

Pitch Your Book:

Loglines, Synopses, and Queries
that Hook and Hold



PART THREE: QUERIES

JAMES PERSICHETTI, LOST HAT EDITORIAL SERVICES

Dear Agent,

Congratulations on your recent sale of *Barrow Hawk's Revenge*. I admire all of Rupert LeBlanc's work and am excited for his next book! I believe my YA thriller CONCERT AT CARNAGE HALL, complete at 86,500 words, will interest you.

Ralph has loved the piano ever since his earliest memory of sitting in his grandfather's lap while he played, his fingers casting a spell over the keys. He aspires to be America's next greatest pianist, but he royally botched his last school concert. What a nightmare that was. So when he gets a mysterious invitation to a scholarship contest at Carnegie Hall, he figures he'll leave the past behind him and hops on a plane to New York.

The competition is going to be stiff, especially after he hears Charlie's rendition of Rondo Alla Turca. And this girl Britta can really bust out a Chopin piece. But he came here to prove to his school that he's not a nervous loser and is determined to win that scholarship. That is until Britta is found dead backstage.

Police actively investigate her death, refusing to call it a murder just yet, and the scholarship is still on. But when other students start to disappear, Ralph and Charlie must ban together to get to the bottom of this mystery and stay alive. When Ralph finds a surprising photo of his grandfather in the Carnegie Hall archives, the pieces start to fall together. All the victims were once students of the same teacher: his grandfather.

Drop Dead Gorgeous meets *Phantom of the Opera* in this musical YA thriller. I teach piano at both the high school and college level and have even had the honor of playing at Carnegie Hall myself. My short fiction has appeared in *Beneath Ceaseless Skies* and *Glimmer Train*.

Thank you for your consideration,
Author



Dear Agent,

Intro



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Pitch



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Outro



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The Intro

I'm seeking representation for...

- Title
- Genre
- Word count

Extra information

- Personal connection
- Series potential
- Comp titles



The Intro

I am seeking representation for my 77K-word historical romance novel, GOLDEN BOYS.

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I'm excited to send you THE BLADES OF SATURN, my science fiction novel complete at 90,000 words.

THE BABEL FILES is a completed, YA science fiction book of 83,000 words. Readers familiar with Pierce Brown's *Red Rising* or Fonda Lee's *Zeroboxer* will find similar elements in my work.



Comp Titles

The Martian, but underwater and with a giant squid

Golden Girls meets *Indiana Jones*

The gritty world of *The Way of Shadows* (Weeks) with the character dynamics of *Six of Crows* (Bardugo)

