



Writing Blurbs & Pitches that Sell

aka How to Hook Readers/Agents/Editors/Your Mom



Why Do I Need a Pitch?

To catch agents' & editors' attention.

To write advertising and social media copy.



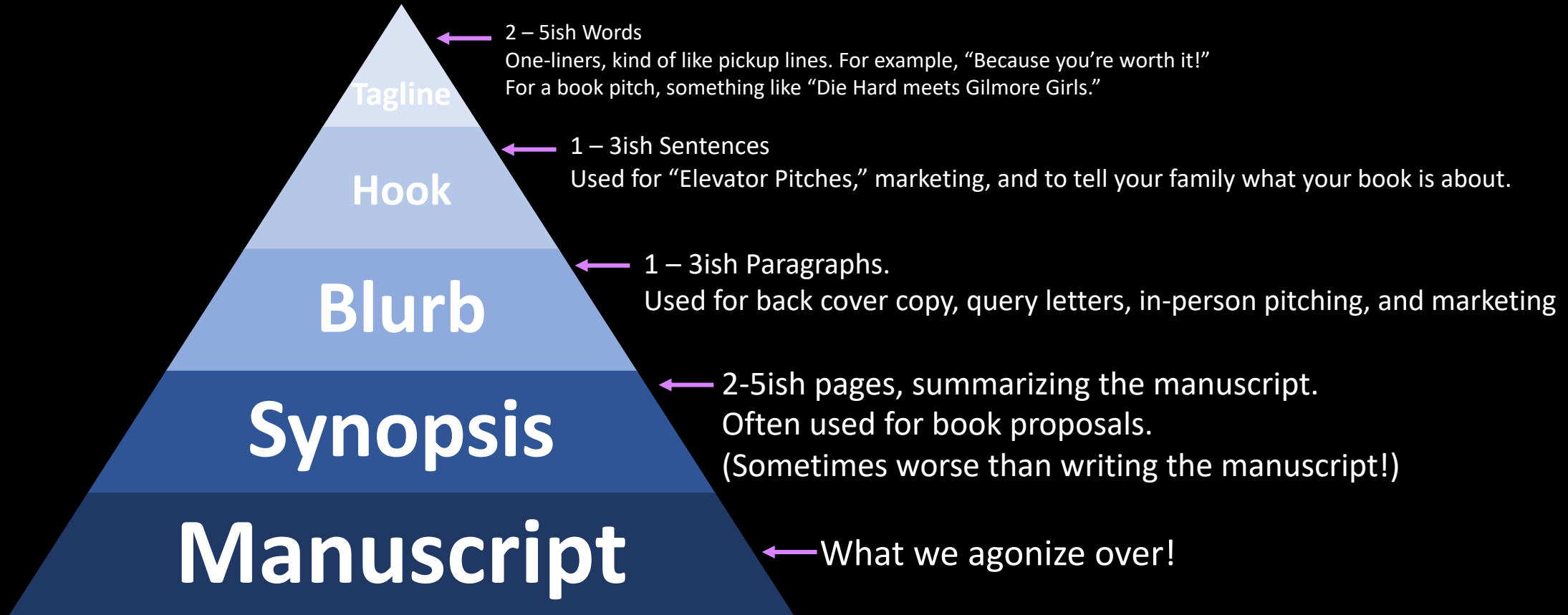
To tell people what the book is about.

To write back cover copy.

To Hook Readers!



Some Pitch Definitions



The Blurb & The 4 Ws

- **Who** is your protagonist(s)?
- **What** do they want?(Goal)
- **Why** do they want it?(Motivation)
- **Why can't they** have it?(Conflict)





Find the 4 Ws in Mystery

Who?

What?

Why?

Why can't they?

Former spy Maggie Bird came to the seaside village of Purity, Maine, eager to put the past behind her after a mission went tragically wrong. These days, she's living quietly on her chicken farm, still wary of blowback from the events that forced her early retirement.

But when a body turns up in Maggie's driveway, she knows it's a message from former foes who haven't forgotten her. Maggie turns to her local circle of old friends—all retirees from the CIA—to help uncover the truth about who is trying to kill her, and why. This "Martini Club" of former spies may be retired, but they still have a few useful skills that they're eager to use again, if only to spice up their rather sedate new lives.

Complicating their efforts is Purity's acting police chief, Jo Thibodeau. More accustomed to dealing with rowdy tourists than homicide, Jo is puzzled by Maggie's reluctance to share information—and by her odd circle of friends, who seem to be a step ahead of her at every turn.

