

# How the Premise Becomes a Hook!

Wouldn't it be great if you could go back in time and hear how some of your favorite movies or novels were pitched?

Benchley: "...so a Great White Shark is eating people at a beach resort, and this water-phobic sheriff has to figure out a way to kill it before the 4th of July week-end when tourism is at its peak..."

Cameron: " We know the ship sank, but did we know that a young man in steerage class was aboard to sacrifice his life to save the love of his life?"

The actual "pitching" is really saying what your premise is by first stating your main character; next comes the inciting incident that catapults your main character into action and conflict; and last is the outcome of the story, or what it is that the main character needs

to do to solve his problem.

The premise of your story becomes “high concept” when you employ a “conflagration of opposites” methodology. This means that an immediately unlikely situation occurs in the story. For example: What if a man decides to dress up as a nanny in order to get to see his children after a divorce decree prevents him from having custody? What if there were a lawyer who suddenly could not tell a lie? Because lying is how lawyers make their living...

This “conflagration of opposites” can also be called a hook, which is the idea that sells the story. It isn't the story itself, because the hook doesn't *tell* you what happens next – instead, it *sets up the question* “what happens next?” You can transcend what has been done before by added an epic element. i.e. Man's struggle against nature; the human race will be destroyed; a societal breakdown of the family structure will occur.

Once you have your high-concept premise,

it should be no longer than 28 words. This would be like sending a text message that needs to include only the 3 main elements: main character; inciting incident; end game of the story. You can use this 28-words as your elevator speech; your pitch; your focus when you are writing your story. If you find yourself getting off-course, refer back to the high-concept premise to remind yourself exactly what your story is about.