X-Files but for middle schoolers

Appeal to fans of Courtney Milan and Tessa Dare

Under the Tuscan Sun set in China

~~Appeal to fans of *Harry Potter*, *Hunger Games*, and *Twilight*~~



What to Pitch

Setup

Escalation

Final Hook



Keep Setup to a Minimum

Describe hero in a single phrase

Stuck in their ordinary world

Internal struggle relevant to the plot

Dive into the **INCITING INCIDENT**

New situation

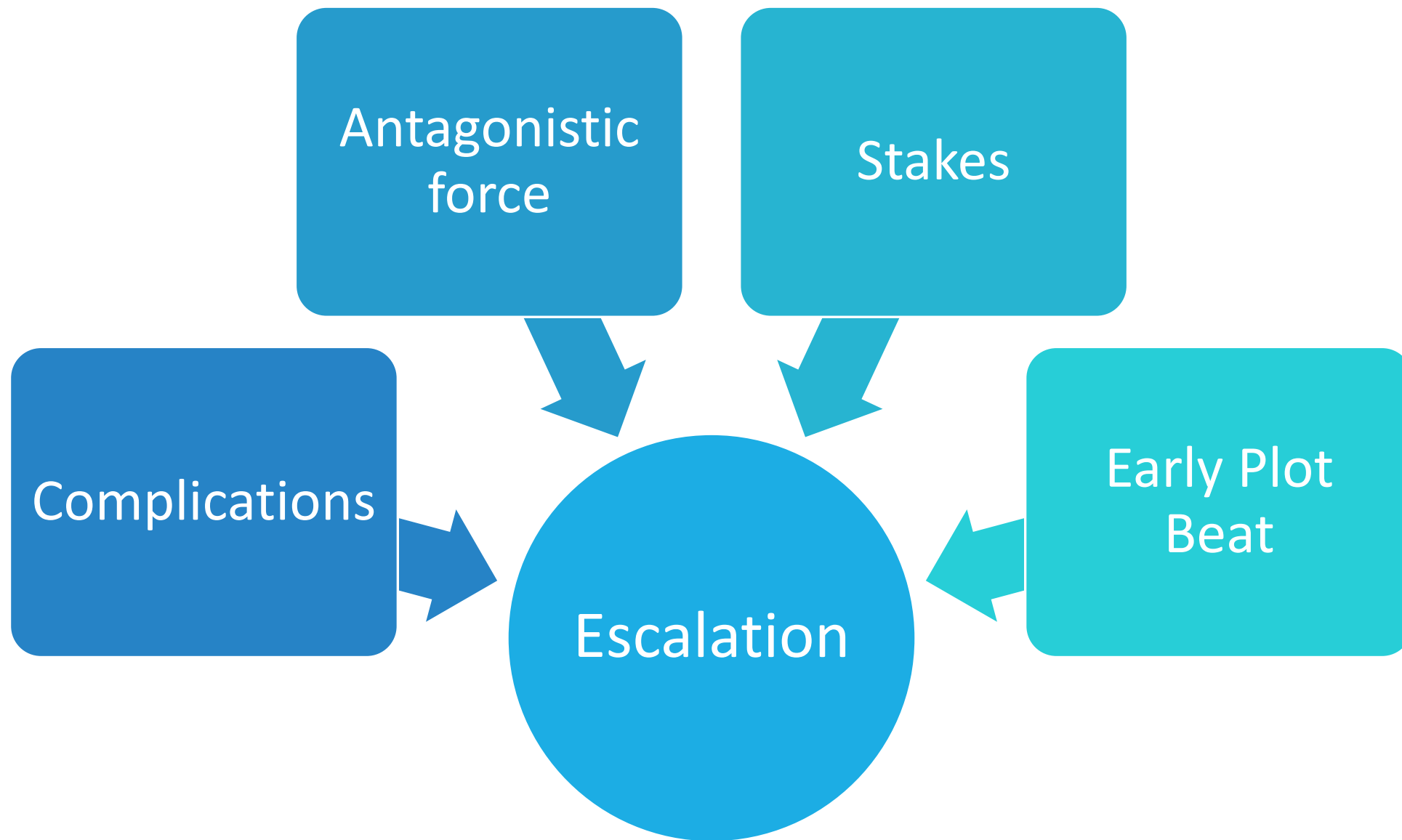


Setup

When fifteen-year-old orphan Samantha Young kills the richest man in Missouri in self-defense, she disguises herself as a boy and flees to the unknown frontier. She knows the law in 1849 will not side with the daughter of a Chinaman. Along with a runaway slave, also disguised as a boy, “Sammy” joins a band of young cowboys headed for the California gold rush.

It takes a very special crew to keep this vessel running. And no one knows that better than Nadya Skylung, who tends the cloud garden and keeps the ship afloat. When the unthinkable happens and pirates attack, Nadya and the other children aboard—all orphans taken in by the kindhearted Captain Nic—narrowly escape, but the rest of the crew is captured.





Escalation

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The trail poses far more hazards than the demure violinist imagined, not just from pursuing lawmen, but from Sammy’s own heart when she falls in love with one of the cowboys, West Pepper, who doesn’t know she’s a girl. Sammy can’t reveal her true identity for fear of losing the cowboys’ protection. But when West’s confusion over his feelings threatens to tear them apart, Sammy has to choose between her love for West and her own survival.



Escalation

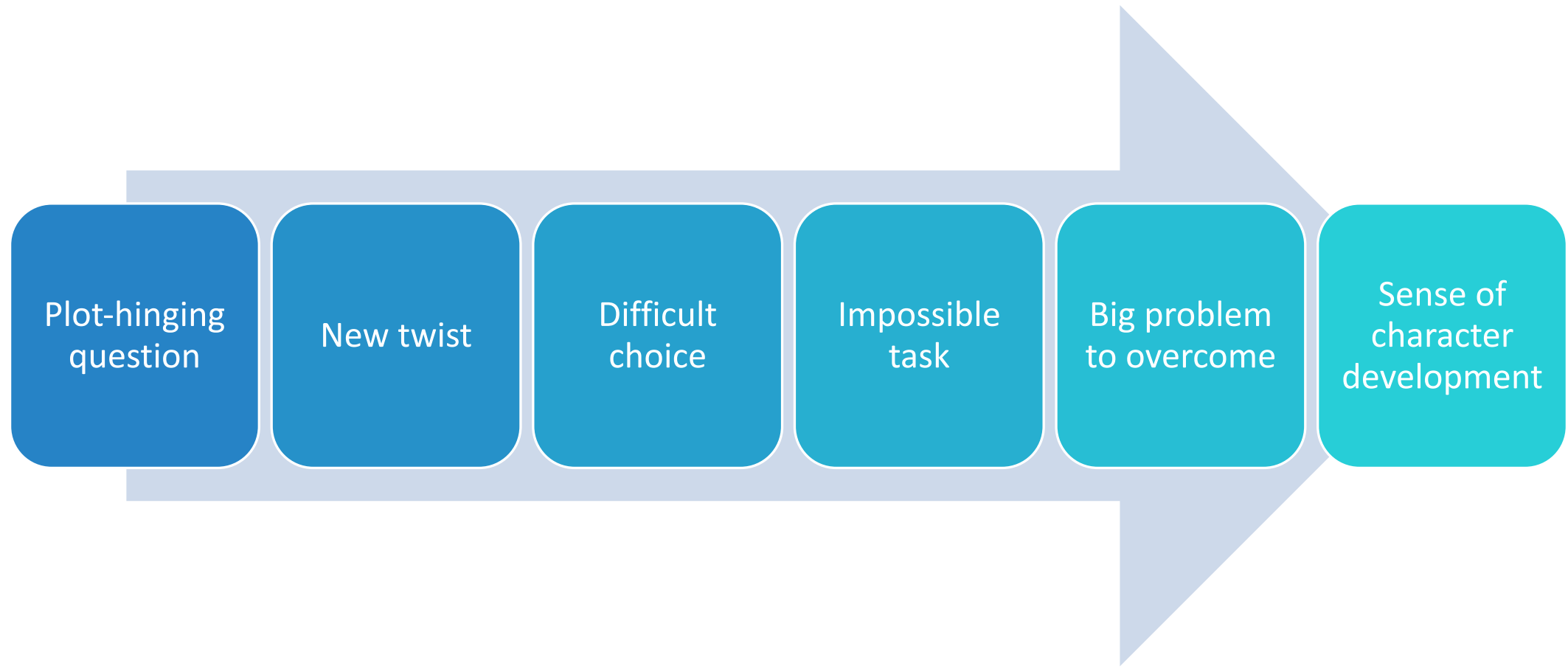
In Shaker Heights, a placid, progressive suburb of Cleveland, everything is planned—from the layout of the winding roads, to the colors of the houses, to the successful lives its residents will go on to lead. And no one embodies this spirit more than Elena Richardson, whose guiding principle is playing by the rules.

