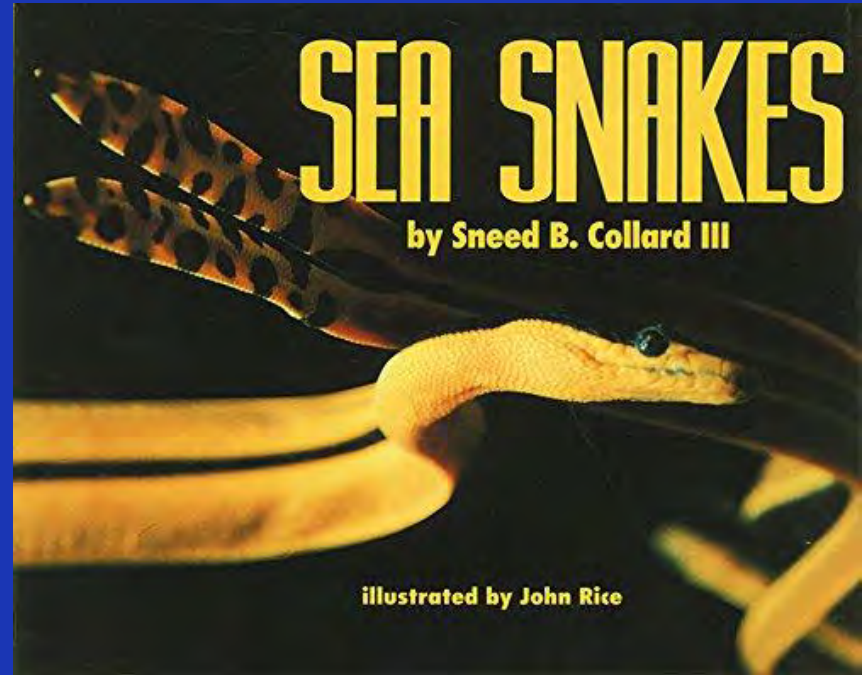


WELCOME

Judging a Book by its Cover

Yes, we all do it!



Why Covers Matter

- **First impressions** are everything
- Stop the scroll/stroll, grab attention
- Signal genre, tone, and quality

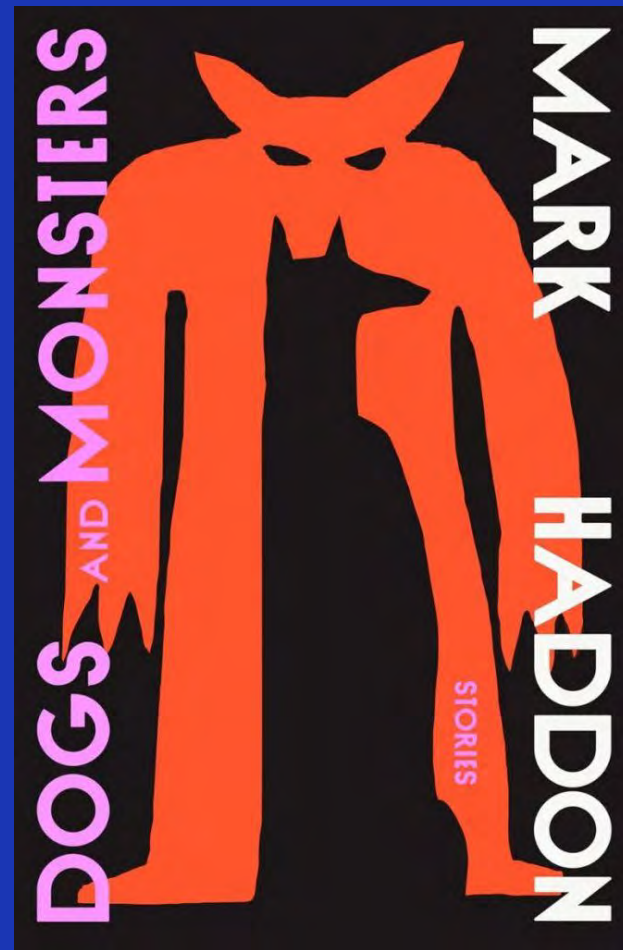


Every Genre has Visual Cues

- Romance: soft light, faces, script fonts
- Thriller: bold sans-serif, dark palette, stark imagery
- Memoir: often photo-centric, personal feel

Breaking the rules?

