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## Agent/Query Submission Central

*~this week~*

# Synopsis and Query WORKSHOP #6

Welcome everyone, members of submission central and those of you in our “audience.” The folks whose work is being evaluated today are members of Submission Central. You’re invited to comment, or ask questions, using the chat box.

### **ABOUT TODAY’S WORKSHOP~**

The focus continues to be the story core, query, and synopsis. They all must be coordinated to feed into one another, engage agent interest, and motivate them to keep scrolling until they reach and read your manuscript.

### **Quick review:**

Before writing a query, you need to define the core of your story:

- Who wants what?
- Why?
- What stands in their way?
- What is the terrible “or else” that might occur if they don’t get what they want?

Respond to each of these questions in one sentence (per question) of 15 words or less. Stick to the focus on your main character, your “who” and

don't go wandering off into the weeds with inclusion of their best friend, or child, or others in your story.

NOTE: You are the only one (besides myself and class members) who ever will read your story core. It's your road map, not a submission document. Hang your story core up near your computer. Or write it on sticky notes and slap it on the screen of your computer. Whatever you need to do in order to look at this every single time you prepare to work on your submission document (and manuscript).

Remember, all story telling is founded on the concept that something happens and something or someone (your protagonist) takes an action in response to whatever has occurred. This reaction can be internal or external.

Your story revolves around your "who" and "what" they want. Next is the "why not" or the obstacle(s) that can prevent them from getting what they want.

And, in the query, you don't reveal the story resolution. Instead, you reveal the "terrible or else" that may occur if your protagonist doesn't get what they want.

Obviously, you must clearly know the core of your story before you can write your query. Same thing with the synopsis. You must know the story core and have included this information in your query before you begin your synopsis.

And then, *DO NOT REPEAT* what you've already written in your query. Use the golden opportunity of the synopsis to reveal more about your protagonist's inner world as you expand on your story.

### **FOR EVERYONE:**

The 350 word limit for a query has been an industry standard for years because this is all most writers could fit on a page.

When unnecessary words show up in your query, it's a good bet they'll also be in your manuscript. Rather than continuing to read, the agent may decide to pass.

Because submissions are emailed to agents, this has resulted in a tsunami of email in their inboxes. Most do not contain saleable manuscripts . . . but, they never know. Each email with an interesting subject line is opened and the first line or two of the query is read. This determines read or delete.

Even though query letters aren't delivered on a piece of paper, the 350-word limit remains. And, in that space of 350 words, does the writer have the ability to tell their story succinctly or not. The query becomes a screening mechanism that prevents most writers from progressing in their quest to land an agent.

Snap decisions, “yes” or “no” are made instantly. Don't give them reason to delete yours. Make certain your query first paragraph reveals the core of your story: who wants what, why, what stands in their way and the terrible “or else” that could occur if the *who* doesn't get *what* they want.

## **The Synopsis Saga continues~**

After a few (or more) drafts of the synopsis, there will come the time when you'll want to be tough on yourself and edit out repeats, weak verbs (especially “is”), red-flag words and phrases that take up space instead of moving the story forward.

Remember, your synopsis doesn't repeat information in your query. It expands it. This is the gift and the challenge.

The agent reading your query, if engaged and curious, will wonder “what happens next,” and scroll down the screen to read your synopsis. All in a matter of seconds. There no longer is any separation between the query and synopsis since they've been submitted in the same email.

## **Misinformation has a longer shelf life than Velveeta!**

If you want proof of eternal life, just look at the misinformation that lives forever on the internet. Poke around a bit looking for synopsis information and you'll discover instructions on how to write your query and synopsis as if they are not read one after the other, followed by your first pages. Much of this outdated information was posted in the snail-mail days before 2014, and has never been removed.

## **Your golden opportunity~**

The all-in-one submission process today is a golden opportunity for you to hook and hold agent interest so they will read your query, wonder about your story, then read your synopsis to discover how it is resolved.

Write your synopsis to reveal more of your story and more of the inner world of your protagonist.

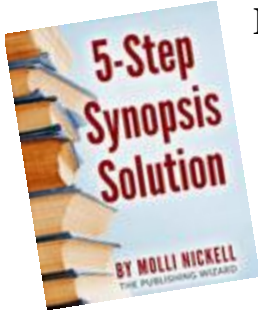
The synopsis gives you the opportunity to expand your story about someone or something who faces a challenge, and struggles to overcome it. This allows you to continually reveal greater depth in your protagonist through their emotions and actions.

