**WRITING IRRESISTIBLE KIDLIT by Mary Kole**

The table of contents has a summary per chapter, and the chapters have ‘From the Shelves’ and ‘From the Authors and Editors’ throughout to give examples.

\*These are my notes for *me*. If you want more information on a certain chapter or topic, I encourage you to support the author and buy the book. Thanks!\*

**CH1 Kidlit Market Overview**

**CH2 The MG & YA Mindset**

-MG wants to be loyal to their family but also start to crave independence from them

- They want to define themselves as an individual but also want to fit in with friends and social groups at school

- You feel the pull to go - grow up, make big choices, be unique- but also the pull to stay - be a kid, be safe, have things decided for you when the going gets tough—all at once.

**CH3 What’s the Big Idea?**

Originality; Commercial; Hook

Logline/Hook/Elevator Pitch — The genre, protag, set-up (goal), & problem/hindrance to said goal

**CH4 Storytelling Foundations**

How to Start your story, the inciting incident, & the promise of the novel

Prologues

Balancing Action & Information

Show vs Tell: Show character emotion, physical telling is cliché, use interiority; Character’s thoughts, feelings, and reactions. Reflection on why they’re crying or angry etc. Need interiority to go with telling and physical telling.

-In romance scenes- eyes lighting up, blushes, tilt of head, etc are cliché.

\*Interiority- access to a character’s thoughts, feelings, & reactions to the situation at hand. \*It’s when Interiority is MISSING that telling & physical telling become a problem.

Tense vs POV; & Multi POV

**CH5 Character**

6 things needed of Protag in 1st ch- character’s worldview, how they think about life and what their overall attitude about it is; at least 1 piece of context, a detail about how he relates to and interacts with his world; at least 1 character objective or goal, either big picture or pertaining to the scene at hand; at least 1 characterizing detail that teaches us something about their personality; at least 1 piece of voice that gives us a hint of his language, energy, and way of noticing things around him; at least 1 concrete choice or action, preferably a save the cat moment.

Layers to yours story: Revealing Objective & their Revealing Motivation; How they Confront Changes vs Confronting Failure; Me vs The World. (p102)

Core Identity: Core Strength, Virtue, Role, Flaw, Emotions, Boundaries, Outlook & Beliefs (p106)

Writing Exercises: Defining Core Identity; Heroic Qualities, Tough Decisions; The Outlying Layer; Characterizing Reactions; Past, Present, & Future; Quirks & Private Moments

Make sure to give your antag’s Objectives & Motivations early on so readers can relate/understand them.

\*Secondary Character Worksheet & Villain Character Worksheet\* (p129)

\*Scene Rubric\* (p143)

**CH6 Plot**

-Plot vs Emotional Plot graph (p158)

Have at least 3 escalating conflicts during the Fall that your characters comes up against before he reaches the Climax, each getting more dire

-Public and private stakes. Have the stakes rise when your MC gets close to her goal, always find a way to make things worse - have the object destroyed, have her ally leave, have her safe haven destroyed, etc.

-Tension is more subtle than stakes. Tension is on every page, it’s in every objective. Create tension in description, in withholding (info), & in rhythm (sentence structure/length), urgency vs leisure.

-Using backstory & Withholding- less is more for backstory, and it must be important- if it never appears again, cut it. Gives examples for when to use backstory. To give more details, give a flashback- this needs to be a seed for something later in the book. Withholding is keeping a secret, growing a mystery, a shocking revelation, creates tension.

-Subplots & the Muddy Middle- a lot of people end up info dumping and put the same conflict over and over (like 3 similar fight scenes instead of 1 big fight with high consequences. Cut scenes where your character is learning/in training, or when they’re waiting for more info, a secret, a truth, etc. These are static and your character needs agency. Subplots are separate from your main story but bound by the big objective/theme. Subplots are good pacing for the main action because grinding on the main plot for too long gets linear and tedious. Leave a subplot or 2 untied if you’re writing a series.

See your plot as a web. Deepen the connections between plot and subplot and characters. Your secondary characters and a tag should have an emotional plot too.

-Climax & Ending- present your character with their biggest challenge and triumph. Incorporate your protag’s core strength and test his core weaknesses. Showcase her in a difficult moral dilemma. Give him an emotional turning point that syncs up with the plot and/or a subplot or 2. Raise the stakes to the point your protag is pushed to one of her core boundaries. Have a badass action sequence if your plot calls for it. There need to be at least 3 times leading to the climax when your character is tested to the point that they almost give up. And then she recommits, but why? And raise the stakes each time. How is her resolve stronger? Did her motivations and objectives shift. What’s the final moment of commitment before the climax?

**CH7 Advance Kidlit** (Other Craft Elements)

-Imagery - through setting, descriptions, simile, metaphor; all 5 senses

-Setting - make your town, room, etc come to life; how it comes across will show how your MC feels about it; Interact with the setting. How does the setting change each time the MC revisites while on a diff part of their arc?

-Worldbuilding - subset of setting; give info on a need to know basis, right before it matters or right as it becomes important. Even contemporary needs societal elements and such. Character imagery like their smell, ticks, how they deal with anxiety, etc.

-Voice- Word choice; imagery; syntax (sentence formation); rhythm; mood; simplicity; passive; uncluttered (get rid of ‘had’); indirect; old. Each character has a diff voice and speech pattern.

-Narrators & Authorial Voice- your brand/style of writing, including your plots/imagery/emotions/fight scenes/whatever sets you apart. \*\*Someone could read your work not knowing it’s you, but know it’s you.\*\* the dream!

Voice exercise - what each character would use as a synonym to a word.

-Theme- what do you want your reader to identify with? This isn’t a moral or lesson and isn’t stated outright. Good themes for Kidlit market: growing up, relationships, being human, ethics, authority & power, and faith & religion.

**CH8 A Career in Kidlit**

Talks about agents, querying, editors, sub rights, submission; links for where to find CPs; Questions to ask yourself for picking agents to query; Links for agent resources; How to access query responses; the Query Blurb formula.