

# Finding an Agent 101

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Query Letters, Twitter Contests, and R&Rs

# What is a Query Letter?

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- A cover letter for your book
- Professional and Courteous
- Short and Concise: 250-400 words
- Why do you need one?

# Anatomy of a Query

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- Formula
  1. Personalization
  2. Hook
  2. Summary
  3. Bio



# Anatomy of the Hook & Summary

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- The Hook – lure the agent in
- But WHEN: (inciting incident)
- THEN: (the point of no return)
- BUT: (the consequences/the stakes/the villain)
- WILL HE/SHE: (the final big question)

# Summary Pitfalls

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- Too Vague
- Too Specific (no word salads!)
- Too Surprising (WITH DRAGONS)
- Tips
  1. Have a friend who knows nothing about your book read your query and tell you what \*they\* think your story is about.
  2. No more than 3 (maybe 4) names

# Anatomy of a Bio

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- Non-Fiction: platform, credentials, endorsements
- Fiction: previously self-published (successfully). Awards.
- Short and Professional

# Query Pitfalls

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- The ending
- Gimmicky
- Rhetorical questions
- The next Harry Potter!
- My mother loved it
- A fictional novel
- Belittling the genre
- Telling not showing
- Already self-published



# Query Strategies

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- First: is your ms polished? Beta readers and CPs.
- Spreadsheet- Agent, Agency, Notes, Reason, Date Sent, Response
- Researching Agents
  1. Publishers Marketplace
  2. AgentQuery.com and QueryTracker.net and ManuscriptWishlist.com
  3. Twitter and the #mswl hashtag and #tenqueries and #querytip
  4. Google!



# Query Strategies Cont.

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- Send out queries in batches of 5-10
- Take stock, re-work
- Follow the guidelines!
- Beware of schmagents

# Twitter

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- Connect with other writers, follow your dream agents
- #amwriting #ontheporch #askagent
- Pitch Contests: #pitchwars #revpit #pg70pit #dvpit (Carissa Taylor)
- Use comps when pitching on Twitter (TITANIC + SALT TO THE SEA)
- Etiquette- don't pitch agents

# Helpful Websites

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- [publishingcrawl.com](http://publishingcrawl.com)
- [Queryshark.blogspot.com](http://Queryshark.blogspot.com)
- [Chucksambuchino.com](http://Chucksambuchino.com)
- [Carlywatters.com](http://Carlywatters.com)
- [Janefriedman.com](http://Janefriedman.com)
- [Literaryrambles.com](http://Literaryrambles.com)



# The R&R

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- Revise and Resubmit:
- “Happy to take another look” vs. “exclusive r&r”
- Don’t re-work overnight
- Keep the line of communication open

# Offer of Representation!

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- Don't be afraid to ask questions
- Contact other agents who have the partial or full
- Contact clients of those agents
- Read the agency agreement
- Celebrate!