Fine—but know them first



Fiction

Romance – Soft light, warm colors, couples, script fonts

Thriller – Dark tones, bold sans-serif, single object or figure

Mystery – Shadows, texture, moody imagery, serif fonts

Fantasy – Symbols, magical landscapes, ornate fonts

Science Fiction – Futuristic fonts, tech elements, cold palette

Historical Fiction – Period costume, sepia tones, classic layout

Literary Fiction – Minimal, abstract, strong typography focus

Horror – High contrast, creepy imagery, distressed fonts

Adventure – Dynamic scenes, rugged typography, bold imagery

Young Adult (YA) – Trendy, character-focused, **genre-hybrid** look

Children's – Bright colors, illustrated characters, playful fonts

Non-Fiction

Memoir – Author photo or symbolic image, personal tone

Biography – Strong portrait, serif title, straightforward layout

Self-Help – Clean design, bold titles, optimistic colors

Business – Minimalist, block fonts, subtitle-heavy

Health/Wellness – Calm colors, clean fonts, wellness icons

History/Politics – Serious tone, strong typography, archival imagery

Cooking – Large food photo, cozy or stylish design

Travel – Scenic photography, handwritten fonts, maps/icons

Hybrid Genres

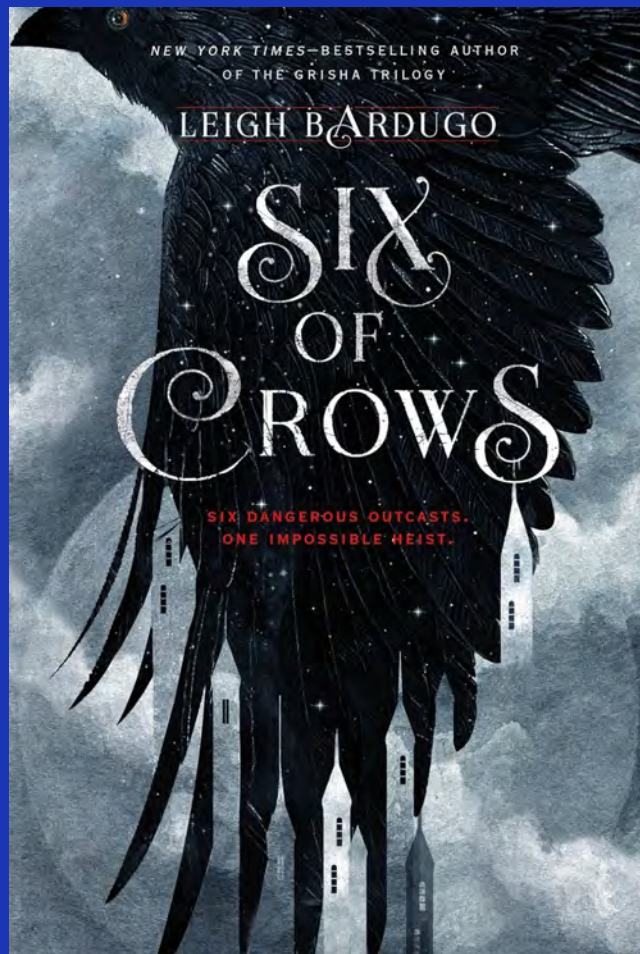
Readers now expect cross-genre storytelling and more than one promise— e.g., action + romance, magic + mystery

Mixed typography styles

Contrasting color and textures

Dual imagery

But think fusion, not chaos.



