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Agent/Query Submission Central

~this week 12-30-2016~

WORKSHOP #12

Happee New Year!

A gadzillion thanks to you, the beta group, who have helped me determine how to best teach in the digital world. I couldn't have learned so much so fast as I have without you.

THANKYOUTHANKYOUTHANKYOUTHANKYOU!

Moving ahead.

Take charge of your future.

Chose what you want to come to you in 2017.

Embrace the opportunities that are heading your way.

Remember, your word is your wand.

Speak what you want.

Write what you want.

Read it out loud occasionally look at it to keep yourself on track.

ABOUT THE GOAL (S):

Pick attainable goals that you can achieve step by step.

Create action plans to help you reach them step by step.

For example:

Goal: learn to write submission documents that will help you land a fabulous agent.

Steps:

- 1) Find an industry savvy teacher to guide you.
- 2) Attend classes that include evaluation of weekly progress of required submission documents: query, synopsis, and first pages.
- 3) Put time and effort into completing your weekly homework assignments.
- 4) Join into discussions with like-minded writers, all moving along their paths toward authorhood.
- 5) Polish and proof all submission documents to be free of all writing mechanic errors.
- 6) Create agent research protocol/procedure/format/organization
 - a. Research agents attending Writers' Digest Conferences. Celebrate as you grow your list.
 - i. Also look at agentquery.com and querytracker.com
 - b. Pick 12 agents to query and begin.
 - i. Celebrate your launch.
 - ii. Keep track of responses.
 - c. If necessary, launch second wave.
 - d. If necessary, review and revise submission documents.
 - e. **Rinse and repeat** until you meet the perfect agent to guide you through the publishing maze.

Make adjustments as necessary along the way.

Record your progress as you move through each step.

When you achieve a goal, CELEBRATE!

Set new goals to further your movement toward the success you desire and deserve.

Group goals for 2017:

from Doree:

- 1) Hook Paragraph and 1st Chapter for Eighty-One finished and submitted to Submission Central (This will place One Eighty in the Revise situation)
- 2) Queries submissions to Agents sent For Eighty One
- 3) Continue Learning with Submission Central.
- 4) Organize ideas for Next Young Adult novel
- 5) Work on Presentation for League of Utah Fall Conference

From Carol:

On or around the 1st of each month:

Come up with one new book idea for a total of 12 new ideas for books in 2017.

Create a new character for a total of 12 new characters, which could become main characters or secondary characters.

Create a story plot for a total of 12 new plots, which could become fodder for picture books, chapter books, or novels.

My “wonderful” goal for 2017 is to write the book that is my burning passion and feel that it is one that must be written and can only be written by me.

“and also”

Make money and a name for myself (Ultimate Goal)

Become a best-selling author

(Note how Carol’s goals build to help her reach her ultimate goal. That’s smart. One step at a time.)

PS: Carol is moving on to work with a picture book group this next year. Good luck Carol. We'll miss you!

From Janet:

1. Become a better seller and teller
2. Secure a competent, well connected GREAT agent
3. Get Glass Promises published
4. Get another short story published in the FWA anthology
5. Win writing competition
6. Sell more books

From Vicki:

- 1-believe in myself a lot more.
- 2-I am getting query synopsis ready and done and 15 pgs done.
- 3-I am getting an agent who understands my story.
- 4-I am betting ready to write a short story to be pub in a mag. 5-
"Crooked" will be in a bidding war with top publishers.
- 6-I will start working on book two with Sadie and Finn and Devilia.

From Linda:

- 1-I will revise my book for red-flag words and other issues pointed out during Sub Central workshops. Eliminating speaker tags.
- 2-I will read whole book in one setting, looking for consistency.
- 3-I will polish my novel until it glows in the dark.
- 4-I will land the best possible agent for my book.
- 5-I WILL GMBIG. (Get my butt in gear!)

Goals from Molli:

For 2016, my goal was: Go digital 100%. DONE! WOOHOO!!!

