



Workshop #6 – February 10, 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. It boils down to lack of experience in selling. What will help reduce the terror?

Be prepared.

- Know your query letter.
- Know your main story points.
- Write them on note cards, and be prepared for the agent to ask, “So (your name), what’s your project about?”

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).

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 this agent wants, in terms of genre, 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.

From Tammy~

Subject line: 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:

Her lapse in judgement on a murky night leaves one colleague dead and a dangerous psychopath gone. Two years later, former profiler, Dr. Olivia Greyson, still can't catch her breath. A gruesome new case tempts her to return to the criminal battlefield to redeem her shattered career, and bury the guilt that haunts her. But, Olivia's reentrance into the limelight is quickly dimmed when unfamiliar dangers tilt the precarious balance from her emerging victorious to her tragic demise.

A beautiful, young redhead is brutally murdered and clutched in her lifeless hand is a quote from a Shakespeare play. Reminiscent of the killings 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 long buried secret. With one colleague missing and another near death Olivia is forced to suppress her anxiety in a race to unravel the twists and turns that ultimately bring her face-to-face with the killer. In order to save one of her own she must forgive her past failures and put herself in jeopardy before another killer slips away. Will sheer will and copious amounts of espresso be enough to rewrite his twisted play or will the curtain fall on his next heinous act?

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: Nice revision Tammy. Still needs some adjustment, but you've accomplished the heavy lifting.

DR. OLIVIA GRAYSON, A FORMER PROFILER'S LAPSE IN JUDGEMENT ON A MURKEY NIGHTXXXXXXXXX TWO YEARS LATER, XXXXXX Her lapse in judgement on a murky night leaves LEFT one colleague dead and a dangerous psychopath gone/ESCAPED? ON THE LOOSE? FREE TO KILL AGAIN?. Two years later, SHE former profiler Dr. Olivia Greyson still can't catch her breath. A gruesome new case tempts PULLS/DRAGS/CAPTURES HER INTEREST SO HE RETURNS her to return to the criminal battlefield to redeem her shattered career, and bury/HEAL/RELEASE the guilt that haunts her BECAUSE OF THE DEATH OF HER COLLEAGUE TWO YEARS EARLIER. But, Olivia's reentrance into the limelight is quickly dimmed when unfamiliar dangers WHAT ARE THESE tilt the precarious balance from THE POTENTIAL OF HER VICTORIOUS EMERGENCE TO her emerging victorious to her tragic demise. This tease works well. Except it's much stronger than the 2nd tease. Needs to be the reverse. THE KILLER IS CLOSER THAN SHE THINKS. AN INSIDER. THAN SHE REALIZES.

10 YEARS AGO THE SHAKS KILLER MURDERED, THEN DISAPPEARED.

2 YEARS AGO ANOTHER KILLER, THE MACHETE MAN, KILLED HER COLLEAGUE DURING THE INVESTIGATION.

A beautiful, young redhead is brutally murdered. CLUTCHED—and elutched in her lifeless hand is a SHAKESPEARE QUOTE. WHICH HARKENS TO MURDER 10 YEARS AGO. quote from a Shakespeare play. IT'S EARILY Reminiscent of the killings that shook Atlanta ten

years (is this from two years ago? Do you need to link it to the situation where her lapse of judgement resulted in the death of a colleague?) she prior. QUESTION: HOW DO YOU LINK THIS MURDER TO ONE FROM 10 YEARS PRIOR. WHY? WHAT IS IT THAT TRIGGERS REGURGITATION OF GUILT AND NEED FOR REDEMPTION FROM OLIVIA? Olivia steps back into the gritty world of profiling to determine if a cCopy-cat is at work or HAS THE if the elusive Shakespeare killer RETURNED? Question, does your reader know about the Shakespeare murders? has returned. WHY ELSE IS SHE DOING THIS? EXPAND REDEMPTION ASPECT. The cryptic message hidden in the quotes takes her through the seedy world of politics and organized crime to a long buried secret. With one colleague missing and another near death IS THIS A RESULT OF THE MURDER? Olivia is forced to suppress her anxiety CLARIFY THAT THIS IS BRINGING UP FEARS/GUILT/ANXIETY THAT SHE MIGHT SCREW UP AGAIN in a race to unravel the twists and turns that ultimately bring her face-to-face with the killer. In order to save one of her own WHO? THE MISSING PERSON? she must forgive her past failures and put herself in jeopardy before THE another killer slips away. Is it the same killer or a new one? Will sheer will and copious amounts of espresso be enough to rewrite his twisted play BEFORE THE CURTAIN FALLS or will the curtain fall on his next heinous act? NOT A LARGE ENOUGH THREAT. Does the killer know she is on his/her trail? Is she in peril? Escaping justice isn't enough of a threat.