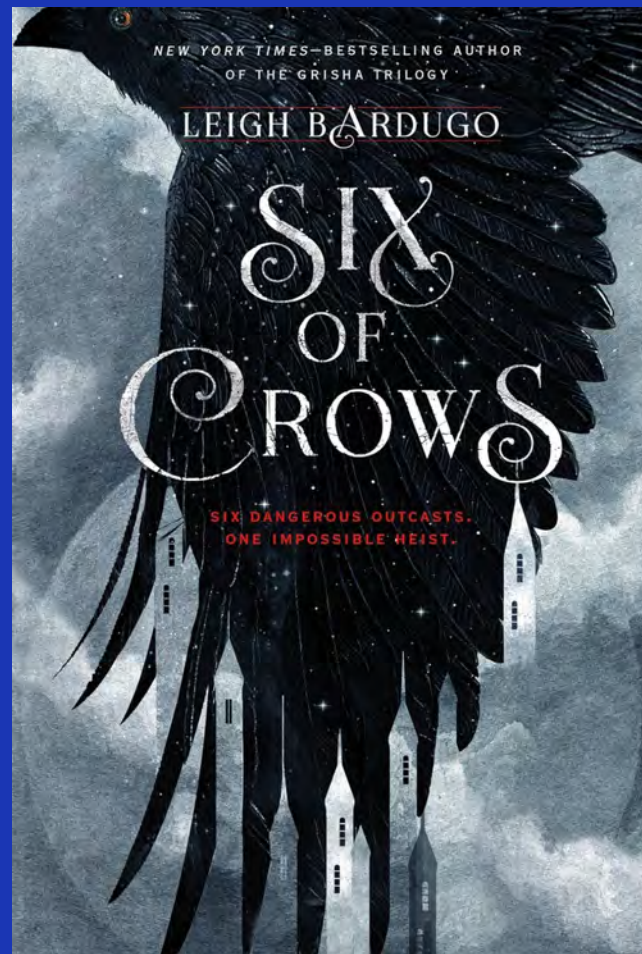
Crow wing + gothic cityscape = danger + setting

Dark palette = tone of grit and mystery

Ornate font = fantasy + red accent = drama

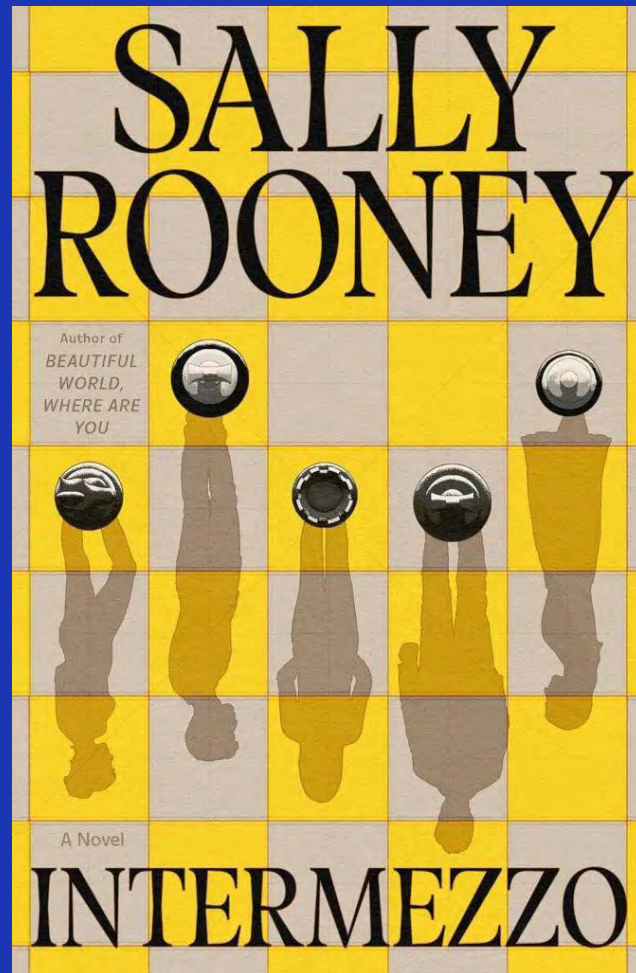
Minimal but symbolic = mood over literal

It's iconic, emotional, and instantly says "this isn't cute—it's cunning."