For 2017:

- 1-Finish a NF book proposal BY January 7.
- 2-Locate an agent using email and twitter.
- 3-Encourage agent to create a publishers' bidding war resulting in a six (6) figure advance.
- 4-Book assembled and ready to go in 120 days.

Today's submissions:

We're focusing on the query second paragraph. There is no point in fine tuning your synopsis until you resolve the needs of the second paragraph to propel the agent into reading further.

Otherwise, nothing else matters because it won't be read.

Sad but true, agents are always looking for reasons to reject work and move on to the next query. Don't give them cause to do this to your query.

From Doree:

My thoughts:

DOREE WROTE:

(Molli comments: reconsider the story core. Levi wants life to be as it always has been, with mom, secure, safe, assured. This is the first paragraph. But then . . .)

Why: Afraid to grow up and survive on his own

What does he want: Levi wants his mom to fight her illness and to live?

Question: or does he want life to be safe and secure and just like he planned?

The or else: Death/suicide

Core: Mortality

Subject: Opioids . . . can you hear me now?

Seventeen-year-old Levi Yokum's plans to spend the summer scouting out colleges with his mother. Until **life triggers an avalanche of drastic changes**. His mother, a divorced parent who is always there for him, is diagnosed with a recurrence of cancer. Levi presses her to undergo treatment once again, but she decides to accept her inevitable death. Horrified, he feels his mother has chosen to abandon him with no security or provisions. Anger taints his attitude and choices leading him to squirrel away a bottle of his mother's OxyContin. If he can't manage without his mother's steadfast love, will a handful of opioids solve his problems?

Levi Yokum and his mother are a tight family of two. When he learns that she's fallen ill with acute liver disease, he believes that working as a team, they'll get through it. They'd battled breast cancer when Levi was younger and won. There's no doubt that, with chemo and radiation, the results would be the same. She disagrees. Levi accuses her of surrendering, to leave him destitute and alone. The tension turns their home into a war zone and Levi into an odious young man. Pressure and anxiety fight him inside. The closer to death she arrives, the stronger his internal war intensifies and he fears his existence without her to guide him. Once she's dead, will he decide that his only choice will be to join her?

My comments:

Query needs: greater separation between first and second paragraphs and a different, and more dire tease at the end of the second paragraph. First paragraph focuses on story core. Period. Make it tight and tense and the tease intriguing. +

Question???? Does your subject line still relate to Levi hearing voices inside his head?

From Vicki

Vickie wrote: Born with cerebral palsy Sadie hides from relationships, believing others view her as a cripple when she slithers by. Until Finn, a British exchange student, sees past her shyness. With Finn Sadie finds laughter, learns to cheat at poker, and they harmonize as she shares her songwriting. When the school year ends, Finn returns home, promising to return for a visit during the holidays. Sadie's convinced she'll never see him again. Sent to her grandmother's Catskill Mountain house for the summer, Sadie decides the isolated setting to be a perfect refuge to end her life. But in the forest, as at school, Sadie senses someone watches.

After swallowing enough pills to kill a giant, Sadie awakens and wakes to crystals in her lap. Soon Sadie comes face to face with Devilia, a hand-sized fairy who enjoys tormenting Sadie. Sadie's curiosity

