



Workshop #7 – February 17, 2017

## **PITCHING PRACTICE**

The first time any writer pitches their project to an agent, instead of feeling excitement over meeting a potential representative for their work, they feel terror.

This is caused by a lack of experience in selling.

What will help reduce the terror?

Breathing helps. As you walk to the agent pitch area, breath, consciously pulling air in your nose and out your mouth. On the exhale, consciously think about blowing out your nervous feelings.

For a quick moment, think about the agent. This person wants to meet you and hopes you are a writer they can represent.

As you approach the table, keep breathing. Smile.

- You know your query letter.
- You know your story core. (who wants what and why, what stands in their way and what is the terrible “or else” if they don’t get what they want.)

Just in case you have a “deer in the headlights moment,” you have written pertinent information (your story core) on note cards. And, you’ve written these in story-telling form so the agent will listen, instead of simply listing the story core elements.

Shake hands with the agent.

Sit down.

The agent will ask, “So, tell me about your project.

At that time, begin to tell your story.

My story is about (character’s name) who wants (what does she/he wants), because (why she/he wants it) and how this launches (the main action of the story).

An option is to use your subject line, then weave it into your story telling.

Talk slowly, pause to allow the opportunity for the agent to comment/and or ask questions.

If you’ve done your homework and know what genre this agent seeks, they will tune in to your story immediately and ask questions that will help them understand more about your protagonist (main character) and will ask questions about them and the path of the story.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?

From Tammy~

ALL THE WORLD’S A STAGE, AND TO A PSYCHOPATH, ALL THE PLAYERS GAME.

Story Core:

Who is my main character? Dr. Olivia Greyson

What does she want? She wants to heal emotionally.

Why does she want it? Live without fear

What stands in her way? Self-forgiveness

What is the terrible or else that might occur if she doesn’t get what she wants?

Another wrong choice could lead to her demise and the death of another colleague

TITLE: The Shakespeare Murders:

On a murky night a few years ago former profiler, Dr. Olivia Greyson, made a wrong decision that led to her partner's murder. Even with his killer behind bars Olivia still can't catch her breath. With a friend gone and her career shattered, Olivia's only hope of salvaging her reputation is to return to the life she left behind. A gruesome murder occurs and Olivia recognizes the killer's handiwork. It's eerily similar to several murders from years ago; the Shakespeare murders. Olivia jumps at the chance to redeem herself. But, will the anxiety from past failures cripple her progress before she can rewrite his twisted play? Or will the curtain fall on her?

A beautiful, young redhead is brutally murdered. Clutched in her lifeless hand is a Shakespeare quote just like the murder victims that shook Atlanta ten years prior. Olivia steps back into the gritty world of profiling to determine if a copy-cat is at work or if the elusive Shakespeare killer has returned. The cryptic message hidden in the quotes takes her through the seedy world of politics and organized crime to a bygone underground network harboring a long buried secret. As the case progresses clues point to someone close to the investigation and when a colleague goes missing Olivia knows the killer is closing in. Unsure who to trust Olivia puts herself in jeopardy to unravel the twists and turns that bring her face-to-face with the killer. She's forced to relive the same situation that led to her previous failure and alter the outcome if she and her colleague are going to make it out alive. But, the killer knows her weakness and Olivia's reentrance into the limelight is quickly dimmed as he tilts the precarious balance from the potential of her victorious emergence to her tragic demise.

The Shakespeare Murders is a \_\_\_\_\_ word crime thriller/mystery. My background is in scientific research. I've co-authored several peer-reviewed articles. I am also an active member of a writer's critique group.

Thank you for your consideration

Tammy Desjarlais

COMMENTS:

Story Core:

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What is the terrible or else that might occur if she doesn't get what she wants?

Another wrong choice could lead to her demise and the death of another colleague

The Shakespeare Murders:

On a murky night a few years ago former profiler, Dr. Olivia Greyson, made a wrong decision that led to her partner's murder DEATH. DELETE: **Even with his killer behind bars Olivia still can't catch her breath.** With a friend gone and her career shattered, Olivia's only hope of salvaging her reputation is to return to the life she left behind. RELUCTANCE/ CAN SHE DO THIS? UNCLEAR. **Do you mean she wants to return to the life she left? Or is she reluctant to do this, even tho she knows this is key to her healing?** A gruesome murder occurs ~~and~~ Olivia ~~recognizes the killer's handiwork.~~ It's eerily similar to several murders from years ago Olivia jumps at the chance to redeem herself QUESTION: JUMP AT OR RETURN RELUCTANTLY?. But, will the anxiety from past failures cripple her progress before she can rewrite his twisted play? Or will the curtain fall on her?

