

Dear Ms. Grinberg,

I'm seeking representation for *Cinder*, an 85,000-word futuristic young adult novel and a re-envisioning of the classic Cinderella story. I'm submitting to you because Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies* series was hugely inspirational in the writing of this novel, and I hope my futuristic world will capture your interest as well.

Sixteen-year-old Cinder is a cyborg, considered a technological mistake by most of society and a burden by her stepmother. Being cyborg does have its benefits, though—Cinder's brain interface has given her an uncanny ability to fix things (robots, hovers, her own malfunctioning parts), making her the best mechanic in New Beijing. This reputation brings the prince himself to her weekly market booth, needing her to repair a broken android before the annual ball. He jokingly calls it a matter of national security, but Cinder suspects it's more serious than he's letting on.

Although eager to impress the prince, Cinder's intentions are derailed when her younger stepsister, and only human friend, is infected with

Commented [MOU1]: Immediately caught my eye!

Commented [MOU2]: I appreciated that you had done your research, and come to me because of Scott. And given my love of Scott's work, I was intrigued by how *Uglies* might have influenced you.

I also loved your phrase "hugely inspirational" – I felt your genuine respect and admiration and unbounding enthusiasm in that two word phrase, and same with the close of this first important par: "and I hope my futuristic world will capture your interest as well." Your wish here struck me as personal, and genuine, whilst still totally professional.

Commented [MOU3]: Cinderella as cyborg – genius!! You made me immediately feel for this protagonist, with "technological mistake" to society, and a "burden for her stepmother." I felt deep empathy.

And in the same breath you introduce the fact that she has extraordinary gifts and traits- unappreciated by her society and her evil stepmother, but the sort of traits that would be deeply appreciated by me, the reader. This brought me further close to her still. I love characters that play against stereotype – girl mechanic is awesome. And "New Beijing" immediately intrigued me as well.

Then you throw in the prince – the promise of romance! – and a fabulous plot teaser: "he calls it a matter of national security, but Cinder suspects it's more serious than he's letting on."

It's also very effective how this paragraph is worded to subtly suggest we're in the character's pov. This instantly works to bring us close to her, plus gives us a great taste of your writing.

the fatal plague that's been devastating Earth for a decade. Blaming Cinder for her daughter's illness, Cinder's stepmother volunteers her body for plague research, an "honor" that no one has survived.

But it doesn't take long for the scientists to discover something unusual about their new guinea pig. The surgeons who turned Cinder into a cyborg had been hiding something. Something valuable.

Something others would kill for.

I've had a novelette, "The Phantom of Linkshire Manor," published in the gothic romance anthology *Bound in Skin* (Cats Curious Press, 2007), and am a member of the Romance Writers of America. I hold an MS in Publishing and a BA in Creative Writing, emphasis on children's literature. My bi-monthly writing newsletter reaches over 450 subscribers.

Cinder is the first of a planned series.

I've attached the first fifty pages. Thank you for your consideration.

Commented [MOU4]: Here you cleverly pull back from that close pov, to seamlessly pitch the rest of the book.

In a very short number of words you reference devastating personal loss (her younger stepsister and only human friend); large scale loss (the fatal plague); and a fascinating, horrifying twist (her stepmother volunteering her body for plague research! Which no one else has even survived!).

And in pulling back from the close POV, you could then relay a key aspect that hinges on Cinder herself not being aware of "Something being hidden from her. Something valuable."

And then the brilliant, Boom! line: "Something others would kill for."

Note: It's key for query letters – like book jacket copy – to walk the line between general and specific. Enough detail/specifics to paint a compelling picture, but general enough to act as a true teaser, create a sense of mystery and suspense, and leave the reader wanting more.

Commented [MOU5]: I was drawn to the straightforwardness and simplicity of your bio. It was free of exaggeration or affect.

I liked the title of your novelette.

The "gothic romance" reference – plus membership in Romance Writers of America – underscored for me your love of and prioritizing of romance in your writing, which further drew me to *Cinder*.

Your MS in Publishing in combination with your BA in Creative Writing indicated to me that you were serious both about the business of publishing and the craft of writing. The BA emphasis on children's literature also spoke to me personally.

The fact that you already had a bi-monthly newsletter indicated to me that you understood the importance of marketing one's own work, and that you were focused and industrious, which of course turned out to be very true! Also this was before the current era of author-driven social media. You were an early embracer.

Commented [MOU6]: It struck me as fortuitous, given the marketplace at the time, that you were already envisioning *Cinder* to be the first in a planned series. At the same time, you were smart not to overwhelm me with a full series synopsis, etc. with this first query. You strategically took it in steps. And of course we ended up doing a 4-book deal.

Best regards,

Marissa Meyer

Commented [MOU7]: A good, professional sign off.

You attached the first 50 pages – which showed you paid attention to what my agency requested be sent, along with the query letter.

“Thank you for your consideration” is a lovely, professional, and quietly confident phrase, one I use often myself.

Just from the query letter alone I had a strong hunch you would be a pleasure to work with. And wow was that hunch spot on 😊