

OUTLINING LAB – REVISION #3 – HANDOUT #1 THE PITCH AND THE PREMISE

Examples of the Difference between a Pitch and a Premise

Premise:

The Cotton Club is set in the 1920's, and follows the onstage and offstage lives of some of the club's chorus girls, owners, and employees. We follow Lucille Wilson, who is too dark-skinned to qualify as a Cotton Club Girl; and Johnny Burke, who gets sucked into the gangsters' world against his better judgment; and Sally Rivers, the light-skinned chorus girl, who tries to fend off the attentions of a wealthy white man.

Pitch:

Set in Harlem's most famous night spot, this is a musical story of those whose lives revolved around this fabled speakeasy and black performers' zenith. Our story revolves around three different characters whose lives were entangled with this magical time and place: Lucille Wilson, a talented singer and dancer trying to break the "dark-skinned" taboo; Johnny Burke, an up-and-coming young mobster who gets in way over his head working for Owney Madden, the gangster and owner of The Cotton Club, and the chorus girl Sally Rivers, who can pass for white, pursued by wealthy Nelson Forrest who wants her as his mistress. A whirlwind of colorful characters and hot big band music.

Premise:

Holmes is determined to rescue *femme fatale* Irene Adler from Moriarty's clutches, and involves Watson in a scheme to feign an attack in front of Irene's home, which will allow Holmes to slip inside and steal some incriminating photographs. Irene, still a desperate woman, urges Holmes to give up his life as a detective, and join her in a life of passionate crime. Holmes is tempted. But in the end, he is true to his dedication to the Art of Deduction and the absolution of the innocent.

Pitch:

It's classic Sherlock Holmes. A stolen diamond. *A femme fatale*. And, of course, Dr. Watson, 221 Baker Street and the Napoleon of crime, Moriarty. What Holmes doesn't suspect is that this time he himself is the intended victim, and his nemesis is going to take the form of a ruthless actress, Irene Adler, who will stop at nothing to steal the most priceless thing in London: Sherlock Holmes' heart. Can Holmes rescue Irene from the clutches of Professor Moriarty? Or is he just falling into a trap which Moriarty has set for him?