No one, and I mean NO ONE, moves through a story without changing, without expanding who or what they are. This is what makes for juicy story telling. Your story begins the moment something happens as it involves your protagonist. The evolution of your protagonist as they deal with the "something" that has happened, keeps your reader interested and turning the page or scrolling down the screen.

If you become mired in a travelogue "this happens and then that happens," the agent will lose interest because you have not revealed the expanding world of your protagonist as they move through your story.

Use every inch of your synopsis to show and sell more information about your protagonist. Reveal more as they expand into activities or thoughts that are new to them, but necessary to explore/develop if they are to succeed.

(And yes, it's OK if they fail. A valiant but lost challenge can be more poignant and memorable than the traditional "happy ever after.")



BTW: Whether or not you are able to attend the weekly Submission Central Friday Workshop/Webinar, this 24-page tutorial/textbook (available at [MolliMart](http://MolliMart)) will help expand your understanding about how to make the most of your synopsis, then structure it to motivate the agent to continue scrolling and read your manuscript: the goal all along.

## **SPOTLIGHT EVALUATION (hot seat)**

This week focuses on Janet's query and synopsis. She's poured considerable effort into revising the structure of both these documents. Janet's almost completed the major heavy lifting to write this into shape. Good work Janet. You still have a few more issues to resolve. And you will!

**TITLE: Glass promises**

### **STORY CORE:**

**BTW:** If you aren't familiar with the expression, "story core," it's the bottom-line distillation of your story. Without defining this clearly, no writer can craft a query, synopsis, or story that will hook and hold agent interest.

**WHO** is the story about? Professor Grace Stone.

**WHAT** does she want? The love of a husband and the security of a family.

**WHAT stands** in her way? Fear of being vulnerable, of having a man break her heart . . . again.

**WHAT happens** if she doesn't get over her fear and doesn't get what she wants? She remains a family outsider.

Email SUBJECT line: Glass Promises

**Query:**

*(Note: overuse of “is” is highlighted in green. It needs to be revised/replaced with stronger verbs)*

Professor Grace Stone, yearns for what was missing from her childhood, a family. As the illegitimate offspring of her mother’s affair with a wealthy married man, Grace grew up without a father. In a twisted coincidence, her own husband was killed with his mistress shortly after the birth their daughter, Lily. Grace **is** grief-stricken and alone again. Four years later, Lily **is** lobbying for a father. Grace puts aside her fears of men with glass promises and, with a friend’s urging, attends speed dating. She meets Beau and **is** attracted to this burly construction worker. When Lily **is** introduced to him, she pegs Mr. Beau as daddy material. Grace **is** torn between her physical desire for this man and the need to protect her child and herself.

At a ritzy charity event, she **is** mistaken for her dead mother. The terrifying incident leads to her unknown father’s identity and the realization that Beau’s stepmother **is** her aunt. Grace feels blessed to have a connection to a family but learns that not everyone **is** eager to welcome her into the fold. Beau’s sister, Gen, **is** openly hostile. After Lily **is** traumatized at a family gathering by another child, Gen fosters a rift where relatives, including Beau, must choose between Grace and her. Lily’s safety and happiness remain Grace’s primary concerns as she navigates the labyrinth of family dynamics and love. She refuses to accept that she doesn’t have a place in Beau’s heart and family. Will she be able to realize her dream or lose the man she loves and remain an outsider like her mother?

GLASS PROMISES **is** a 72,000 word completed romance manuscript which won third place in the 2016 Royal Palm Literary Award competition in the unpublished romance genre. For four years, I have been a member of the Florida Writers Association, Romance Writers of America, Florida Romance Writers, Coral Springs Writers Group, assisted with and presented at the annual Coral Springs Literary Festival.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

#### SYNOPSIS:

Professor Grace Stone is a young widow whose birth resulted from one of her mother's affairs with wealthy married men. All her life she dreamed of a father and the security of a family. After her philandering husband's death, she is alone with their infant daughter, Lily. Grace vows to protect herself and her child from men and their glass promises, but now four-year-old Lily is lobbying hard for a father.