A beautiful, young redhead is brutally murdered. Clutched in her lifeless hand is a ShakespeareAN quote COMMA ~~just~~ like A SERIES OF MURDERS the murder victims that shook Atlanta ten years prior. Olivia steps back into the gritty world of profiling to determine if a copy-cat is at work or if the elusive Shakespeare killer has returned. QUESTION: **You have said this person is behind bars.** The cryptic message hidden in the quotes takes her through the seedy world of politics and organized crime to a ~~bygone~~ underground network THAT HARBORS harboring a long-buried secret. As the case progresses COMMA clues point to someone close to the investigation. ~~and when~~ a colleague goes missing Olivia FEARS/REALIZES knows the killer is closing in. Unsure who to trust COMMA Olivia puts herself in jeopardy to unravel the twists and turns that bring her face-to-face with the killer. She's forced to relive the same situation PERIL that led to her previous failure. THIS TIME SHE MUST ~~and~~ alter the outcome if she and her NEW PARTNER colleague are going to make it out alive. But, the killer knows her weakness and Olivia's reentrance into the limelight is quickly dimmed as he tilts the precarious balance from the potential of her victorious emergence to her tragic demise. REPHRASE THIS SO OLIVIA IS IN CHARGE, NOT THE KILLER.

The Shakespeare Murders is a \_\_\_\_\_ word crime thriller/mystery. My background is in scientific research. I've co-authored several peer-reviewed articles. I am also an active member of a writer's critique group.

Thank you for your consideration

Tammy Desjarlais

### From Vicki

It followed her to school one day, breaking all the rules.

Who is the story about: Sadie

What does she want and why: Sadie wants to be a normal teenager.

What stands in her way: Lack of self-esteem What is the terrible or else: Suicide Query

Born with cerebral palsy Sadie hides her disability behind long skirts. Her peers taunt the "cripple geek" whenever she wobbles by, and Sadie endures a painful life of loneliness. Until Finn, a British exchange student arrives. He sees beyond Sadie's walk and insecurities. With Finn, Sadie finds laughter, learns to cheat at poker, and harmonizes on her original songs. When the school year ends, Finn returns home. He vows to visit, but Sadie's convinced she'll never see him again. Sent to her grandmother's Catskill Mountain house for the summer, Sadie decides the isolated setting is the perfect refuge to end her life. Yet in the forest, as at school, Sadie senses someone watches.

After swallowing a handful of pills, Sadie wakes, dazed from a failed suicide. An unseen entity sparks her iPod to play Beatle songs, and the same sparks fly from her computer. Sadie finally discovers her culprit, Devilia, a mischievous hand-sized fairy. Devilia, lost in the human world, and Sadie, alone in a cruel teenage world, both yearn to belong. A tentative friendship evolves. When school begins Sadie allows Devilia to live with her in the city. Although Devilia promises not to leave Sadie's room, she disobeys. On a field trip to the Natural History Museum Devilia lures hundreds of butterflies to land on Sadie. They lift her skirt revealing her crooked legs. This goes viral. Humiliated, Sadie feels even more like a freak. Finn IMs "How cool! Wish I'd been there." He reveals that he's helping a mate sell "merchandise" so he can make money to visit her. Intuition tells Sadie that Finn is delving into the drug world. Sadie convinces Devilia to stop Finn in person. ASAP. Devilia, terrified she'll die in the cyber world, conjures fairy magic and disappears in a flash of energy, emailing herself to Finn. Sadie messages Finn

frantically. She waits and waits. No response. Finn is gone. Devilia is gone. And without them in her life, Sadie also wants to be gone.

My YA (and possibly MG) novel “Crooked” is complete at 75,000 words. I’m a member of SCBWI, attend writers’ conferences and workshops, and have participated with a Writer’s Group and writing partners since 2004.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

#### Synopsis:

Sadie knows she is being watched in the eerie Catskills. Attacks occur at every turn by something she can’t see, and all of Sadie’s attempts at suicide are thwarted. In a magical garden, what Sadie believes to be a hummingbird flies at her with a human face. But she comes face to face with a real fairy, Devilia. Terrified, Sadie flees. But once her shock alleviates, she anticipates meeting the fairy again. As their lives intertwine, Sadie develops a fondness for Devilia. Their cautious alliance leads to companionship. At summer’s end, Sadie allows Devilia to live with her in the city. Devilia wants to learn at school and agrees to follow Sadie’s rules; stay invisible in public and no magic. But when a group of girls tease Sadie, Devilia uses her skills to disgrace them in front of their peers. They take their anger out on Sadie, pushing and shoving her. Devilia flies in to help Sadie fight back. Sadie’s shocked at the tiny fairy’s strength and ingenuity. Then, during a field trip Devilia is the cause of a small miracle and Sadie becomes a YouTube sensation.

