**Interview Assessment #3**

**Name of Professional:** Sarah Hepola

**Profession:** Author

**Date of Interview:** October 11, 2018

For my third interview, I had the amazing opportunity to sit down with New York Times best-selling author Sarah Hepola. Since novelists’ offices tend to just be their homes, we met at Dunn Brothers Coffee Shop in Addison, Texas. This informational interview was long-awaited, because it actually took us more than two months to be able to schedule a time that worked for both of us. When I reached out to her in the summer through the forum on her website I did not expect to receive a reply, but Sarah was nice enough to suggest we meet and talk which was so exciting! Our original meeting was scheduled for early September, but it did not work out. Luckily a month and two attempts later we got to have one of the best conversations I have had interviewing professionals thus far. I really liked how casual she was, and how eager she looked to give me advice. She seemed like she really cared about helping me, which showed how nice she was.

At the beginning of our conversation, I told her a bit about myself and how I am in the middle of the college application frenzy. We discussed college some more and then moved on to where she went to college, which was UT Austin (also known as my dream school). I told her about how my parents have always pushed me to pursue law, and she told me a story about how she was in a group of ten friends in college, seven of which ended up becoming lawyers. She said that lawyers and writers are very similar since they both require strong communication skills, both written and spoken. The thing that most stood out to me from that story was when she told me that the difference between a successful and unsuccessful writer is not talent; rather, those who succeed are the ones who stick with it and never stop writing. Ever since she mentioned this, I have not been able to stop thinking about it and know that I will keep it in mind forever as I pursue my dream of becoming a novelist.

Sarah gave me a lot of useful advice and information about life as a writer, and asked me lots of questions while she was speaking to tailor the information specifically to me, which I found quite unique since I have never interviewed someone who did that. Some key pieces of advice that she gave me included: Read often, observe others, and write as much as possible. At the end of the interview, Sarah generously took the time to read what I have written so far of my short story and gave me some really helpful feedback. Getting to talk to a successful author really shaped my perspective on the career I am pursuing. I feel more secure having talked to someone who achieved their dreams, and followed the path which I am hoping I have the chance to follow. Ultimately, this interview made me more confident in my independent study and excited to create my final product. I am really looking forward to asking for her opinion on my finished manuscript!