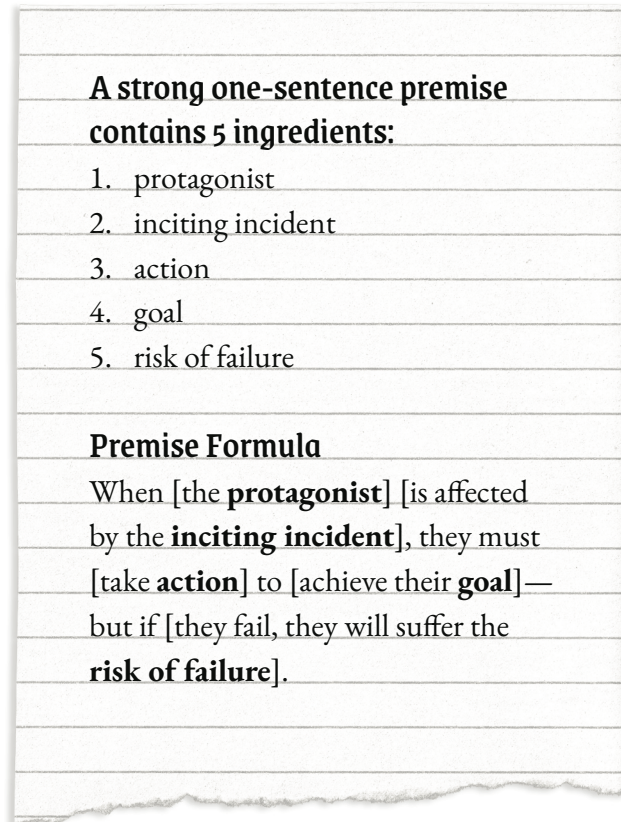# Premise

Turn your murky idea into a clear, one-sentence description of your book's premise.

A strong one-sentence premise contains 5 ingredients:

1. protagonist
2. inciting incident
3. action
4. goal
5. risk of failure

Premise Formula

When [the **protagonist**] [is affected by the **inciting incident**], they must [take **action**] to [achieve their **goal**]—but if [they fail, they will suffer the **risk of failure**].

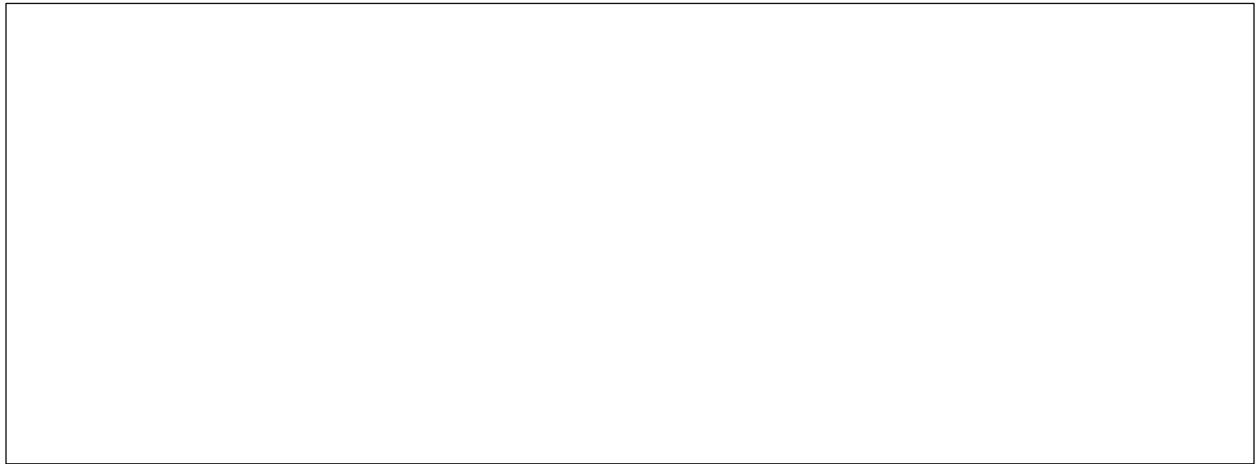**Write your one-sentence premise below.**

Example: When the teen daughter of a sickly botanist is caught stealing potential cures from a drug dealer, she must work for him to pay off her debt while secretly continuing to rob him for her mother—but if he discovers her double-cross, he'll make her family pay too.

1. protagonist: the teen daughter of a sickly botanist
2. inciting incident: is caught stealing potential cures from a drug dealer
3. action: work for the drug dealer
4. goal: to pay off her debt while secretly continuing to rob him for her mother
5. risk of failure: if he discovers her double-cross, he'll make her family pay too

Tag Cloud

Read your [premise](#) to a few people and ask them, "If you were to buy this book, what would you be expecting? Tell me the first words or phrases that come to mind." Jot down their responses to create your tag cloud—a list of tropes and story elements that your readers want to encounter. You can use this list to brainstorm ideas throughout the plotting process.

Write your tags below.

Example: double life, moral ambiguity, crime underworld, desperation, botany, healing, poison, secrets, betrayal, drug deals, tension with family, power dynamics, secret identity, street smarts, "one last job" trope, resourcefulness, threats to family, survival tactics, unlikely alliances, loyalty tests, mentorship, covert operations, close calls, rags to riches, law enforcement, cat-and-mouse dynamics, trust issues, thieves, blackmail