

There's more than one way to *Save the Cat!*

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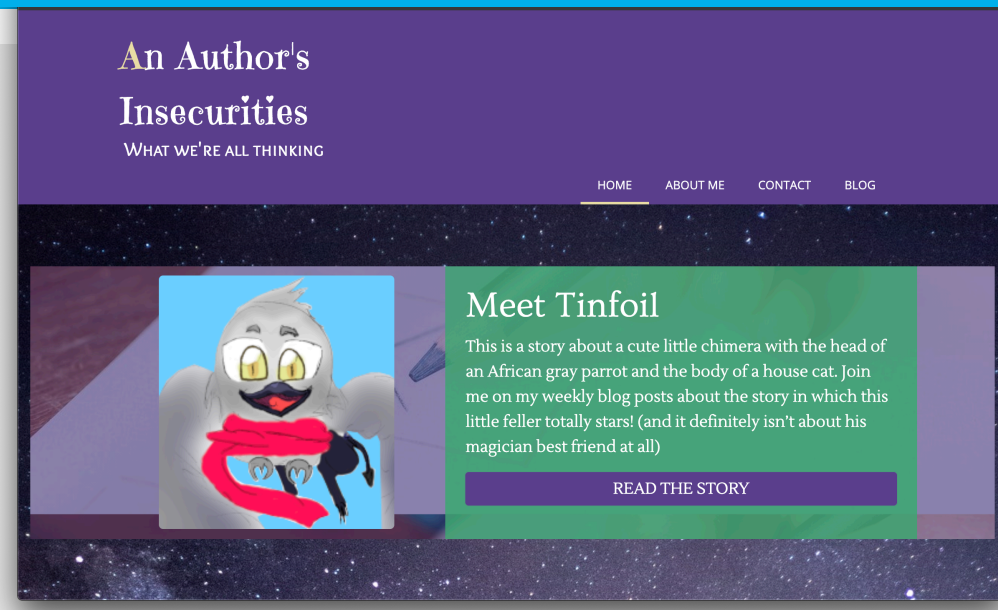


Intro

This project follows the process of writing a book and preparing it for the publishing route.

Blog

I created a blog to record my progress and through the stages of my project. Check out <https://authorinsecurities.com/> (created using wordpress) for more detail about my process researching, outlining, and drafting the book and agent materials.



Literature cited

Publishers Marketplace, info@publishersmarketplace.com. "Dealmakers: Agents - Children's: Middle Grade Fiction." *Publishers Marketplace*, 2020. www.publishersmarketplace.com/dealmakers/index.cgi?tag=agent.
Mele, Tia. "Agent Page Tia Mele." *The Official Manuscript Wish List Website*, Manuscript Wish List, 2020, www.manuscriptwishlist.com/mswl-post/tia-mele/.
Brody, Jessica. *Save the Cat! Writes a Novel: the Last Book on Novel Writing You'll Ever Need*. Ten Speed Press, 2018.

Research Agent Trends

I researched what agents were interested in, in order to determine trends and create a book that could sell.

Publisher's marketplace was used to find and track current publishing deals.

Manuscript Wish List and agency websites were used to find agents' interests.

I found that agents would be interested in a MG #ownvoices contemporary fantasy story with STEM.



Create Agent Materials

Most publishing houses only deal with authors who are represented by agents. Agents make legal contracts and fight on the author's behalf.

To obtain an agent, one contacts an agent and sends:

- A query letter (300-word compelling sales pitch)
- A synopsis (2-page summary of the plot)
- A sample (first 5-15 pages of manuscript)

