

After 129 Rejections, a Chicago Author Publishes His Fantasy Novel Himself and Lands Audie Award Winner Bahni Turpin to Narrate It

Sophia Sprite and the Sasquatch Secret, the first in a five-book series for readers 10 and up, is out now in audiobook, paperback, and hardcover. The ebook arrives November 23.

CHICAGO, October 17, 2026. Chicago author Brian Young sent his first novel for young readers to 129 literary agents. All 129 passed. This month, *Sophia Sprite and the Sasquatch Secret* arrived on Audible narrated by Bahni Turpin, an Audie Award winner and Audible Narrator Hall of Fame inductee whose credits include *The Hate U Give*, *Children of Blood and Bone*, and *The Underground Railroad*. The paperback and hardcover are available now, and the ebook releases November 23.

"The rejections were polite, and they mostly said the same thing," Young said. "Nobody knew which shelf a book about a fourteen-year-old girl and a Sasquatch belonged on. I decided readers could work that out for themselves. And if the book was worth a kid's time, it was worth doing right, so I hired the best narrator I could find."

Fourteen-year-old Sophia Sprite was told her parents died in a rockslide. Shipped from Seattle to the small town of Elwha, Washington, to live with a grandfather the whole town calls the crazy Bigfoot guy, she finds a key hidden in her mother's music box, a trunk full of things her mother never mentioned, and a trail into the Olympic rainforest. It leads to the Northborn, a people who have stayed hidden for sixty thousand years, who knew her mother and know she was murdered. With a leprechaun, a Northborn warrior, and two loyal friends, Sophia goes after a secret someone wants kept buried.

"I wanted to write the book I would have grabbed off the shelf at eleven," said Young, a Chicago father of three. "A kid who doesn't fit anywhere finds out she's the bridge between two worlds, and the monsters in the woods turn out to be the least of her problems."

The launch has a street-level Chicago component. This month Young placed ten paperbacks in Little Free Libraries in neighborhoods across the city, each with a note asking whoever finds it to read it, review it, and pass it along. "Chicago is home, and I wanted the first copies out in the wild to be here," he said. "If you find one, it's yours. Read it, tell somebody, and leave it somewhere for the next kid."

Turpin recorded the complete 9 hour, 39 minute production, giving distinct voices to a leprechaun several centuries old, a seven-foot Northborn warrior, a Seattle teenager who has just lost everything, and the villain who took it from her. "Hearing Bahni Turpin bring Sophia to life is the closest I'll ever come to seeing the movie in my head," Young said.

BookLife Reviews, the review service Publishers Weekly runs for independent authors, called the novel "an unflinching, heartfelt examination of the choices, tasks, and emotions that come with growing up," praising its "nuanced beats that avoid forced life lessons" and noting that "the engaging cast of secondary characters offers welcome levity and balance."

Sophia Sprite and the Sasquatch Secret is the first of five planned books. The second, *Sophia Sprite and the Banshee Bargain*, moves the series to the fae courts of Ireland and Scotland and is in progress.

Sophia Sprite and the Sasquatch Secret is available now in audiobook on Audible and Amazon. The paperback (ISBN 978-1-7341794-1-5) is available from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Bookshop.org, and independent bookstores, and libraries can order through Ingram. The hardcover is available on Amazon. The ebook releases November 23 and is \$4.99 on preorder through launch week, after which the price rises to \$8.99. Chapter one of the audiobook and the first three chapters of the text are free at brianyoungauthor.com.

Young is available for interviews and podcast appearances, and for in-person visits to Chicago-area schools, libraries, bookstores, and book clubs.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brian Young grew up in Utah, spent eight years in the Seattle area hiking the trails of the Pacific Northwest, where the Sophia Sprite series took root, and now makes his home in Chicago. He is the author of The Sacred Vein Series, a historical adventure saga set in the American West. When he is not writing, he can be found tending his collection of Funko Pops, watching the Chicago Sky, and working on home improvement projects that always take longer than planned. *Sophia Sprite and the Sasquatch Secret* is his first book for young readers. He lives in Chicago with his family.

AT A GLANCE

Title	<i>Sophia Sprite and the Sasquatch Secret</i> (Book 1 of the Sophia Sprite series)
Author	Brian Young
Narrator	Bahni Turpin, Audie Award winner and Audible Narrator Hall of Fame inductee
Audience	Readers 10 and up; middle grade and young adult fantasy
Setting	Elwha, Washington, on the Olympic Peninsula west of Port Angeles
Audiobook	Out now on Audible and Amazon; 9 hours, 39 minutes, unabridged
Print	Paperback available now everywhere books are sold, ISBN 978-1-7341794-1-5; hardcover available now on Amazon
Ebook	November 23, 2026; \$4.99 on preorder through launch week, then \$8.99
Review	"Sincere coming-of-age sees teen make room for grief and wonder." BookLife Reviews
Free sample	Chapter 1 audio and the first three chapters at brianyoungauthor.com
Series	First of five planned books; Book 2, <i>Sophia Sprite and the Banshee Bargain</i> , is in progress

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