As Jo's investigation collides with the Martini Club's maneuvers, Maggie's hunt for answers will force her to revisit a clandestine career that spanned the globe, from Bangkok to Istanbul, from London to Malta. The ghosts of her past have returned, but with the help of her friends—and the reluctant Jo Thibodeau—Maggie might just be able to save the life she's built.

From Tess Gerritsen's *The Spy Coast*





Find the 4 Ws in Romance

Anyone can be tempted...

Who?

What?

Why?

Why can't they?

Xavier Hollow is the king of destruction. A shifter, a vampire, a demon—every nightmare you have—all rolled into one very smoking hot package. Xavier snaps his fingers, and the world falls at his feet. His enemies tremble in fear. And the women who want him? They tremble with yearning. Life (and death) is one fabulous ride...until a certain very old curse kicks in for him. **A curse that threatens to take away all of his dark power.**

He needs someone good...to fall for him. STAT.

Three days. That's how long Xavier has to tempt one Mercy Josephine. Innocent, pure, the actual descendant of an angel, she's all the things that normally **give him hives—literally. He's allergic to good and just can't stand it. Committing a "good" act causes Xavier physical pain. The bigger the act, the more intense his suffering.** But, for Mercy, he'll have to pretend to be someone very, very different. Someone who is—unfortunately and ever-so-disgustingly—good.

He'll corrupt her. She'll save him.

A simple enough task. Go to the costume ball. Charm the modern-day princess. Get her to sacrifice her soul for him. *Done.* He could probably bring her to the dark side with just a kiss. But then he meets Mercy and realizes that he's not the only one looking to destroy some goodness. **Other beasts are closing in,** and in order to **break the curse that haunts him,** Xavier will have to do the one thing he never expected...protect Mercy. Beautiful, brave, and—shudder—*good* Mercy.

From Cynthia Eden's *Monster without Mercy*





Craft the 4 Ws

- **Who is the protagonist?**

Molly Nyland, a twenty-six year old forensic artist who can tell what people say doesn't match what they saw. These powers came to her when she was hit by lightning at age 12. The accident covered her arm and shoulder in white scars that itch when people aren't telling the full truth.

- **What does she want?**

Catch the serial killer who's haunting her town.

- **Why does she want it?**

The killer is killing people.

- **Why can't she have it?**

The killer is really smart and evades her and the police.





Craft the 4 Ws—Take 2



- **Who?** Molly Nyland, a twenty-six year old forensic artist who can tell what people say doesn't match what they saw. These powers came to her when she was hit by lightning at age 12. The accident covered her arm and shoulder in white scars that itch when people aren't telling the full truth.
- **What?** She wants to keep her secret at all cost.
- **Why?** Her rural, religious, uneducated family and community labeled her a witch after the lightning strike. She was treated as a freak and called the devil's spawn.
- **Why can't they?** Her new working partner, Detective Rankin, is a master at ferreting out secrets and knows that Molly is keeping something from him. She ends up as one of the suspects in a serial killer case and is hunted by the real killer. The only way to clear her name and stay alive is to trust Rankin.



Tips for Working the 4 Ws

- Apply them to both external and internal conflict.
- If you have more than one main character, do it for all of them.
- Pick and choose the sentences and paragraphs that have the most action and power words.
- Read your pitch out loud.
- Try it out on (unsuspecting) friends.





Enhancements



- **Include Your Genre**
 - *Xavier Hollow is the king of destruction. A shifter, a vampire, a demon...*
 - *... very old curse...the actual descendant of an angel...*
 - *...former spies may be retired, but still have a few useful skills...*
- **Show Your Character Development**
 - *More accustomed to dealing with rowdy tourists than homicide...*
 - *Xavier snaps his fingers, and the world falls at his feet.*
- **Include Your Writing Voice**
 - *Someone who is—unfortunately and ever-so-disgustingly—good.*
 - *Beautiful, brave, and—shudder—good Mercy.*
- **Sprinkle with Tropes**

Tropes

According to Dictionary.com, a trope is:

