Logline worksheet

Project: _____

THE FOUR PARTS, AND THE TWIST

1. Who is it about?

Describe them rather than naming them: a word or two that makes them someone in particular.

2. What happens that starts the story?

The moment after which their life can't go on as it was.

3. What do they have to do?

A goal we can picture: get home, find the killer, save the house.

4. What stands in the way, and what is lost if they fail?

The opposing force, and the stakes that make us care.

5. Why them?

Is this person the worst, or the most surprising, person to face this problem? That twist is often the hook.

PUT THEM TOGETHER

When _____, a _____ must _____, or _____.

Three passes

Write it three times. The third is usually the one.

First pass: just what happens

Second pass: who they are, and the clock

Third pass: what it costs, and why them

FIVE TESTS

- [ ] I can say it out loud in one breath, without reading.
- [ ] Someone who has never heard of the project can tell it back to me.
- [ ] It makes them ask what happens next.
- [ ] It suggests the genre and the tone without naming them.
- [ ] It needs this protagonist. Anyone else would make it a different story.

AN EXAMPLE: LOW TIDE

First pass: A woman goes back to her late mother's house and finds her father there.

Third pass: On the day her late mother's cottage is sold, a sound recordist who listens to empty rooms for a living goes back to record it one last time, and finds the father she has refused to hear for thirteen years already inside.

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