**THE WHY**

1. **So, what does your protagonist already want?** Write a short paragraph about what your character enters the novel wanting, even if they don’t think they have a chance of getting it. The sketch of your protagonist that you’ve already written may very well have touched on the question. And, *yes*, even if your protagonist couldn’t possibly articulate the answer*, you* must be able to do so. Be as specific as possible. Use the “eyes wide shut” test—if you can’t close your eyes and envision it, it’s not there yet.
2. **Why do they want it?** Why does *your* protagonist want what they want? What will getting it mean to them? What do *they* think it will say about them? Remember, to the outside world it might say something quite different about them. Not to mention that, very often, what your protagonist thinks achieving their goal will mean to them turns out to be very wrong. Often, that is the whole point of the story.
3. **Misbelief? But it *feels* so true!** Try defining your protagonist’s misbelief. As concisely as you can, write down what they want, and what the fear is that’s keeping them from achieving it. One question to ask yourself as you work this out is: Given their misbelief, what do they think the very worst thing that could happen would be? Try to picture it. Spend time exploring it, and don’t worry whether you’re “writing well.” Dig deep, because you are going to capture the conflict—the yin and yang of the misbelief—that is going to drive your whole novel.