Cover Anatomy

- What is **Most Important**?
 - Title, Author or Image?
- Thriller: bold sans-serif, dark palette, stark imagery
- Memoir: often photo-centric, personal feel



Mistakes!

- Cluttered layout
- Fonts that don't fit the tone
- DIY design without experience
- Ignoring contrast and legibility
- Too much going on—simplify!



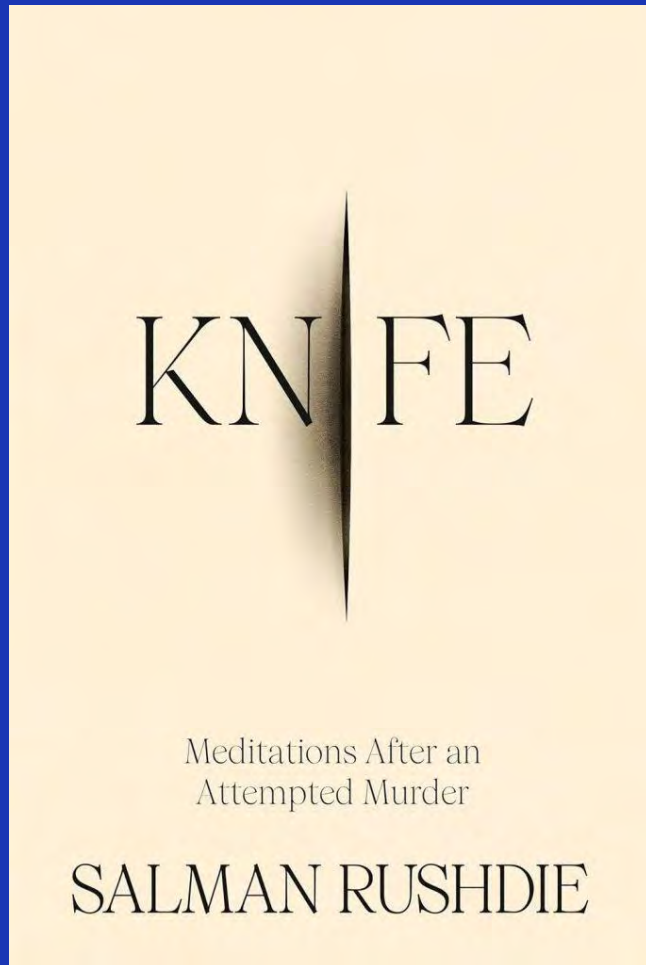
Print/Digital

- Print = spine matters, finish, back cover blurbs, feel
- Digital = small thumbnail must pop
 - Everything about the book must work on a **small screen**
 - Readability, image resolution, contrast
 - Must work in black & white



Find Your Model

- Find **bestselling** books in your genre that are great (your model) and allow yourself to be influenced by them
- Don't steal ideas but use them to increase your **Visual Vocabulary**
- Learn what makes a book cover really good