Television stations clamor for Sadie’s story but she avoids them. Her “girl torturers” create a Facebook page calling Sadie a witch. Sadie blames Devilia, and wants her gone. But could Devilia survive in the city without Sadie? And could Sadie release this small being who fills life with adventure as well as complications, and joy? Sadie has further anxiety when she learns Finn hangs out with a guy named Grocer. Under Grocer’s influence, Finn ditches school. Finn doesn’t tell Sadie he’s dealing drugs, but she figures it out. Just as a big deal is going down, Sadie begs Devilia to fly through the Internet and convince Finn to go back to school.

Devilia accompanies Finn to the drug deal. She causes a fight, and gets critically injured. In a mad rush to save Devilia, Finn grabs Grocer’s drug money and flies to New York, meeting Sadie in the Catskills. They carry Devilia to her magical garden with a healing stream and try to revive her, but Devilia fades away.

Although mourning the loss of the fairy, Sadie can no longer evade reporters. On national television she realizes it is time to stop hiding who and what she is. She bursts out “It was a fairy that caused my miracle.” At that moment, Devilia flies out of Sadie’s pocket, fully rejuvenated from the healing stream. A frenzy of confusion ensues at the TV studio as Sadie, Finn, and Devilia escape back to Sadie’s apartment. That evening on the rooftop, Sadie and Finn kiss. Devilia fills the sky with shooting stars, ready for her own journey in the world. Finn returns home and is off to boarding school. Weeks later, Sadie Skypes Finn telling him she’s won a part in the school play. She reveals her costume: a body hugging t-shirt and red tights.

#### COMMENTS AND TWEAKS:

It followed her to school one day, breaking all the rules.

Who is the story about: Sadie

What does she want and why: Sadie wants to be a normal teenager.

What stands in her way: Lack of self-esteem

What is the terrible or else: Suicide

#### Query

Born with cerebral palsy Sadie hides her disability behind long skirts. Her peers taunt the “cripple geek” whenever she wobbles by, and Sadie endures a painful life of loneliness. Until Finn, a British exchange student arrives. He sees beyond Sadie’s walk and insecurities. With Finn, Sadie finds laughter, learns to cheat at poker, and harmonizes on her original songs. When the school year ends, Finn returns home. He vows to visit, but Sadie’s convinced she’ll never see him again. Sent to her grandmother’s Catskill Mountain house for the summer, Sadie decides the isolated setting is the perfect refuge to end her life. Yet in the forest, as at school, Sadie senses someone watches.

After swallowing a handful of pills, Sadie wakes, dazed from a failed suicide. An unseen entity sparks her iPod to play Beatle songs. ~~THE, and the same~~ sparks fly from her computer. Sadie ~~finally~~ discovers her culprit, Devilia, a mischievous hand-sized fairy. ~~BOTH~~ Devilia, lost FRIENDLESS in the human world, and Sadie, alone in a cruel teenage world, ~~both~~ yearn to belong. A tentative friendship evolves. When school begins ~~COMMA~~ Sadie allows Devilia to live with her in the city. Although Devilia promises not to leave Sadie’s room, she disobeys. On a field

trip to the Natural History Museum COMMA Devilia lures hundreds of butterflies to land on Sadie. They lift her skirt COMMA revealing her crooked legs. THE EVENT-This goes viral. Humiliated, Sadie feels even more like a freak. Finn IMs “How cool! Wish I’d been there.” He reveals that he’s helping a mate sell “merchandise” so he can BUY A PLANE TICKET ~~make money~~ to visit her. Intuition tells Sadie that Finn is FINN’S DEALING DRUGS. ~~delving into the drug world.~~ Sadie convinces Devilia to stop Finn in person. ASAP. Devilia, terrified she’ll die in the cyber world, conjures fairy magic and disappears in a flash of energy, emailing herself to Finn. SADIE WAITS AND WAITS, MESSAGING FINN FRANTICALLY. ~~Sadie messages Finn frantically. She waits and waits.~~ No response. Finn is gone. Devilia is gone. And without them in her life, Sadie also wants to be gone.