awakens with a new purpose when and she discovers this creature seems very much like herself. The both of them are struggling as they search for how to fit in this world with the life they have been given. After the summer, Devilia suffers a tragic loss, losing her caretaker, and is allowed to live with Sadie if she promises not to use her magic and remain invisible. (doesn't work to mention Devilia's caretaker situation. It's enough, for now, that she is alone, lonely and convinces Sadie to take her back to the city when school begins. Although Devilia promises to behave, she creates a magical event during a field trip with hundreds of butterflies appear and lift Sadie's long skirt, revealing her disability to the world. She promises to not practice her magic But on a field trip, because of Devilia, people stare in awe as Sadie is covered by hundreds of butterflies. They lift her skirt and reveal her disability to the world. Cell phones flash and Sadie becomes a viral Internet sensation. Finn tweets , emails , telling her how magical and radiant she looks. But it only makes her more of a freak. Finn confesses to Sadie he has stopped attending school, but and is selling drugs at school hangs out with a drug dealer to generate the cash he needs to finance his holiday visit with her. Sadie has a gut feeling Finn is in danger, and begs him so stop but he laughs her fears away. may get killed . Sadie begs Devilia to help. Although terrified of electronics, Devilia uses strong fairy magic to send herself through the Internet to Finn. Sadie waits and waits, but hears nothing from Devilia. She tweets Finn endlessly, but no response. She believes Devilia has disappeared into the cyber world, and never made it to Finn. Now, Finn is gone. Devilia is gone. And without them in her life, Sadie wants to be gone as well. (nice phrasing!)

Suggested revision:

Born with cerebral palsy, Sadie hides from relationships, believing others view her as a cripple when she slithers by. Until Finn, a British exchange student, see's past her shyness. With Finn, Sadie finds laughter, learns to cheat at poker, and harmonize on her original songs. The school year ends and Sadie's heart breaks when Finn returns home. He vows to return for a Christmas holiday visit, but

Sadie's convinced she'll never see him again. Sent to her grandmother's Catskill Mountain house for the summer, Sadie decides the isolated setting is the perfect refuge to end her life. But, in the forest, as at school, Sadie senses someone watches.

After swallowing enough pills to kill a giant, Sadie awakens and comes face to face with Devilia, a hand-sized fairy. Like Sadie, Devilia struggles to fit into a world where she doesn't seem to belong. They bond over the summer and Sadie agrees to take Devilia back to the city when school begins. Although Devilia promises to not practice fairy magic on the humans in Sadie's world, the temptation is too great. She creates a magical event during a field trip to the Natural History Museum. Hundreds of butterflies appear and lift Sadie's long skirt to reveal her disability. The event flashes around the Internet. Finn tweets about how magical and radiant Sadie looks, and confesses how much he misses her. He reveals that he's skipping classes to hang with a drug dealer who supplies him with "merchandise" which he sells to his school friends. Soon he'll have enough to fund an airline ticket. Sadie instinctively feels there's more to Finn's story than she's being told. She senses danger and begs him so stop. He tweets her, "Tally Ho, all is well." (Make this more British) Sadie begs Devilia to intervene with Finn in person. Although terrified of electronics, Devilia agrees and taps into powerful fairy magic to email herself to Finn. Sadie waits and waits, but hears nothing from Devilia or Finn whom she tweets endlessly. Sadie fears Devilia has gone missing, absorbed by the cyber world. Finn is gone. Without them, Sadie longs to be gone as well.

My YA novel, "Crooked" mixes tweets and text messaging within the story which is complete at 75,000 words. I'm a member of SCBWI, attend writers' conferences and workshops, and have participated with a writer's group since 2004.

From Carol:

Your query is coming along, but still needs to be made stronger to hold the agent's attention and add more tension.

NOTE: Write everything in present tense.

Let's all look at these two paragraphs and help Carol do a bit of shifting and "maturing" of the text.

Question: if the power is out, what powers the streetcar?

STORY CORE: (Modified by Molli)

Who: Georgie.

What: She wants to attend the parade.

Why: Uncle is marching in the parade.

What stands in her way? Having to take care of her frail little brother.

Terrible or else: Unprepared for the freakish snow storm and plummeting temperatures which cause Luke to become ill.

CAROL WROTE:

Georgie takes her frail brother downtown for the Armistice Day Parade to watch their uncle march in the parade and to give them a ride home when the parade ends. An unexpected snow storm comes up and the department store where they are to meet closes. On top of this, Luke coughs and shivers and says he doesn't feel well.

