

Skyler White's

Myth: This Will Fix Everything

Workshop Summary

Struggling to find a timeless high-concept pitch for your contemporary? Every successful heroine, no matter how modern, connects to some ancient archetype.

Looking for a reason to write rather than wash the dishes? Touching base with the myth of yourself can help get you going again. Or maybe you just need a plot? There are worse places to start than the stories that have lasted a few thousand years.

We are all storytellers. From the family histories we recite to explain ourselves to ourselves, to the dreams we write when we're asleep, human beings are creatures of narrative; and writers – from Dante to Gaiman, Milton to Whedon – mythically so. This workshop will unpack myth's power to instruct and inspire not only what we write, but how we write it.



Starting with a definition of myth as “a true story in tension with fact,” this participatory workshop constructs a three-line grid as a tool for mining mythology for character and plot development, pitches, query letters, brainstorming, and personal motivation.

MYTH	FACT
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The first layer explicates the Fact/Myth tension in terms of Action/Reaction (plot) and Event/Meaning (the “G” and “M” of GMC) and then moves on to character creation. Most problems with plotting and characterization come from an imbalance along this continuum. For example, character likeability problems are solved by a stronger focus on meaning, as almost any despicable action is “likeable” if we understand why the character acted the way s/he did. Dragging plots result from over-emphasis on character reactions.

MYTH	FACT
CHARACTER	PLOT

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Adding two fundamental components of storytelling – plot and character – to the grid opens up space for the writer to play and problem-solve. A writer trying to inject more symbolism into her writing, or to get more out of props and settings, can move along the Myth-Plot diagonal with good results. For a compelling pitch, start with one mythic element and one fact about your plot or lead character.

Finally, by adding the character of the author and her life (of which she is the author, after all) to the grid, some very practical tips emerge.

MYTH	FACT
CHARACTER	PLOT
AUTHOR	LIFE

Working collaboratively with the audience, the workshop delivers both specific and personal insights, immediately useable tools, and fodder for further thought. It has been well-received by both published and unpublished writers.



The back cover of Skyler White’s debut novel *and Falling, Fly* reads: “In a dark and seedy underground of burned-out rock stars and angels-turned-vampires, a revolutionary neuroscientist and a fallen angel must pit medicine against mythology to erase their tortured pasts.”

National best-seller Anya Bast calls *and Falling, Fly* “intriguing from page one ... White asks hard questions about desire, damnation, love and sacrifice in a beautiful, poetic way that will keep you utterly spellbound. The book presents a challenging abrasion between rationality and myth that will stick with you long after you finish the last page. With this first novel, White has made my Must Buy list. I eagerly await her next book.”



Skyler would like to have a bio that neatly tied her not-so tortured past to her current talk, and linked her Master’s degree in Theater History to her circus training, her study of philosophy and comparative religion to her career in advertising. But it would be a myth. She lives in Austin, Texas.

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