Get Your Book Right Before the World Judges You

What Agents, Publishers, and Reviewers Are Looking For

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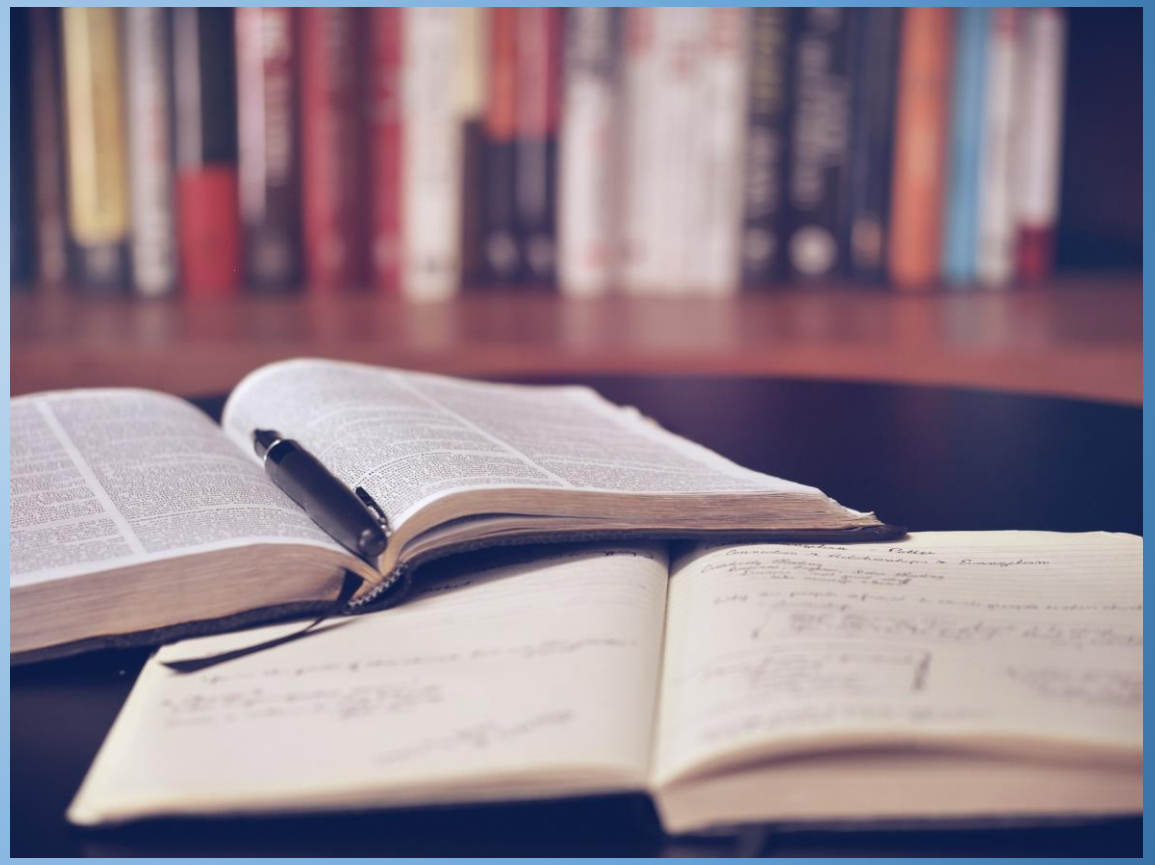
Part 3 - Content

Off to a Good Start

- Audience
- Genre appropriate
- Word Count
- First 10 pages



Nonfiction

- Organization of chapters
- Author's qualification
- References
- Purpose statement/theme
  - Bullet points – what do they need to know?

Fiction Blurb

A (insert adjective indicating longstanding social problem) (insert profession or social role) must (insert goal, sometimes including the ticking clock and stakes).

An amoral American nightclub owner must decide between joining the fight against the Nazis or pursuing his true love.

Scout, the young, impressionable chameleon-like dragon, must decide how she should look in order to get the career she wants.

