

My Crazy Journey to Getting Published

Talia and I met in 5th grade and became fast friends playing make believe in the playground. At a sleepover during the summer between 7th and 8th grade, we decided to try our hand at writing—we were getting a little too old for make believe games. We were currently obsessed with the Percy Jackson series and started creating characters that were children of Greek Gods. Thus, The Immortal Game was born.

We wrote many stories together on and off for a decade. Finally we decided to polish up The Immortal Game and try querying. After numerous rejections, we decided to just throw it out into the universe and see what happens. In January of 2019 we posted our Greek Mythology Young Adult novel on the website swoonreads.com (now rebranded to fiercereads.com), not really expecting anything to come of it.

Within three months, the editors of the site contacted us. It was a rather dramatic experience for me—I woke to a text from Talia saying “CALL ME AS SOON AS YOU WAKE UP” with freak out emojis. Naturally, I thought some horrible disaster had occurred, and called expecting to hear about the tragedy. She told me to check my email where I found a message asking to set up a phone call to talk about buying our book. It was definitely one of the most exciting days of my life.

Over the next month we had a few phone calls with the editors at Swoon Reads—most of which I took in an empty classroom at the highschool I was teaching at. Pretty soon they sent us a contract to look over.

We did not have an agent and didn't know anything about publisher lawyer speak. Reaching out to anyone we knew who could help us translate the contract, and let us know if it looked reasonable, I got in contact with Isaac Stewart of Dragonsteel Books. He put us in touch with his agent—Ben Grange.

This was our second publishing miracle. I was in a writing group with Ben Grange in college! After catching up, he asked to read our manuscript and offered to represent us shortly after. We had an agent!

Ben helped us navigate the contract and we soon signed it. After that came edit letters and creative calls from our amazing editor Holly West. It took just over two years from that first email to the official publication of our debut novel—fifteen years after its conception. It was stressful at

times, but such an incredible process that was nothing less than a dream come true. Many people told us writers never get their first books published, and they never get published posting their manuscripts on free websites. Well, we proved them wrong! You never know what can happen, keep dreaming and keep working. Miracles will happen!