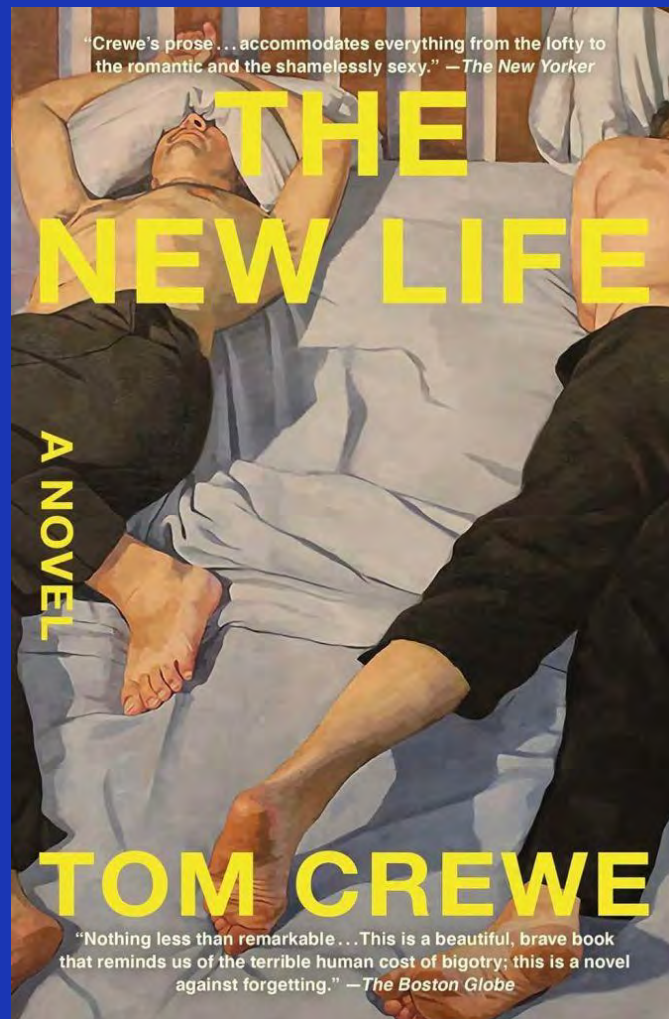


Start with Emotion

- Curious? Safe? Unsettled? Inspired?
- Choose 1–2 core emotions to drive design
- Emotion is more powerful than plot in a visual

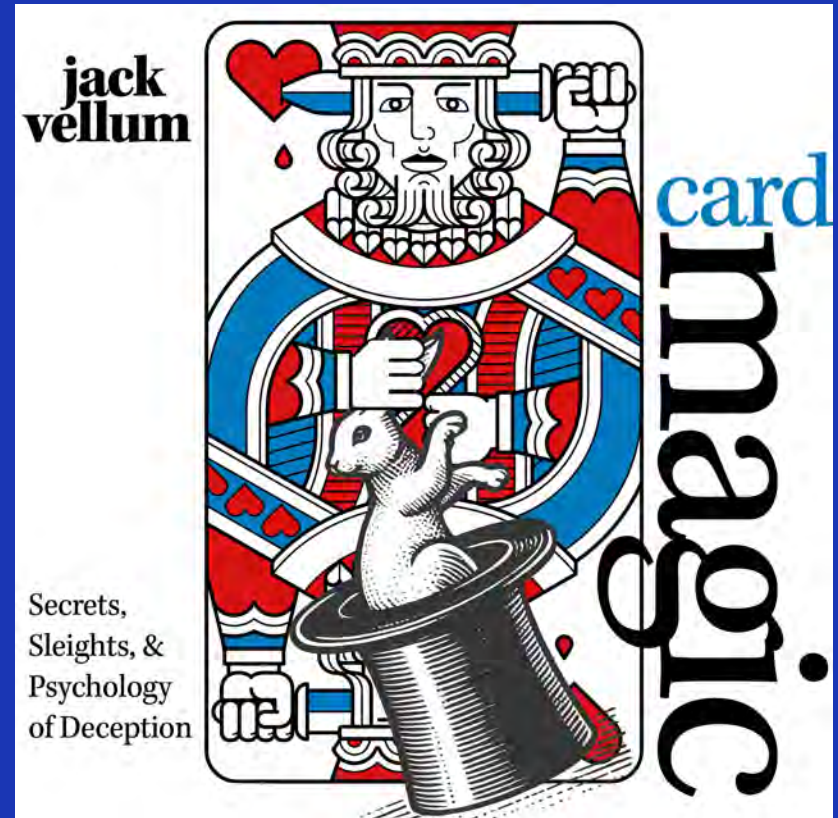
Ask:

"My book **feels like** _____?"



