, somewhere down the road, you might accuse us of stealing your ideas. That's putting it very bluntly, but game companies have found out the hard way that they need that protection. Without a signed release in our files (notarized, or the equivalent for writers from outside the U.S.), we cannot and will not even look at your submission. Anything received without a release is filed unopened and unread, or just returned, until

the release arrives. Our apologies to those who may be offended by this policy, but in this day of random lawsuits, it's necessary.

### **First Draft vs. Final Draft**

Our contract will include deadlines for first draft and final draft. When we say first draft, we do not mean a stack of notes. The manuscript you submit on first draft deadline should be, in your opinion, a complete product, ready to send to the typesetters. We won't, of course - we will send it to editors, and play-testers for comment. But it has to be ready to be looked at! When we have comments back, we will send them to you for incorporation into a final draft. But plan to finish all your creative work by the first draft deadline - that's what it means. The final draft is just polish.

When you've got a complete manuscript to send us, the package should include: The manuscript, on both computer disk and printed output. A complete outline, with a list of the computer files. Any maps, counters or other materials necessary to play-test. Your address, phone number and Social Security number.

### **Penalties**

Over the past couple of years, several projects have been badly delayed or killed because freelancers turned in their manuscripts weeks or months late - or sent "first drafts" that were in no shape for play-testing. So, with regret, we have started putting penalty clauses in our contracts. We will work with you to set deadline dates that you think you can meet. But then we'll expect you to meet them. If you don't, you'll earn less.

### **Unacceptable Work**

The "escape clause" in our standard contract says that if we don't like what you write, we don't have to accept it, and we get our advance back. We have only had to do this a few times, and we don't ever want to do it again. But be warned. Things that might make a manuscript unacceptable include: Sloppy or unprofessional work (correct your own grammar and spelling, please!). Plagiarism. Failure to meet contract specifications for style and content, or a seriously missed deadline. However, we'll work with you as long as we can, if we feel you're working with us.

### **Buy-Outs**

We have also had cases where a writer submits a first draft that is far from ready to publish, but too good to throw away. If we don't think the writer is able to finish in a reasonable time (or if the writer doesn't feel he or she can!), we will sometimes offer a smaller flat fee for the material "as is," and make other arrangements to finish the job.

## **Work for Hire**

Unless otherwise specified in the contract, OWC buys everything it publishes as "work for hire." That is, we buy all rights. It is as if you were working in our offices - what you submit to us in the course of the project, whether or not we publish it, belongs to us. Social Security numbers, or the overseas equivalent, are required on these contracts by law - if you don't have one, get one.

## **Working with Your Editor**

Once we accept your proposal and sign a contract with you, you will be assigned an editor - someone who is paid from OWC. This person's job is to make sure your work is well-written and conforms to our style; that (if it's a supplement) it conforms to the rules of the game it supplements; that it is interesting, readable, logical and fun. Our editor is being paid to edit your work, not to organize or rewrite it. If he finds any minor problems with style, grammar, or content, he'll fix them and tell you, so you can do better. If he finds severe problems with organization or content, he will return the manuscript, with comments, so you can try again. Only if we conclude that your ideas simply outpace your writing ability will we consider a buyout, as described above. At the same time your work will be sent to our rules editor. Changes here will be done so that the entire game remains consistent. He will contact you with questions if you made any new rules or changes to existing rules. If you added something that changes the game world or rule play and we deem it unnecessary you will be returned that section to rework it. So as to lower the chance of any major rewrites please contact our rules editor prior to any major rule additions or changes. You should expect your editors to contact you regularly with comments about your work; to keep you informed about its status; to jog you if you fall behind schedule; and to answer your questions about either game rules or company policy. If you have any problems with your manuscript (or with this company), talk to your editor first.

## **Plagiarism**

Lifting material from other people's work is only acceptable if it is from the Diomin and or Forbidden Kingdoms lines, and is published by OWC, and even then, tell your editor that you're doing it. We don't mind repeating information from an older book if it is relevant, but you will not be paid for such. Repeating information from an older book and not informing us is a breach of integrity and grounds to terminate the project.

## **Art Specs**

The completed first draft must include the writer's sketches - in as much detail as possible - for all maps and similar material that are necessary to the book. Adventures, in particular, need maps. Be sure the map sketch you submit is readable and to the proper scale - and specify what that scale is supposed to be! If your map includes both a large map and details, the details should have their own scale, and should be oriented the same way as the main map. Include a North arrow.

Any maps that must be in the book need to be included in your first draft that is submitted. Also, we cannot simply duplicate or trace over an existing map to make maps for your book. If you give us photocopies of published maps as source material, we must redraw it (so don't send them in at the last moment). And we must have the ISBN, title, author and publisher of the original map, to give proper credit to the source material.

### **Remember**

Always keep a copy of everything you send us. Don't send us your only copy of anything, post office, fed ex, ups, they all have been know to make mistakes. If you keep the original, make sure the photocopy we get is very readable.

Include an SASE - that's "self-addressed, stamped envelope" - with any inquiry or submission. If you want a submission back, send an SASE big enough to hold it. A rejected submission without an SASE is discarded. An inquiry without an SASE is not necessarily discarded, but it always goes on the bottom of the stack.

## Evaluation Waiver

This is to certify that I, \_\_\_\_\_, have submitted the attached original game design, manuscript, or concept to OtherWorld Creations, Inc. (hereinafter called "the publisher"), for evaluation. I certify that this material is the product of my own creative effort and that I am legally able to offer it for sale. I further warrant that this material is not presently being considered for publication by any publisher or other entity, and that I will not submit it for such evaluation for three months (90 days) after the date of this waiver, or until I receive an evaluation and/or offer from the publisher, whichever comes first.

It is specifically stated and agreed that this document is neither a contract nor an offer by the publisher to purchase said design, manuscript, or concept, but instead a vehicle for the protection of the publisher against possible legal actions arising from its evaluation of said material.

It is specifically understood that this material is submitted voluntarily, and that this submission and the examination of this material by the publisher does not establish, by implication or otherwise, any relationship between myself and the publisher not expressed herein. It is further understood that the publisher, according to its own judgment, may accept or reject the material submitted and shall not be obligated to me in any way with respect thereto, unless and until the publisher shall at its own election enter into a properly executed written agreement with me, and then only according to the terms of the said agreement.

It is further stated and agreed that I, the author of the material submitted, fully understand that the publisher may already have in its possession or under development similar designs, manuscripts, or other creative works bearing a resemblance in subject matter, mechanics, design innovations, concept, theme, etc., to my submission, and that said other works may be published in the future after my present submission has been evaluated and rejected. I hereby agree that, should such a situation occur, I shall have no claim or recourse, legal or otherwise, against the publisher.

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Author's name (print)\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

Phone\_\_\_\_\_

Please return via snail mail or fax:

R. Hyrum Savage  
OtherWorld Creations, Inc.  
1424 12<sup>th</sup> ST #B  
Santa Monica, CA 90401