NEED EMOTIONAL CONNECTION TO HER COLLEAGUE TO MAKE IT STRONGER. WAS IT HER PARTNER.

TEASE AT END OF FIRST PARAGRAPH: SHE DOESN'T WANT TO BE DRAWN BACK, BUT KNOWS SHE WILL LIVE IN FEAR, INSTEAD OF BEING ABLE TO TRACK DOWN THE ONE WHO GOT AWA.

USE TEASE FROM FIRST PARAGRAPH TO END YOUR SECOND.

The Shakespeare Murders is a _____ word crime thriller/mystery.

My background is in scientific research. I've co-authored several peer-reviewed articles AND AM I am also an active member of a writer's critique group.

Thank you for your TIME AND consideration

From Vicki

"Crooked"

SUBJECT LINE: 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. Sadie ENDURES BEING FRIENDLESS UNTIL XXXXX hibernates ENDURES LONLINESS/DREADS SCHOOL until Finn, a British exchange student, looks beyond her different 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. But in the forest, as at school, Sadie senses someone watches.

After swallowing a handful of pills, Sadie wakes, dazed from her failed suicide. An unseen entity plays Beatle songs on Sadie's iPod, and sends ~~strange~~ sparks to her computer. ~~Soon~~ she comes face to face with her watcher, SADIE MEETS Devilia, a mischievous, hand-sized fairy. Devilia, alone in the human world, and Sadie, alone in a cruel teenage world, both want 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 Sadie, causing them to lift **her** long skirt and reveal **her** crooked legs. THIS GOES VIRAL. The event becomes a viral sensation. Humiliated beyond despair, 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. not telling the whole story. She begs him to **stop**. He responds "no worries." Sadie convinces Devilia TO CONVINCED help Finn TO **STOP** in person. ASAP. Although terrified she'll die in cyberworld, Devilia conjures up fairy magic and disappears in a spark 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 wants to be gone as well.

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:

Born with cerebral palsy, 15-year-old Sadie arrives in the Catskills for summer vacation, after a failed attempt at suicide. She is lost without Finn, her best friend, who has moved back to London. While at her grandmother's creepy old house someone watches her every move and Sadie believes the house could be haunted. Every attempt to kill herself is thwarted by some invisible entity, who turns out to be a fairy named Devilia.

Jealous of Sadie's presence in her forest, Devilia wanders, but unlike Sadie, who longs to disappear, the tiny fairy longs to be noticed in a world in which she has no place. As their lives intertwine, Sadie escapes the darkness that had consumed her and has a genuine desire

to help Devilia. As Devilia learns to trust Sadie, a cautious alliance leads to companionship. At summer's end, Sadie allows Devilia to live with her in Manhattan. Devilia wants to learn at school and agrees to follow Sadie's rules. While invisible, cruel girls tease Sadie, and Devilia uses her skills to disgrace them in front of their peers. They take their anger out on Sadie and try to beat her up, but Devilia steps in, helping Sadie fight back. Although Sadie is filled with empowerment, she hesitates to celebrate, shocked by Devilia's strength during the battle. The worst of all possibilities happens when Devilia's volatile nature causes a small miracle and Sadie's palsied self, surrounded by butterflies, becomes a viral YouTube sensation.