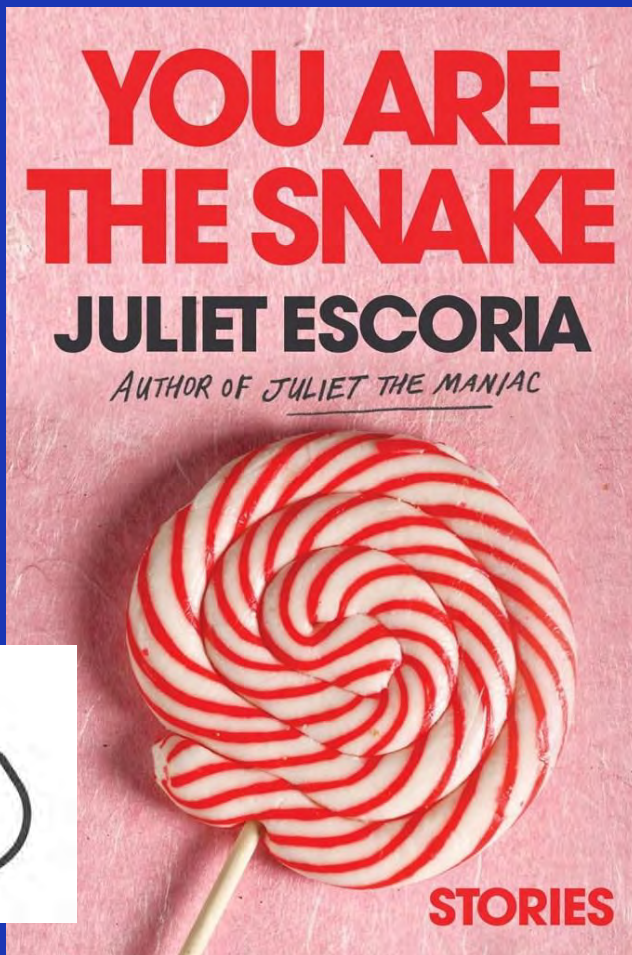
Creative Techniques

- **Combine Symbols** or Metaphors
 - Literal is not a Requirement
 - Broken Clock = Lost Time
 - Birdcage = Loss of Freedom



Creative Techniques

- Close in on the Action
- Copy Analysis
- Redefine the Problem
- Symbolize the Action
- Make Type part of the Idea
- Levels of Reality
 - Photography
 - Illustration