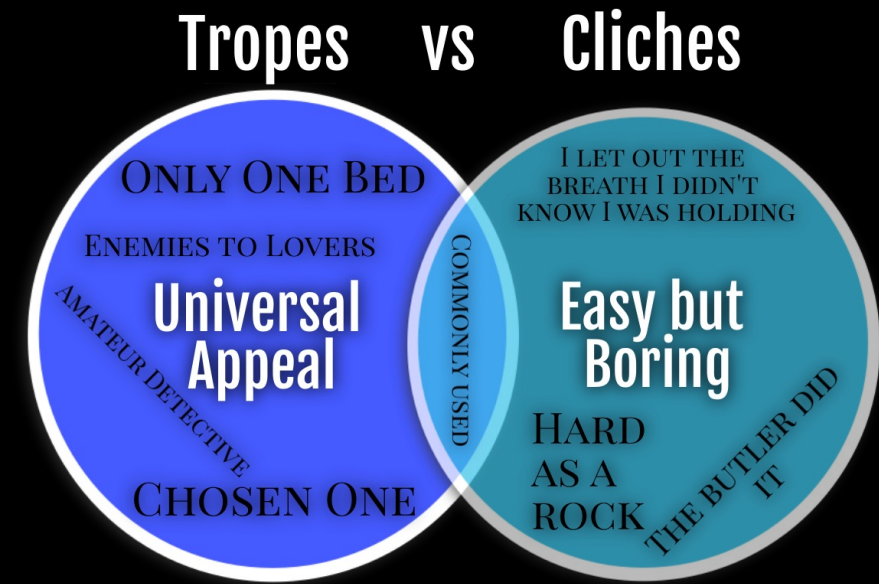
- a. A recurring theme or motif, as in literature or art:

the trope of motherhood;
the heroic trope.

- b. A convention or device that establishes a predictable or stereotypical representation of a character, setting, or scenario in a creative work:

From her introduction in the movie, the character is nothing but a Damsel in Distress trope.

The author relies on our knowledge of the Haunted House trope to set the scene.





The Power of Tropes

- Provides a predictable character, setting, plot, or type of story.
- Creates multi-dimensional characters by building tension.
- Strengthens conflict—internal and external.
- Tells readers that you write what they like.





Trope Examples

Romance

- Enemies to Lovers
- Friend's Sibling
- Forced Proximity
- Secret Baby
- Arranged Marriage
- One Night Stand
- Fated Mates

Mystery/Thriller

- Loner/Scarred Sleuth
- Serial Killer
- Protector/Guardian
- Amnesia
- Amateur Sleuth
- Stalker
- Revenge

Fantasy

- Chosen One
- Quest
- Secret/Lost Heir
- Second Chance
- Misfiring Powers
- Time Travel
- Redemption

Spot the Tropes in Mystery



Spy

Redemption

Former spy Maggie Bird came to the seaside village of Purity, Maine, eager to put the past behind her after a mission went tragically wrong. These days, she's living quietly on her chicken farm, still wary of blowback from the events that forced her early retirement.

Revenge

But when a body turns up in Maggie's driveway, she knows it's a message from former foes who haven't forgotten her. Maggie turns to her local circle of old friends—all retirees from the CIA—to help uncover the truth about who is trying to kill her, and why. This "Martini Club" of former spies may be retired, but they still have a few useful skills that they're eager to use again, if only to spice up their rather sedate new lives.

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From Tess Gerritsen's *The Spy Coast*

Found Family

Spot the Tropes in Romance



Anyone can be tempted...

Alpha Male

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Good vs. Evil

Ballroom/Royalty

Betrayal

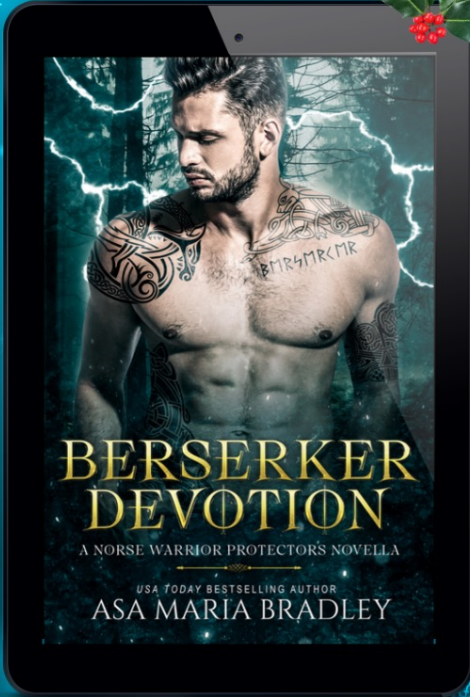
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Protector/Guardian

From Cynthia Eden's *Monster without Mercy*

Tropes in Advertising

Immortal Norse Warriors
Protecting Our Modern-Day World



Viking Hero with a Heart as Cold as Snow

Yuletide Adventures

Only One Bed

Holiday Magic

Scarred Wolf Heroine Who Trusts No One

Fated Mates

Hot Sexy Times 🔥

Soulmark

amazon
kindleunlimited

Questions/Discussion/Practice