Television stations clamor to hear Sadie's story. 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 as her caretaker? And could Sadie let go of a fairy who fills her life with adventure, as well as complications, and joy. Sadie has further fears when she learns that Finn hangs with a guy named Grocer, and under his influence Finn has not been attending school. Finn doesn't tell Sadie he's dealing drugs, but she figures it out. Just as a big drug deal is going down, Sadie begs Devilia to fly through the Internet and convince Finn to go back to school, and stay away from the Grocer.

Devilia accompanies Finn to the drug deal. A fight breaks out and Grocer and another dealer outnumber Finn. Devilia flies in, attacks the Grocer, and saves Finn. She gets seriously injured in the scuffle. In a rush to save Devilia, Finn grabs Grocer's dirty drug money to fly to New York. Sadie and Finn reunite in the Catskills, and bring Devilia to her magical garden with a healing stream. As they try to revive her, Devilia fades away.

In mourning, Sadie appears on national television and in a moment of clarity realizes it is time to stop hiding who and what she is. She

bursts out “It was a fairy that caused my miracle.” Devilia flies out of Sadie’s pocket, fully rejuvenated from the healing stream. A frenzy of confusion ensues at the TV studio and Sadie, Finn and Devilia escape back to Sadie’s apartment. On a Manhattan rooftop, Sadie and Finn kiss. Devilia charges the sky with shooting stars, enlightened, and ready for her own journey to see the world. Finn returns to London and must attend boarding school, but Sadie plans to visit for the holidays. Proudly, Sadie tells Finn she won the part of Puck in A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Skyping Finn, she shows off her costume of a short brown top and green tights, a leggy sprite ready for the world to see.

Synopsis COMMENTS:

Born with cerebral palsy, 15-year-old Sadie arrives in the Catskills for summer vacation, SHE’S TRIED SUICIDE BEFORE. THIS DEVIATES FROM YOUR QUERY. after a failed attempt at suicide. She is lost without Finn, her best friend, who has moved back to London. REPEAT OF QUERY ~~While~~ at her grandmother’s creepy old house someone watches her every move. ~~and~~ Sadie believes the house IS could be haunted. ADD A FEW OF THE DEVILIA INTERACTIONS WITH SADIE. THINKS IT’S A HUMMING BIRD, EXCEPT IT HAS A FACE. Every attempt to kill herself is thwarted by some invisible entity, who turns out to be a fairy named Devilia.

~~Jealous of Sadie’s presence in her forest, Devilia wanders but unlike Sadie, who longs to disappear, the tiny fairy longs to be noticed in a world in which she has no place.~~ SAID THIS IN THE QUERY. Feel you need to re-write your synopsis opening paragraph that doesn’t repeat from the query or introduce unnecessary information.

As their lives intertwine, Sadie DEVELOPS A FONDNESS FOR DELIVIA. ~~escapes the darkness that had consumed her and has a genuine desire to help Devilia.~~ THEIR As Devilia learns to trust Sadie, a cautious alliance leads to companionship. At summer’s end, Sadie allows Devilia to live with her in Manhattan. Devilia wants to learn at

school and agrees to follow Sadie's rules. BUT WHEN THE GIRLS While invisible, cruel girls-tease Sadie, and Devilia uses her skills to disgrace them in front of their peers. They PUSH AND SHOVE SADIE AROUND, UNTIL DEVILIA FLITS IN TO HELP SADIE FIGHT BACK. SADIE'S AMAZED AT THE TINY FAIRY'S INGUENITY AND STRENGTH. take their anger out on Sadie and try to beat her up, but Devilia steps in, helping Sadie fight back. Although Sadie is filled with empowerment, she hesitates to celebrate, shocked by Devilia's strength during the battle. DURING A FIELD TRIP DEVILIA CAUSES A SMALL MIRACLE AND SADIE BECOMES A YOUTUBE SENSATION. The worst of all possibilities happens when Devilia's volatile nature causes a small miracle and Sadie's palsied self, surrounded by butterflies, becomes a viral YouTube sensation.