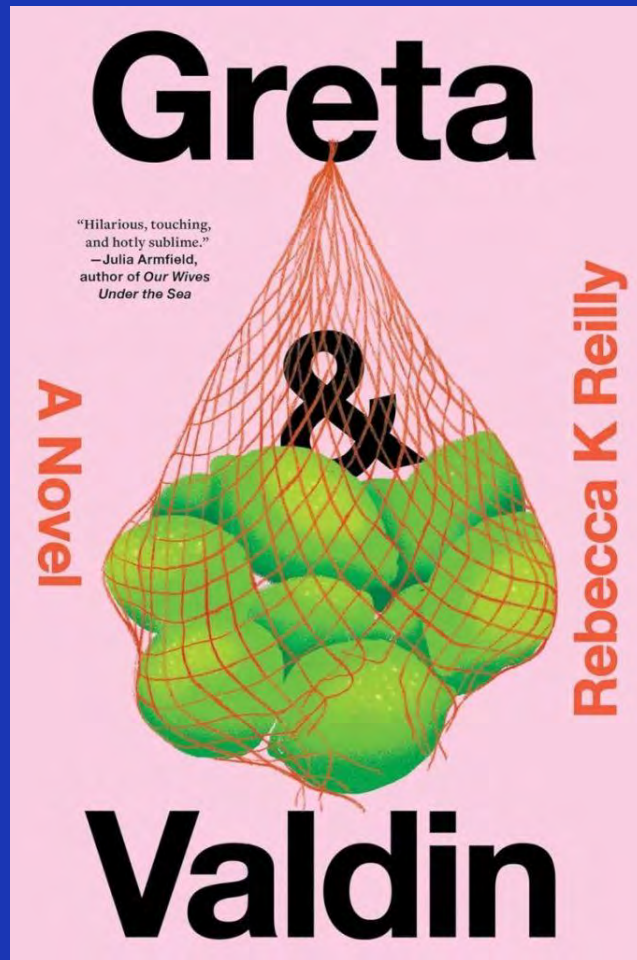


Color

- Red = intensity, passion, danger
- Blue = trust, melancholy, depth
- Yellow = quirk, warmth, energy
- Black = mystery, drama, elegance

Ask:

"My book **feels like** the color ____?"



Typography = Voice

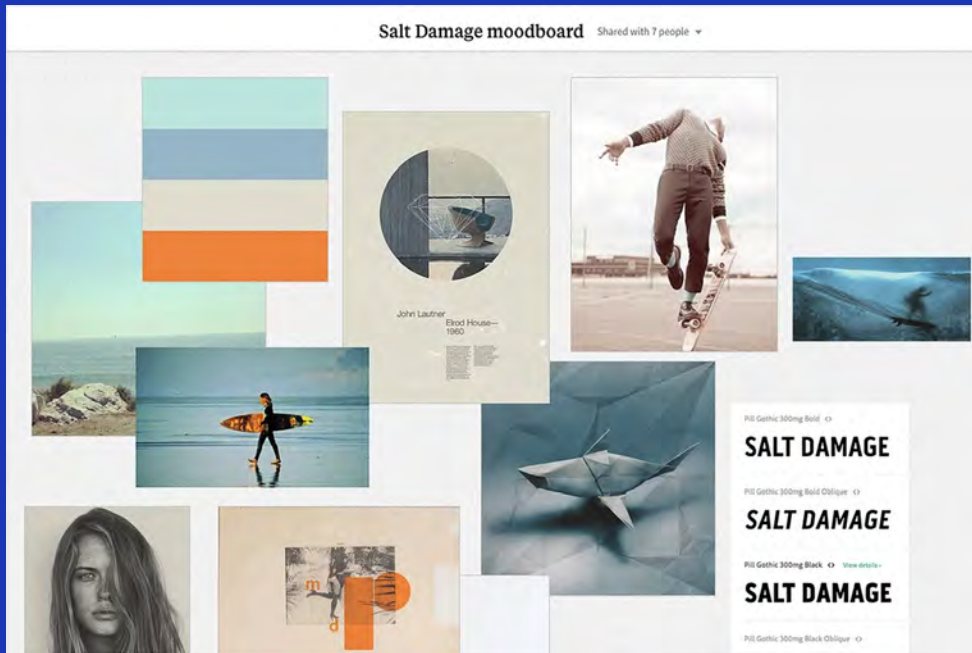
- Fonts speak before words are read
- Serif = classic, literary, trustworthy
- Sans-serif = modern, clean, fast
- Script = romantic, personal
- Distressed = edgy, raw

UNIVERSIDAD



Mood Boards

- Pin 3 covers you love
- Pin 1 photo that captures your book's feeling
- Pin 1 color palette
- Pin 1 typeface