Enter Mia Warren—an enigmatic artist and single mother—who arrives in this idyllic bubble with her teenaged daughter Pearl, and rents a house from the Richardsons. Soon Mia and Pearl become more than tenants: all four Richardson children are drawn to the mother-daughter pair. But Mia carries with her a mysterious past and a disregard for the status quo that threatens to upend this carefully ordered community.

When old family friends of the Richardsons attempt to adopt a Chinese-American baby, a custody battle erupts that dramatically divides the town—and puts Mia and Elena on opposing sides. Suspicious of Mia and her motives, Elena is determined to uncover the secrets in Mia's past. But her obsession will come at unexpected and devastating costs.



The Final Hook



The Final Hook

All the murder victims were once students of the same teacher: his grandfather.

But when West's confusion over his feelings threatens to tear them apart, Sammy has to choose between her love for West and her own survival.

As Emmett uncovers the truth, he realizes he's not fighting for wealth or glory, he's fighting for his life.

Vin has learned to expect betrayal from everyone she meets, and gotten it. She will have to learn to trust, if Kel is to help her master powers of which she never dreamed.



Putting It All Together

Brussels, 1943. Twelve-year-old street orphan Helene survives by living as a boy and selling copies of the country's most popular newspaper, *Le Soir*, now turned into Nazi propaganda. Helene's world changes when she befriends a rogue journalist, Marc Aubrion, who draws her into a secret network that publishes dissident underground newspapers.

The Nazis track down Aubrion's team and give them an impossible choice: use the voice of the resistance to create a Nazi propaganda bomb that will sway public opinion against the Allies, or be killed. Faced with no decision at all, Aubrion has a brilliant idea. While pretending to do the Nazis' bidding, they will publish a fake edition of *Le Soir* that pokes fun at Hitler and Stalin—daring to laugh in the face of their oppressors.

The Ventriloquists have agreed to die for a joke, and they have only eighteen days to tell it.



Voice in Pitch

Flat Pitch:

When Jessica accidentally steals a holy relic from the Triton aliens, she unknowingly starts a war with the humans and Tritons. Now the Tritons are chasing her down in their mothership to recover their relic.

Pitch with Voice:

To be fair, Jessica didn't *mean* to steal a holy alien relic and start an intergalactic war. She just thought it was a plain old boring space rock. But try explaining that to the Tritons who are chasing after her in an alien mothership that packs a ton of firepower.



Voice in Pitch

Flat Pitch:

Charlotte Holmes is too smart to comfortably fit into the rigid Victorian society. But she never expected to become an outcast, exiled to the inhospitable streets of London.

Pitch with Voice:

With her inquisitive mind, Charlotte Holmes has never felt comfortable with the demureness expected of the fairer sex in upper class society. But even she never thought that she would become a social pariah, an outcast fending for herself on the mean streets of London.



What NOT to Pitch

Theme

World

Morals

Ending

Subplots and
side characters

How to market

How long it
took to write

Why your
book is better

Other books

Yourself



Ask Beta Readers

Who is my main character?

What do they want?

What event starts the book?

What's my hero's **goal**?

Why do they care about that goal (**motivation**)?

What happens if they fail (**stakes**)?

What's the main **conflict**?

Who's the antagonist, and why are they opposing the hero?

What kind of readers would want to read this book?



Reasons an Agent Will Reject

Easy Pass



- Guidelines
- Agent doesn't rep
- Word count
- Poorly written

Clarity



- Main character
- Plot
- Story problem
- GMCS

Story



- Average
- Not high concept
- Market
- Similar project



Thank You



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