Television stations clamor to hear Sadie's MAGIC INSECT story. 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 as her caretaker? And could Sadie RELEASE THIS TINY BEING WHO let go of a fairy who fills her life with adventure, as well as complications, and joy. WHEN SADIE LEARS THAT FINN'S DITCHING CLASSES AND HANGING WITH A NEW FRIEND NAMED GROCCER TO MAKE SOME QUICK CASH, Sadie has further fears when she learns that Finn hangs with a guy named Groccer, and under his influence Finn has not been attending school. Finn doesn't tell Sadie he's dealing drugs, but she. SHE FIGURES IT OUT . . . HE'S DEALING DRUGS. igures it out. Just as a big drug deal is going down, Sadie begs Devilia to TRANSPORT HERSELF fly through the Internet and convince Finn to STOP AND go back to school, and stay away from the Groccer.

Devilia ARRIVES DURING A MAJOR DRUG DEAL BUT DISRUPTS IT BY CAUSING A FIGHT AND IS SEVERELY WOUNDED. accompanies Finn to the drug deal. A fight breaks out and Groccer and another dealer outnumber Finn. Devilia flies in, attacks the Groccer, and saves Finn. She gets seriously injured in the scuffle. In a rush to save Devilia, Finn grabs Groccer's dirty-drug money FLIES/RED EYES

TO NEW YORK AND REUNITES WITH SADIE IN THE CATSKILLS. ~~THEY CARRY to fly to New York. Sadie and Finn reunite in the Catskills, and bring~~ Devilia to her magical garden ~~with a healing stream. As they~~ AND try to revive her, BUT SHE FADES AWAY. ~~Devilia fades away.~~

THIS IS TWO DAYS WORTH OF ACTION.

BUTTERFLY EVENT OCCURRED WAY BEFORE? A MONTH BEFORE.

SCHEDULED FOR A HUMAN INTEREST INTERVIEW, KEPT AVOIDING IT. REPORTERS HOUND HER.

SHE AVOIDS THEM, BUT THE FLURRY DOESN'T DIE DOWN. WITCH LABLE ON FB STIRS IT UP AGAIN, OR KEEPS ALIVE.

SCHEDULED FOR A TELEVISION INTERVIEW REGARDING THE BUTTERFLY EVENT, SADIE DECIDES THIS IS THE TIME FOR HER TO STOP HIDING WHO AND WHAT SHE IS AND HOW THIS ALL TRANSPIRED. OR IS SADIE CONFRONTED BY A TV REPORTER AS SHE ARRIVES AT SCHOOL AFTER SHE CONCEALS THE INTERVIEW? AGAIN, IT'S IMPORTANT TO MAKE SURE THE TIMING ON THIS ALL IS CLEAR. In mourning, Sadie appears on national television and in a moment of clarity realizes it is time to stop hiding who and what she is. TIMING ISSUE? DOES FINN CATCH A RED EYE TO MAKE IT TO NY SO QUICKLY? 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 and Sadie, Finn, and Devilia escape ~~back to~~ Sadie's apartment. THAT EVENING, ON THE ROOFTOP, ~~On a Manhattan rooftop,~~ WHEN Sadie and Finn kiss. Devilia FILLS charges the sky with shooting stars, THEN BEGINS ON HER enlightened, and ready ~~for her own journey to~~ DISCOVER see MORE OF THIS the-world. FINN RETURNS HOME AND TO BOARDING SCHOOL. WEEKS LATER, SADIE SKYPES FINN TO TELL HIM THAT SHE'S WON A PART IN THE SCHOOL PLAY AND FLASHES HER COSTUME: BODY-**REVEALING** T-SHIRT AND **RED TIGHTS**. Finn returns to

~~London and must attend boarding school, but Sadie plans to visit for the holidays. Proudly, Sadie tells Finn she won the part of Puck in A Midsummer Night's Dream. Skyping Finn, she shows off her costume of a short brown top and green tights, a leggy sprite ready for the world to see.~~