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Synopsis:

Sadie knows she is being watched AT GRANDMAS HOUSE.

Strange things seem to be happening to her.

She imagines small flying things around her. What is she seeing, sensing.

Insanity is worse than being dead. She believes she is going crazy which would create more pain in her life.

But, her suicide attempt fails, and some comes face to face with a curious fairy with the power to manipulate her computer and ipod.

When she first meets Devilia, she’s cautious, relieved that she’s not crazy, and, over the next months, they become friends.

in the eerie Catskills. Attacks occur at every turn by something she can’t see, and all of Sadie’s attempts at suicide are thwarted. In a magical garden, what Sadie believes to be a hummingbird flies at her with a human face. But she comes face to face with a real fairy, Devilia.

Terrified, Sadie flees. But once her shock alleviates, she anticipates meeting the fairy again. As their lives intertwine, Sadie develops a fondness for Devilia. Their cautious alliance leads to companionship. At summer’s end, Sadie allows Devilia

to live with her in the city. THIS NEEDS SIMPLIFICATION. HOW DOES THE STORY BEGIN?

WHERE DOES THE SYNOPSIS BEGIN: Haunted, ghost,

Devilia wants to learn at school and agrees to follow Sadie's rules; stay invisible in public and no magic. But when a group of girls tease Sadie, Devilia uses her skills to disgrace them in front of their peers. WHAT DOES SHE DO? They take their embarrassment/anger out on Sadie, pushing and shoving her. Devilia flies HELPS SADIE FIGHT BACK OR in to help Sadie fight back. Sadie's shocked at the tiny fairy's strength and ingenuity. Then, during a field trip Devilia is the cause of a small miracle and Sadie becomes a YouTube sensation.

Television stations clamor for Sadie's story but she avoids them. Her "girl torturers" create a Facebook page calling Sadie a witch. Sadie blames Devilia, and wants her gone. But could Devilia survive in the city without Sadie? And could Sadie release this small being who fills life with adventure as well as complications, and joy? Sadie has further anxiety when she learns Finn hangs out with a guy named Grocer. Under HIS Grocer's influence, Finn ditches school FOR DRUG DEALS. Finn doesn't tell Sadie he's dealing drugs, but she figures it out. Just as a big deal is going down, Sadie begs Devilia to fly through the Internet TO and convince Finn to go back to school. TO STRAIGHTEN UP.

Devilia FOLLOWS FINN TO THE DEAL AND INTERRUPTS THE TRANSACTION BY STARTING A FIGHT. SHE IS CRITICALLY INJURED. ~~accompanies Finn to the drug deal. She causes a fight, and gets critically injured. In a mad rush~~ DETERMINED TO save Devilia, Finn grabs Grocer's drug money and flies to New York, meeting Sadie in the Catskills. They carry Devilia to her ~~magical garden with a healing stream~~ and try to revive her, but Devilia fades away.

Although mourning the loss of HER FRIEND, ~~the fairy~~, Sadie can no longer evade reporters. On AN EVENING national television TALK SHOW, she realizes it is time to stop hiding who and what she is. UNCLEAR. As written, you have said that her realization comes as she is on TV. Doesn't it come before? She bursts BLURTS ~~out~~ "It was a fairy that caused my miracle." At that moment, Devilia flies out of Sadie's pocket, fully rejuvenated from the healing stream. A frenzy of confusion ensues WHY? DOES DEVILIA FLY ABOUT CAUSING HAVOC WITH LIGHTS AND BOOMS ETC? at the TV studio as Sadie, Finn, and

Devilia escape back to Sadie's apartment ROOFTOP. ~~That evening on the rooftop,~~ Sadie and Finn kiss. Devilia fills the sky with shooting stars, ready for her NEXT JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY INTO THE WORLD. ~~own journey in the world.~~ Finn returns home and ~~is off to~~ THE DISCIPLINE OF boarding school. Weeks later, Sadie Skypes Finn TO SHARE HER TRIUMPH, ~~telling him she's won a~~ ROLE part in the school play. She reveals her costume: a body hugging t-shirt and red tights.

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS?

From Janet~

TITLE AND SUBJECT LINE: Glass Promises

Professor Grace Stone was a new mother and happily married (or so she thought) when her husband and his mistress were killed in a CAR ACCIDENT ~~natural disaster~~. The pressures of single motherhood are multiplied for Grace when LILY, HER FOUR-YEAR-OLD, BEGINS TO DEMAND THAT MOMMY "FIND HER A DADDY." ~~her four-year-old daughter, Lily, demands she "find her a daddy."~~ As an orphan and the offspring of an illicit affair, Grace knows the heartbreak of rejection all too well. Is the possibility of love worth the cutting pain of glass promises?