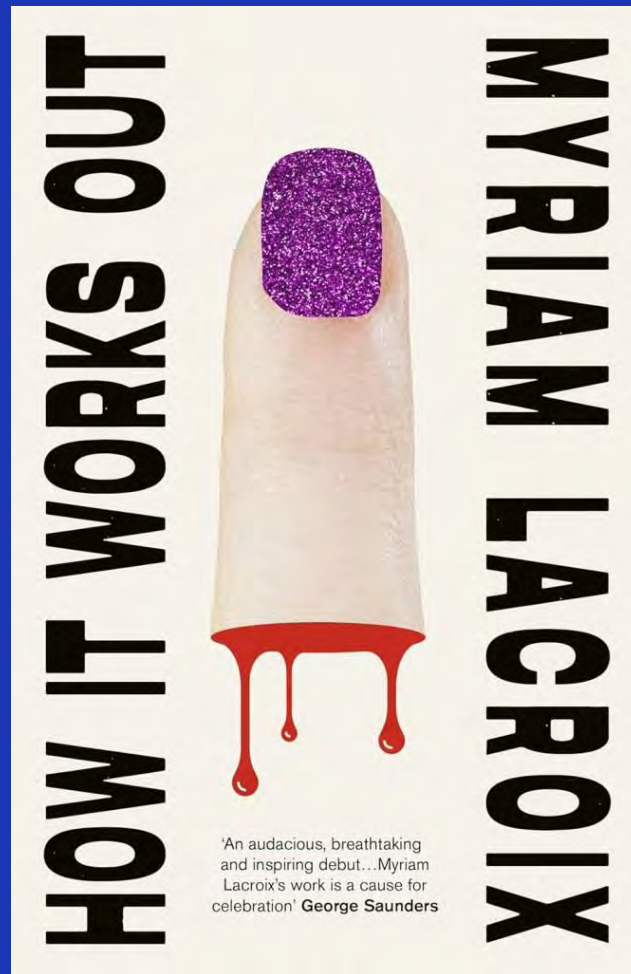
Ask:

"Show your book's soul in 5 images?"

Test Test Test

- Ask People (5 Seconds)
 - What **genre** is this book?
 - What does this cover make you **feel**?
 - Would you **pick up** this book?

"Starbucks Street Testing"



Final Thoughts

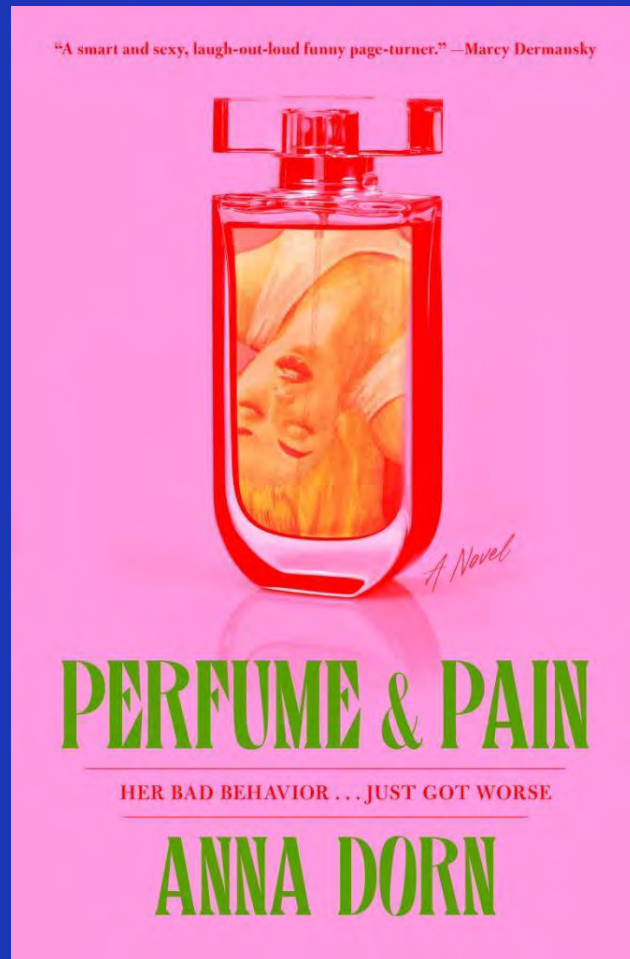
Your cover is not a summary.

It's a hook.

- Catch the eye
- Spark curiosity
- Promise a great read

Don't settle.

A great book deserves a great cover.



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KID**RIVER**STUDIO