Labelled a "love cripple" by a friend, Grace agrees to try speed dating. She meets Beau and is attracted to this good-looking blue collar worker, but reluctant to date a man she talked to for five minutes. They meet again when her car is destroyed in a bizarre construction accident. The chemistry between them sizzles. When he makes a heedless remark about the cost of having sex with her, Grace is reminded of her mother and pushes him away. Beau fights to win her back. Meanwhile, Lily charms him as her new daddy candidate.

Grace is accosted by one of her mother's former lovers at a premier Boca Raton charity fundraiser. As a result of the humiliating incident, the identity of her deceased father is revealed. In a twist of fate, she discovers Beau's stepmother is her aunt. Grace is thrilled with the family connection, but not welcomed into the fold by Beau's hostile sister, Gen.

At Thanksgiving, Lily is terrorized by Gen's young daughter and locked in a closet. A rift occurs when Beau's sister forces the family to choose between her and Grace. The ultimatum tests Grace's relationship with Beau as she learns about the bonds in a family hierarchy. She pushes him for a commitment and to set boundaries with his sister. With regret, he chooses them over her.

Grace is heartbroken that she has lost the man she loves. She recalls strategies her mother employed to favorably influence people, even the wives of her lovers. Determined to win a forever place in Beau's heart and

in his family, she begins a campaign which utilizes her mother's tricks-of-the-trade, her own PhD book smarts, and even Lily's child-like ingenuity.

#### MY COMMENTS:

*Janet's query and synopsis are close to completion. However, there remain some writing mechanic issues, particularly overuse of "is" which needs to be replaced with STRONG verbs.*

### **FOR EVERYONE~**

Your query paints the biggest picture possible. Introduce the protagonist, their problem, and the terrible thing that will occur if they don't get what they want. Don't mire your query (or synopsis) down in details unless they pertain to your protagonist. Then, in the synopsis (read immediately after your query), DO NOT REPEAT what you've already said. Instead, expand on it.

Here are a few examples of how to replace "is" with more powerful and meaningful words to reveal Grace's inner world in Janet's query.

#### **QUERY revision concepts:**

Professor Grace Stone yearns for what she's never had: a family. The illegitimate offspring of her mother's affair with a wealthy married man, Grace grew up without a father. In a twisted coincidence, her own husband (and his mistress) were killed shortly after the birth their daughter, Lily. Grief stricken, Grace faces life alone. ~~grief-stricken and alone again.~~ Four years later, Lily begins to lobby ~~is begins lobbying~~ for a father. Finally, Grace sets ~~puts~~ aside her fears of men with glass promises and, ~~a friend's urging, attends~~ tries speed dating. She meets and feels attraction to Beau, and ~~is attracted to~~ burly construction worker. Lily bonds with Mr. Beau immediately, as she pegs ~~ing~~ him as prime daddy material. ~~When Lily is introduced to him, she pegs Mr. Beau as daddy material.~~ Grace ~~is~~ torn between her physical desire for this man and the need to protect her child and herself.

#### MY COMMENT:

*Protect from what? You haven't yet built the case for the fact that Lily needs to be protected.*



*What is the “or else” tease at the end of this paragraph that will keep the agent reading? NOTE: This terrible or else needs to tie in with the much larger threat at the end of your second paragraph. So, what is it?*

At a ritzy charity event, Grace ~~she~~ **is** mistaken for her dead mother. The terrifying (*what is terrifying about this?*) incident leads to her unknown father’s identity and the realization that Beau’s stepmother **is** her aunt. Grace feels blessed, finally . . . ~~to have a family. connection to a family.~~ However, not everyone in Beau’s family welcome her with open arms. His sister Gen, jealous over Grace’s education and accomplishments, considers her an interloper who will stir up the family dynamic and interrupt her close relationship with Beau. ~~her enthusiastic em to join the fold stirs up issues with Beau’s sister, Gen, who considers Grace and Lily to be part of their lives stirs up but learns that not everyone~~ **is** eager to welcome her into the fold. Beau’s sister, Gen treats Grace with distain and traumatizes Lily, (*how?*) then demands the family chose between her and these newcomers, ~~is openly hostile~~ After Lily **is** traumatized at a family gathering by another child, Gen fosters a rift where relatives, including Beau, must choose between Grace and her. Lily’s safety (*be clear about the safety issue for four-year old Lily. What happens that threatens this?*) and happiness remain Grace’s primary concerns as she struggles to navigate the labyrinth of family dynamics and love. She refuses to accept that she doesn’t have a place in Beau’s heart and family. Will she ~~be able to~~ realize her dream or lose the man she loves and remain an outsider like her mother, the other woman?