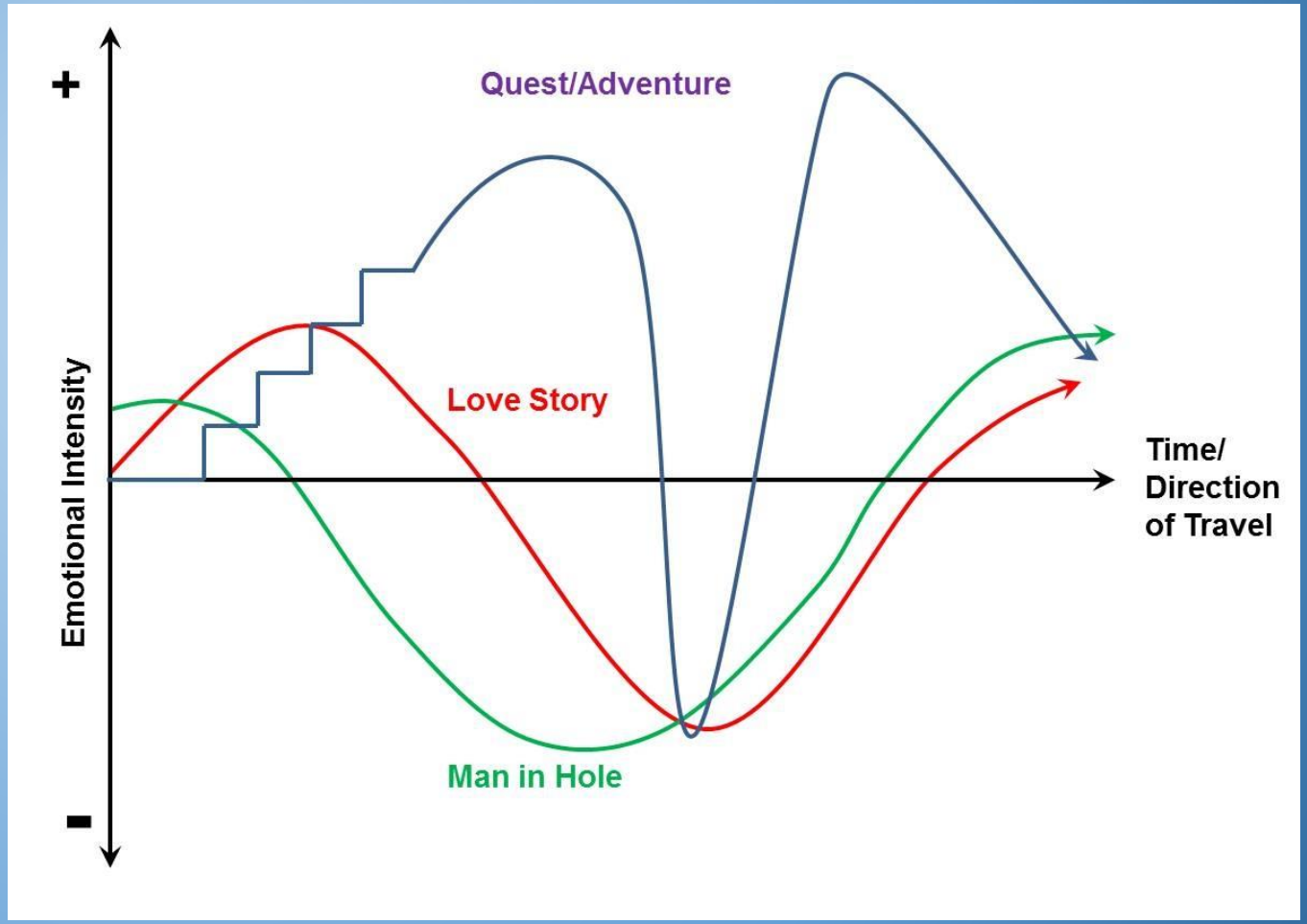
Things to Watch Out For

- Tropes
- Cliché
  - The apple doesn't fall far from the tree; Kid in a candy store
  - Bad guy dressed in black
- Stereotypes
  - Racial
  - Political
- Polarizing issues
- Repetitions
  - Unusual words or phrases that jump out at you
  - Repeated scenes

APPLIES TO NONFICTION TOO

Pacing

- Setting
  - Where and When
  - Just enough
  - Mix it in
- Story/Plot
  - Consistent with theme
  - Holes
  - Story arc
  - Nothing extra



Characters

- Do they act true to themselves?
- Are they *too* good? Or *too* bad?
- Appropriate for genre and age-range
- Do the main characters grow in some way?
- Love them or hate them
- Side characters
- Physical description
- Can you tell the difference between the characters, or do they all sound the same?

Point of View

- One at a time
  - If you are writing from Character #1's POV, then you cannot know what Character #2 is thinking/feeling.

Example of head-hopping:

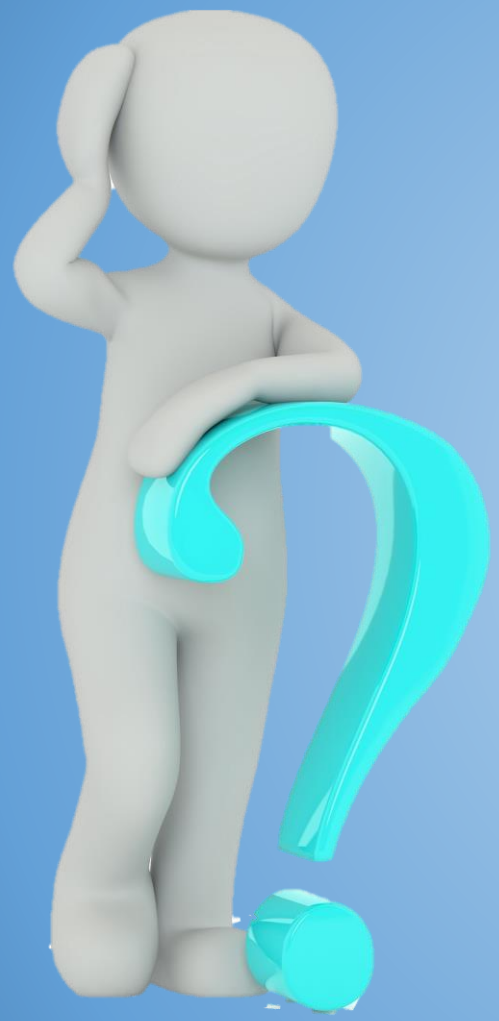
Aury saw Scott across the room and instantly fell in love. At the same moment, Scott caught her eye, and his heart jumped out of his chest.

Point of View

- First sentence in a chapter sets the stage
- You can switch POVs within a story
  - At a chapter break
  - Use distinguishing marks such as ********** at the shift
- Try to limit the POV shifts within the same chapter

Conclusion/Impact

- F: Cliffhangers at end of chapters
  - Page turn for picture books
- NF: So what factor
- F: Tie up all the conflicts introduced
- NF: Did author answer what they promised?
- Entertained or learned something



Part 3 Coming Soon

- Visual
- Technical
- Content
- Style

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