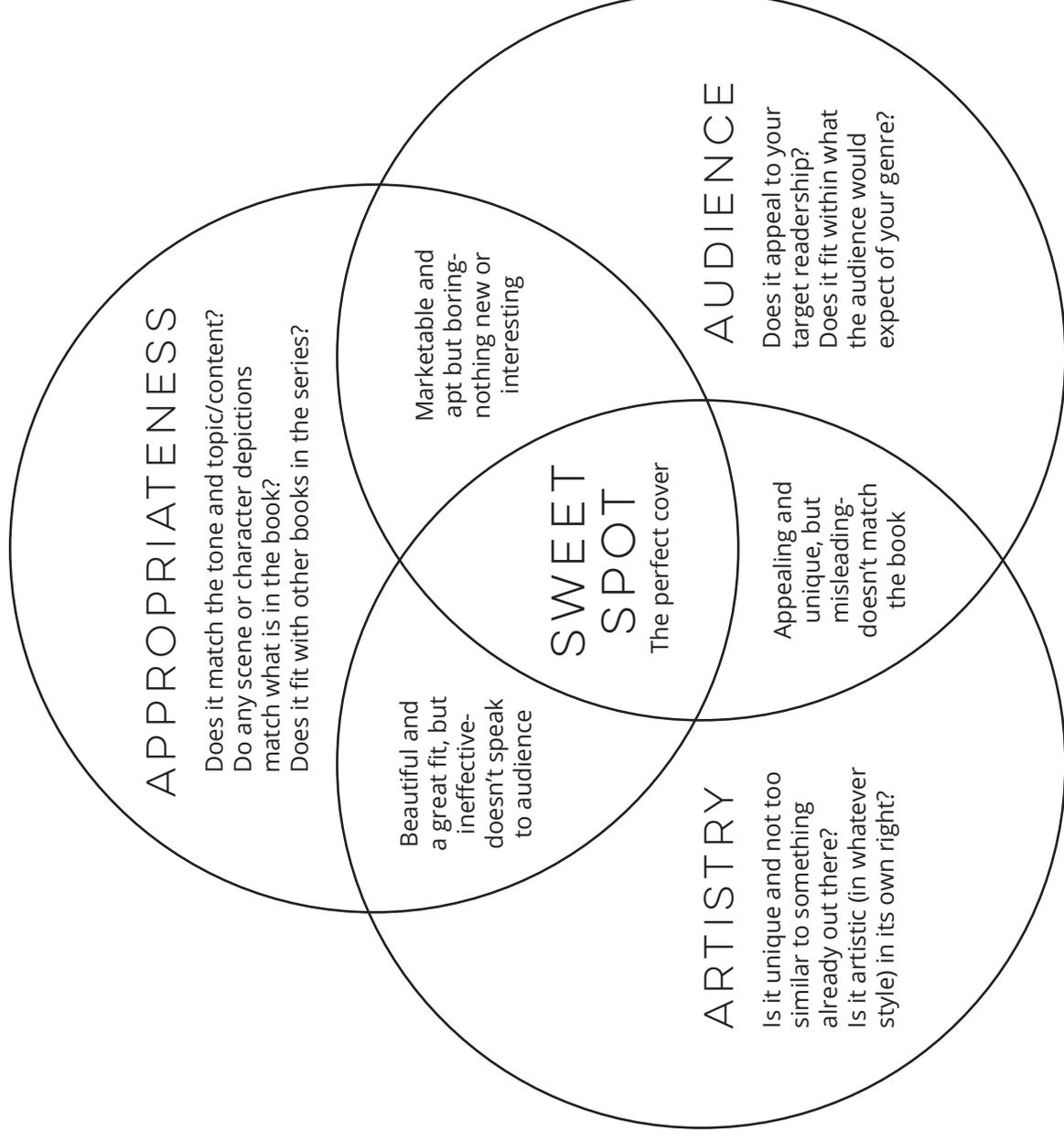


THE 3 A'S OF COVER DESIGN



Cover design is subjective. There are few hard-and-fast rules. Achieving a great cover design is entirely subject to the circumstances of a specific book. **Consider its 3 A's (see chart).**

Rules to Break

1. **Do what everyone else in your genre is doing.** Don't be afraid to push the boundaries of your genre - in both your writing AND your cover. Doing something different can help you stand out.
2. **You must have a custom illustration or complicated Photoshopped scene.** Sometimes simple is better. Consider a photo of an everyday object, or a type-only cover.
3. **The title must be the largest thing on the cover.** While it's a good idea to have one element be the clear main focus to catch a potential reader's eye, this *does not have to be the title*. Remember that your book title and name always show up next to your cover thumbnail in online marketplaces. A title doesn't have to strictly be readable at thumbnail size.

General Cover Design Tips

- Don't forget about the spine if you're doing a physical book! It's likely how your book will be seen on shelves more often than not.
- Your cover is a preview or hint of what's inside - you don't have to represent the entire story!
- Have one element of the cover be the main focus - whether the art, the title or your name. A single dominant element helps draw the eye.
- Pay attention to but don't necessarily buy into trends. It's useful to know what they are if only so you can do something different.
- You don't want to be so literal in your cover interpretation that it's groan-worthy, but don't go too far the other way into obscure symbolism to the point where no one gets what the book is about.
- Remember, the cover is about appealing to readers - not your ego! Put more emphasis on what is best for your book, not necessarily your personal preferences (you ≠ your audience).

If you're going to DIY:

- Don't try to just copy what another author has done. Really try to come up with something tailored to your book and only your book.
- Stay away from the Photoshop effects- drop shadows, glows, gradients, etc. need expert handling. Simpler is better if you're not a designer.

If you're going to use a pre-made design:

- Many sites will offer either recommended fonts and type placement, or give the option to let the original template designer place your text for you. Take advantage of this!
- Be aware of whether the pre-made design you're selecting will be exclusive to you, or still for sale to others.

If you're going to work with a designer (recommended!!!!):

- You're hiring a designer for their expertise, not just placing things where you want in Photoshop because you don't have a copy. Let them help you come up with the cover concept - it's part of their job! Use & trust that expertise.
- Use a contract (theirs or yours) & pay invoices on time.