*(Realization of her goal (as stated) is passive. Suggest you insert something physical and active, demonstrating how Grace becomes the momma grizzly, and steps up to protect her cub, get what she wants, and turns the situation around. You need more tension here, otherwise it sounds like the most interesting aspect of this story might be hours spent in family therapy. YAWN!)*

GLASS PROMISES **is** a 72,000 word completed romance manuscript which won third place in the 2016 Royal Palm Literary Award competition ~~in the unpublished romance genre.~~ Since 2012, (delete: For four years), I’ve have

been a member of the Florida Writers Association, Romance Writers of America, Florida Romance Writers, Coral Springs Writers Group, and have assisted with and presented at the annual Coral Springs Literary Festival.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

### **SYNOPSIS AND REVISION SUGGESTIONS:**

Professor Grace Stone **is** a young widow whose birth resulted from one of her mother's affairs with wealthy married men. All her life she dreamed of a father and the security of a family. After her philandering husband's death, she **is** alone with their infant daughter, Lily. Grace vows to protect herself and her child from men and their glass promises, but now four-year-old Lily **is** lobbying **ing** hard for a father.

*NOTE: this is a repeat of what you have written in your query. Don't waste the space. Tighten it up and trim it. Revision suggestions for the first paragraph:*

Raising Lily, on her own, Grace dreams of becoming part of a family, of sharing her heart with a partner. Fearful of enduring hurt and humiliation again, she sympathizes with Lily who pressures her, relentlessly, for a daddy.

When her best friend taunts Grace as a being a "love cripple," she agrees to try speed dating. She meets Beau and is attracted to this good-looking blue collar worker, **REPEATED FROM QUERY** but feels reluctant to accept a date from man she talked to for only five minutes. They meet again when her car is destroyed in a bizarre construction accident. The chemistry between them sizzles. When he makes a heedless remark about the cost of having sex with her, (*say what?*) Grace **is** reminded of her mother and pushes him away. Relentless, Beau fights to win her back and is charmed by Lily who considers him to be prime daddy material.

*What is said that reminds Grace of mom?*

Grace is accosted by one of her mother's former lovers at a premier Boca Raton charity fundraiser. *(This is a repeat)* As a result of the humiliating incident, the identity of her deceased father is revealed. In a twist of fate, she discovers Beau's stepmother is her aunt. Grace is thrilled with the family connection, but not welcomed into the fold by Beau's hostile sister, Gen.

*Revise and expand this information. Don't repeat it from your query. Expand info about Gen here, and how this makes Grace feel, then remove this from your query. Always think of expansion, not repetition.*

At Thanksgiving, Lily is terrorized by Gen's young daughter and locked in a closet. *What is Grace's reaction to this? Does she verbally push back against Gen? A rift occurs when Beau's sister forces the family to choose between her and Grace.*

*(This would be more powerful if Grace forces Beau to make the choice right then and there. She wants nothing to do with Gen who appears to be unstable, and therefore, dangerous to Lilly.)*

The ultimatum tests Grace's relationship with Beau as she learns about the power of *long-standing* bonds in a family hierarchy. She pushes him for a commitment and to set boundaries with his sister. Grace is shocked with Beau refuses, and chooses his family over her. ~~With regret, he chooses them over her.~~

*(Keep the power with Grace and her feelings. We don't care if he feels regret.)*

Grace is heartbroken that she has lost the man she loves. (revise to read: *the man she has allowed herself to love*) Then, she taps into strategies her mother employed to favorably influence people, even the wives of her lovers. Determined to win a forever place in Beau's heart and be accepted in his family, she launches ~~begins~~ a campaign which utilizes her mother's tricks-of-the-trade, her own PhD book smarts, and even Lily's child-like ingenuity.

Re-arrange last portion to read . . . she launches a campaign which utilizes her PhD book smarts, Lily's child-like ingenuity, and her mother's tricks-of-the-trade strategies.

*And then, what happens.* Her campaign is successful or not? Finish your story.

Janet is almost there. Suggests she dig deep into Grace's inner world. Show and sell how she makes a conscious decision to risk love again, even with the family issues, and how she feels as she sets this course. Vulnerable? Afraid? Nervous? Determined? Demonstrate this by her thoughts and actions.