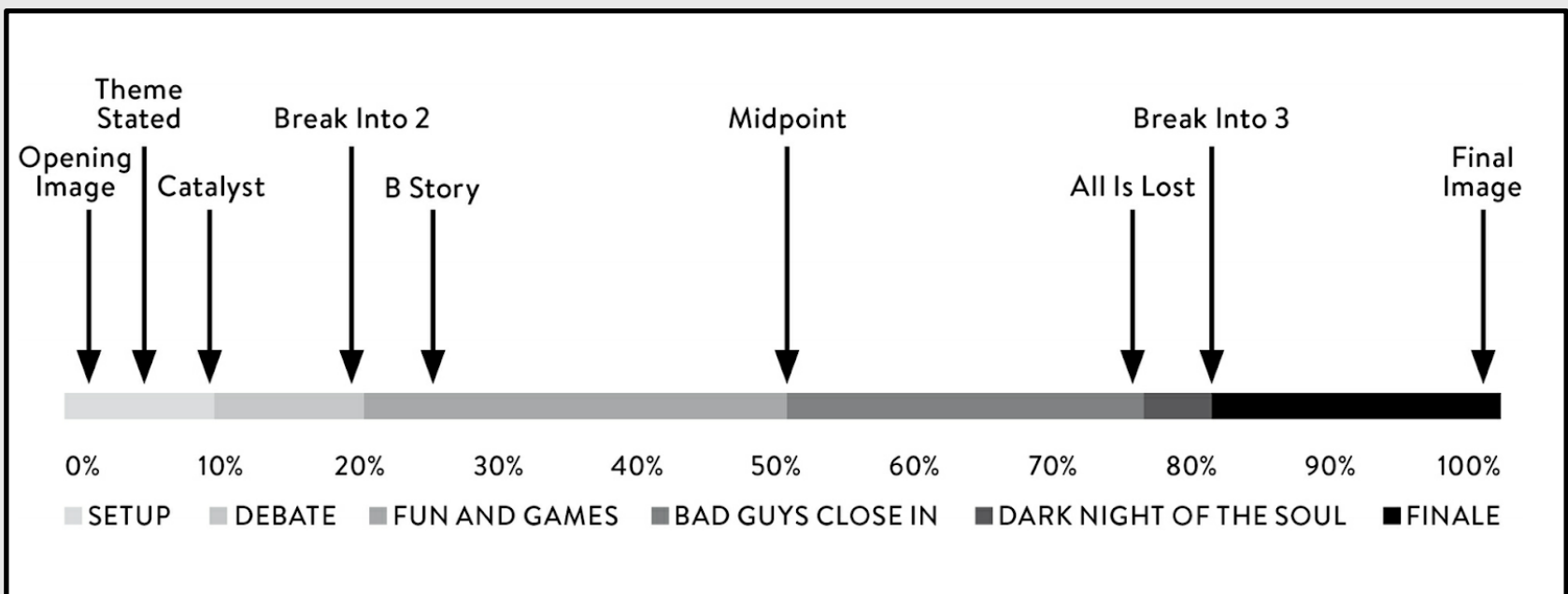
If an agent is interested, they will continue the correspondence and ask for additional materials.

If rejected, one must research more agents to contact.

Outline

- I read *Save the Cat! Writes a Novel*, where Jessica Brody adapts Blake Snyder's beat sheet, which gives plot timestamps and deconstructs story.
- I used the beat sheet to plot a more traditional plot structure.

Beat Sheet illustration from *Save the Cat!* →



First Draft

Over a month, I turned my outline into a first draft. I started with writing Act 1, then Act 2, then Act 3.

ACT 1	40 Pages
1. OPENING IMAGE (0 TO 1%):	0-2
2. THEME STATED (3%):	10
3. SETUP (1% TO 10%):	1-20
4. CATALYST (10%):	20
5. DEBATE (10% TO 20%):	20-40
ACT 2	120
6. BREAK INTO 2 (20%):	40
7. B STORY (22%):	44
8. FUN AND GAMES (20% TO 50%):	40-100
9. MIDPOINT (50%):	100
10. BAD GUYS CLOSE IN (50% TO 75%):	100-150
11. ALL IS LOST (75%):	150
12. DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL (75% TO 80%):	150-160
ACT 3	40
13. BREAK INTO 3 (80%):	160
14. FINALE (80% TO 99%):	160-198
15. FINAL IMAGE (99% TO 100%):	198-200

CHAPTER 1 – Act 1 part 1 (Opening Image)

Tap, tap, tap. Alex tapped the tip of his shoe against the wooden floor of his room. This created an echo that bounced off of the many bookshelves covering his walls. Every book had its place. The eleven-year-old had taken extreme care in arranging his books to turn his room into a fortress. Books covered his walls in colorful patches of green, red, orange, and blue.

CHAPTER 9 – Act 2 part 5 (Fun and Games + Midpoint)

School passed. Classes didn't matter. Strangers didn't matter. Sure, Alex was still aware of their stares. But now that he had Chiyo and Tinfoil on either side of him, the stares stung less. The silence stung less.

Alex knew exactly what he wanted to do and nothing was going to get in his way. He was going to become a god. He was going to change the world as others knew it. He just needed time.

Revising & Editing

It is very important to revise and edit the manuscript until it is flawless.

One great revising tool makes use of a writer's greatest asset: their loyal friends, writing group, or beta readers who will read the entire manuscript and provide critique.

It is easy to glance over mistakes when editing. I read aloud and mark up printed copies to get a 2nd look.