Snowflakes whip through the air as the temperatures drop. If only she had listened to Daddy and stayed home, safe and warm, they wouldn't be in this precarious predicament. How will she find her uncle and if she doesn't, how will she get her sick brother home where he needs to be?

The day had started out warm. As Georgie shivers, she wishes they had worn warmer clothing. With no money and unable to find their uncle, they must make a long walk home to an empty house as their parents are at the hospital awaiting the birth of a new baby. Luke's lips turn blue so Georgie keeps her arm around Luke and close to her body. She stops a streetcar and lies to catch a free ride home. Then

she trudges through the snow and carries and drags Luke in the snow for blocks only to find the electricity out in their cold home. How can she warm the house, and what about Luke who becomes sicker by the minute? If anything happened to him, it would be all her fault.

My comments:

Query needs greater separation between first and second paragraphs and a more dire tease at the end of the second paragraph. More tension in the second paragraph. May not have to mention Luke being sick so much until that last sentence.

End of second paragraph needs to play up that he's becoming more sick by the minute, phones are out so she can't call for help and can't find anything else to burn to generate a little bit of heat from the fireplace. With both paragraphs, look for weak verbs and replace. Don't duplicate anything. Use the space to add new issues and build tension.

FOR EVERYONE:

Like Jack and the Beanstalk, the wants of Carol's protagonist evolve. With Jack's story, first he wants to avoid starvation. And then, as the story develops, he wants to continue stealing and avoid the giant who wants to eat him.

In Carol's story, Georgie wants to attend the parade, even if she has to drag Luke along. This evolved into a much greater want: to protect him from the weather and return home safely.

From Janet

Who? Grace. **What:** husband and father for Lily. **Why not:** Fear of heartbreak and discovery that she and Beau are related. **Or else?** Make choice not to love or trust again and live, as her mother did, alone.

TITLE AND SUBJECT LINE: Glass Promises

Professor Grace Stone yearns for a family. As the offspring of an illicit affair, she never knew her father. Grace has a newborn daughter and

is happily married (or so she thought) when her husband and his mistress are killed. Four years later, the pressures of single motherhood are multiplied with Lily's demands to "find her a daddy." Grace suppresses her fear of heartbreak and begins to date. Attracted to Beau, another victim of a cheating spouse, they begin a steamy relationship. Will Grace risk future love despite the landmine of pain she suffered in the past?

At a ritzy charity event, Grace's uncanny resemblance to her dead mother causes a brawl. The incident leads to the identity of her deceased father and his living relatives. Now Grace must learn to navigate the unfamiliar labyrinth of family dynamics when a newcomer is not welcomed by everyone. An additional complication involves her love affair with a step-cousin. Grace campaigns to secure a future with commitment-phobic Beau and win over a hostile relative. As a woman denied love as a child, will Grace secure a father for Lily, a family of her own, and a faithful husband?

My comments:

Shift some of the first paragraph info into the second to make it more important and generate more tension. Seven (7) sentences are not a quick read.

Revision concepts:

Professor Grace Stone thought she was happily married until her husband and his mistress died in a car accident weeks before the birth of her daughter. Now four-years old, Lily lobbies for a "daddy." A product of an illicit affair, Grace never knew the identify of her father. Despite fears of betrayal, she begins to date lusty and love-damaged Beau, until . . . then tell how she discovers she's been sleeping with a family member/cousin/relative.

This sets up your second paragraph to explain the situation a bit more.

As written the query second paragraph still doesn't flow, and it's too slight.

When dear old dad's identity is revealed, Beau's sister doubles down on this interloper.

Write this so the "sleeping with your cousin," issue brings the animosity from Beau's sister to a head.

So, stick with your goal.

Pursue your first step in achieving that goal.

Keep moving forward to craft a submission packet that will motivate any agent to jump up and down with "Yahoo, here's the writer I've been looking for. Order pizza!"

May the words be with you in 2017 and beyond!

Happy New Year.