Despite a persistent fear of being vulnerable again, Grace begins to date. She meets Beau, another victim of a cheating spouse, but is reluctant to pursue a relationship with him. HOWEVER, SPURRED BY A STRONG ATTRACTION, ~~Without intending to,~~ she falls into Beau's passionate ~~embrace spurred by a strong attraction~~. At a ritzy charity event, Grace's uncanny resemblance to her dead mother causes an incident which reveals relatives she didn't know existed. She believes her days of longing for a family are over, but complications arise BECAUSE BEAU, HER LOVER, IS NOW HER STEP-COUSIN. when her lover is now a step-cousin. PLUS, ~~Also~~ Beau's sister refuses to accept Grace and sees her as an unwanted bastard. ~~She is forced to reassess the value of a family when Lily is terrorized by another child during a holiday gathering.~~ ALTHOUGH Mounting pressures FROM BEAU'S FAMILY trigger an estrangement from Beau, ~~but~~ Grace is determined to secure a place in his love-scarred heart. Will her efforts succeed or will she and Lily be forced to soldier on as a lonely family of two?

My 68,200 word completed romance, GLASS PROMISES, won third place in the 2016 Royal Palm Literary Award competition. I am a member of the Florida Writers Association, Romance Writers of America, Coral Springs Writers Group, a board member of the Florida Romance Writers, and assistant chairperson for the annual Coral Springs Literary Festival.

Synopsis:

Two years into her marriage, Grace Stone is left a widow with a newborn daughter. She obtains her PhD, secures a tenured university position, creates close friendships, and pays off the mortgage on her home. Life is good except for Lily's persistent preschooler demands for a daddy. Despite her vulnerability and fear of rejection, Grace cannot deny her child the love of a father.

She reenters the complicated world of relationships with speed dating. Weeks later, when her car is totaled in a freak construction accident, Grace encounters Beau, one of her rejected five minute speed dates. After he assists Grace with the purchase of a new vehicle, they become intimate...in her garage...on the trunk of his car. Appalled by her loss of control, she shuts down the relationship. However, Beau's patience and genuine feelings for Grace and Lily compel CONVINCING her to give him another chance.

When Grace ACCIDENTALLY discovers a family connection to Beau's stepmother, she's thrilled to have finally found living relatives. But tensions flare when Beau's sister, Gen, views GRACE as an illegitimate interloper. This strife drives Grace to press Beau for a commitment. BUT, Instead of a vow of love, he reveals the emotional scars inflicted by his ex-wife and admits he fears risking his heart again. With no hope of a future together, Grace is heartbroken and ends their relationship

HMMM. I FEEL YOU NEED A SENTENCE THAT TELLS HOW/WHY SHE ATTENDS A FAMILY THANKSGIVING PARTY. IS SHE WELCOME? DO SHE AND BEAU AMICABLY PART AND HE INVITES TO REMAIN AS A PART OF THEIR FAMILY? WHY WOULD HE?

When she and Lily are invited to the family's Thanksgiving dinner, Grace is concerned about awkwardness between her and Beau. The get-together goes well until Lily, DURING A GAME OF HIDE 'N SEEK, is traumatized WHEN GEN'S DAUGHTER LOCKS HER IN A CLOSET. from being locked in a dark cabinet by Gen's daughter. Grace wonders if an extended family is worth all the drama. However, her deep feelings for Beau and a growing attachment to her warts-and-all relatives confirms their value to her. To win Beau's love and his sister's acceptance, Grace maps out a campaign.

Tapping into her intellect and femininity, Grace appeals to Beau's masculine desires with flirtations and food. She provides support to Gen who ALSO HAS BEEN ~~has also been~~ wounded by marital infidelity. On Christmas Day, Lily SOBBS ~~sobs becomes upset~~ when she receives A BICYCLE FROM BEAU. Beau's ~~gift~~. She tells him "only daddies should give bikes to little girls." TOUCHED BY LILY'S TEARS, BEAU REALIZES HOW MUCH ABOUT LILY AND GRACE. HE PROFESSES HIS LOVE FOR GRACE WHO ~~Grace's strategy with Beau is rewarded when he professes his love. She encourages him to commit to their~~ relationship so they can build a future together. Six months later their promises (QUESTION: what promises?) are finalized on their wedding day. THIS LAST SENTENCE STILL DOESN'T WORK . . . NOT SURE WHY.