From Janet~

SUBJECT LINE: Glass Promises

Professor Grace Stone was happily married (or so she thought) AND A NEW MOTHER when her husband and his mistress were killed IN AN A FREAK ACCIDENT. ~~weeks after HER daughter's birth.~~ The pressures of single motherhood are multiplied for Grace when ~~her~~ four-year-old 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. 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 CREATES AN INCIDENT WHICH reveals THE EXISTENCE OF relatives she didn't know existed. She believes her days of longing for a family are over, but complications arise when she discovers her lover is NOW a step-cousin WHOSE ~~and his~~ sister refuses to accept her, the bastard girlfriend. Grace IS FORCED TO REASSESS reassesses the value of HER NEWLY-FOUND/DISCOVERED family AFTER when Lily is terrorized BY A STEP-COUSIN DURING A FAMILY DINNER. N AWKWARD attempt to drive the newcomers away. THEIR MOTIVES ~~Although~~ mounting pressures ON BEAU 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 68,000 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, Florida Romance Writers, Coral Springs Writers Group, and assistant chairperson for the annual Coral Springs Literary Festival.

Synopsis: (396 words)

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.** ~~has close friends, and a mortgage-free home.~~ Life is good—except for demands from Lily who, with preschooler persistence, lobbies for a daddy. Despite her vulnerability and fear of rejection, Grace cannot deny her child the love of a father.

NOTE: DON'T USE—EM DASHES BECAUSE THEY OFTEN ARE LOST IN TRANSLATION INTO A DIFFERENT SYSTEM.

She reenters the complicated world of ~~man-woman~~ **MALE/FEMALE** 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, Grace shuts down the relationship. However, Beau's patience and genuine feelings for **GRACE AND Lily** compel her to give him another chance.

When Grace discovers a family connection to Beau's stepmother, she's thrilled to have finally found living relatives. ~~However, she soon learns that her dream and the reality of family dynamics are very different.~~ **MEANING? HOWEVER,** Tensions flare when Beau's sister, **GEN**, views Grace as an illegitimate interloper. This strife forces Grace to press Beau for a commitment. Instead of a vow of love, he reveals the emotional scars inflicted by his ex-wife and **ADMITS** fear

of risking his heart again. With no hope of a future but still in love with him, HEARTBROKEN, Grace is ~~heartbroken when SHE ENDS~~ their relationship ~~ends. ALL IS LOST~~

When she and Lily are invited to the family's Thanksgiving dinner, Grace worries THIS MAY BECOME AWKWARD, BUT THE FAMILY GATHERING GOES WELL ~~what will happen when she sees Beau again. Although there is some awkwardness, the get-together goes well-until BUT/HOWEVER~~ Lily is traumatized WHEN SHE IS DELIBERATELY LOCKED IN A CLOSET BY GEN'S DAUGHTER DURING A GAME OF HIDE-AND-SEEK ~~by a young step-cousin.~~ Grace wonders if an extended family is worth all the drama until she acknowledges REALIZES/BECOMES AWARE OF/CONCEDES/ADMITS the depth her love for Beau and a growing attachment to her warts-and-all relatives. She initiates a campaign to win his love and his sister's acceptance.

Tapping inTO her INTELLECT ~~natural intelligence and her mother's~~ tricks-of-the-trade, Grace appeals to Beau's masculine desires with flirtations and food. She also provides ~~survivor~~ support to GEN his ~~hostile sister~~, WHOM SHE LEARNS HAS BEEN ~~recently~~ wounded by marital infidelity.

CHRISTMAS DAY

BEAU GIVES LILY A BIKE

SHE CRIES BECAUSE SHE WANTS A DADDY WHO GIVES BIKES TO THEIR CHILDREN.

SHE THOUGHT ONLY DADDIES GIVE BIKES TO CHILDREN

On Christmas Day, Lily cries when Beau gives her his gift because SHE THOUGHT "only daddies can give bikes to little girls." SHE IS CRYING BECAUSE SHE IS UPSET. UNCLEAR AS REVISED. STRAIGHTEN THIS OUT. Grace's efforts, with a little help from Lily, are rewarded when Beau professes/CONFESSES how much they mean to him. The following day, they meet for a heartfelt talk. GRACE and Grace encourages Beau to COMMIT TO THE RELATIONSHIP SO THEY CAN BUILD A FUTURE TOGETHER.

~~promise his fidelity and love so they can build a future together as a new family.~~ Six months later that commitment is finalized on their wedding day.