

Query Critique

Dear fake agent

Because you rep many authors who deal with themes of concern to young people, I have a 90,000-word YA Sci Fi/Speculative Fiction [REDACTED] I think you will enjoy. It would appeal to readers of Tahereh Mafi's Shatter Me and Lauren Oliver's Delirium. Imagine Stranger Things' Hawkins in the year 2053, where the MC and her mates take on the Hunger Games' Capitol.

It's 2054. In sleepy Portobello on the south coast of New South Wales, Australia, it's hard to know who to trust. Spies are everywhere. The corrupt Goers government sees no future on Earth. In the fire-blackened bushland, the Stayers Resistance is preparing an army. Further up the coast, the Spaceship Aurora is poised on the Australian Space Agency peninsular, ready to blast off to Mars.

Sasha Barnes is a badass blow-in orphan from Sydney caught in the middle. She's an outsider, a freak with latent superpowers and a terrible reputation. All she wants is to find her missing sister. But to do so she needs to get to Mars. And she can't tell anyone that today, her 18th birthday, is her last day on Earth.

Going means betraying her ex-astronaut grandmother Greta, abandoning her little brother, giving up on a future with love interest Billy, and aligning with the Goers.

As the battle looms closer, she becomes a pawn between the two sides. But when she finds out her superpowers hold the key to mankind's future on Mars, and that the sister she has risked everything for has set her up, she must decide whether she is a Stayer or a Goer. And whether the dying Earth is worth saving.

This stand-alone novel is the first in a potential series. I am completed my first two drafts through the Writer's Studio, and further courses through the Australian Writers Centre. I belong to a private writer's group. My debut novel has been read by qualified beta readers.

It combines the coming-of-age intensity of Twilight's Bella with the reluctant revolutionary of Hunger Games' Katniss.

Commented [KV1]: Nice touch. Lol

Commented [KV2]: I'm thinking this is a placeholder for more direct personalization. If not, please consider. 😊 You don't want to miss this opportunity to hook the agent!

Commented [KV3]: Super interesting comp, but a little on the older side.

Commented [KV4]: This comp title is also on the older side. I'm wondering which elements in this one might be similar to your work as both of these comp titles seem very different to those proposed in the next sentence.

Commented [KV5]: Wow! This sounds like an epic tall order! I'm enticed to read on.

Commented [KV6]: The previous sentence says 2053. Just flagging for your reference.

Commented [KV7]: Great world building here. Wondering if we need to get to our MC sooner. What's her problem? What's her life like before everything changes.

Commented [KV8]: Does this mean she came out of nowhere?

Commented [KV9]: I can feel a hint of voice here. This is a good setup for what readers can expect in the narrative.

Commented [KV10]: Just to clarify, are her superpowers what makes Sasha an outsider. And why does she have a terrible reputation?

Commented [KV11]: Great job setting up a goal and motivation!

Commented [KV12]: This is a good setup. We may just need to reduce some of the world building to get to it.

Commented [KV13]: Unique! Love this.

Commented [KV14]: We might have 1 or 2 too many details in this list. I would trim the least impactful storyline. Maybe the little brother? I'm a sucker for a good love story, so I'm biased. You can keep these details in the story itself, but it might not be as pivotal to your pitch.

Commented [KV15]: Good plot twist here.

Commented [KV16]: At first, I thought that maybe your stakes weren't clear. But I think the list at the beginning of this paragraph highlights what your MC has to lose. I think refining that statement will make the stakes clearer.

Commented [KV17]: Excellent. Agents like to see this sort of flexibility.

Commented [KV18]: A typo here. I think this note could be stronger with some rewording. Perhaps something... [1]

Commented [KV19]: May flow better with "I also belong to a private writer's group." Not that you need this ex... [2]

Commented [KV20]: I think the detail about beta readers is unnecessary, but it is common to include "TITLE v... [3]

Commented [KV21]: This seems to be an extra note for comps. While interesting, I think the 2nd comp choi... [4]

Commented [KV22]: Fairly sound pitch! Just need stronger comps, a few tweaks to your intro and bio... [5]