Go deep with Grace. She is a fascinating character. I'm cheering for her success and am curious about how she deals with the sister-in-law from hell.

## **FOR EVERYONE~**

When you are close to completion of your query and synopsis, deal with issues that need to be addressed, but don't shred it all and begin again. Build on what works and revise that which doesn't work.

## **When is it time to edit?**

As some of you have noticed, I don't spend much (if any) energy on editing your homework submissions. At this stage, as you master query and synopsis writing skills, editing would be a waste of time. You continually revise and re-write, focusing your attention on the context (content) of your query and synopsis. This is 1000% more important than ferreting out split verbs or other writing mechanic errors.

The most important issue for all writers is the story. I push you to tell your story as fully as possible in query and synopsis. The more fully and colorfully you reveal your protagonist's needs, wants, and challenges, the greater the potential that your entire submission will be read.

It's all about the story and the people/beings who populate it.

Perfect grammar and editing skills will not attract agent interest if your presentation doesn't reveal your story telling skills.

Everyone will benefit if the comments/suggestions made on our private Facebook page focus on the story core. Instead of making editing suggestions, stick to helping each other be more aware of adherence to the story core in each of your submissions.

### **Questions/comments before we move on to the next submission?**

#### **FROM JOHN**

**Who** is the story about: Jack Crane, who is sent from another dimension on a mission to clean up corruption, but he is unaware of the mission due to the loss of memory.

**What does he want and why?** Because he's unaware of being a spirit being, he just wants to remember his past and who he is.

**What stands in his way?** He is unaware of being from another world and does not what why he is here.

**What is the terrible or else** that might occur if he doesn't get what he wants? Something bad may happen if he hasn't completed what he's here to accomplish which he's unaware of.

*John, you are making this more difficult than it needs to be. Pare down your story core. **KISS** Keep it simple sweetheart.*

**Who:** Jack from another dimension.

**What** does he want? To remember who he is.

**Why does he want this?** So he can accomplish his mission.

**What stands** in his way? Memory loss.

**What is the terrible or else?** He will fail and ????? *John. What are the ramifications of his failure? As written, your story shifts away from this central focus.*

Email SUBJECT line: Query – Is Jack a victim, criminal or a little of both?

**Query:**

While on a mission from another dimension, Jack Crain, a feared debt collector, loses all memory after being shot in the head during a botched drug transaction. He awakes on a park bench with little recollection of his past or that he's not from this world. After a short hospital stay, he fears what he may have done before being wounded. He has a brief recall about shooting someone in the foot. He'd like total recall of his past, but if he's done something wrong that could land him in jail, maybe not remembering is better. For now, he asks, "Am I a victim or a criminal?"

*(If he has no memory, is it necessary to ID him as a debt collector?  
What's the payoff to the reader?)*

His identity is further questioned when it's found he has a money belt with fifty grand in cash, and he hasn't a clue why. As memories slowly return, his fear increases. Snippets show the money in the belt belonged to his loan shark boss. When his car is dragged from the river, a body is found in the trunk with another fifty grand. Could this be the person he shot in the foot? He vaguely remembers how this money belonged to the drug dealer's boss. He's convinced both the drug boss and loan shark will be looking for their money and will want him dead. Jack's life abruptly changes when he's placed in the line of fire and missed ten times at close range. It's then he discovers he's different from others. He can perform supernatural feats when needed, and at other times he has no powers at all. He struggles with the idea he could be a killer or a hero while trying to figure what this other side of him really is?

*(Comment: This tease needs to be stronger, beyond trying to figure it out. Wouldn't he be more concerned about staying away from bad guys trying*

*to kill him? If you bring in his supernatural powers, this needs to figure into this last tease.)*

My novel, "CAN TWO WRONGS BE MADE RIGHT?" is complete at 55,000 words. I've spent most of my technical career in the newspaper and publishing industry. I have been published in several magazines. I'm a member of a writers' group, and in the process of organizing a group of first-time writers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

John Levasseur

### **Synopsis for "CAN TWO WRONGS BE MADE RIGHT?"**

One: First paragraph describes who wants what (goal), why they want it, and what stands in their way (obstacle).

Jack doesn't know he's a spirit being. His doctor says his prognosis is 50/50 of ever remembering anything. What little he does remember places him in a position where two different crooks are after their money which he carried. He has no idea what they look like or when they will come, but he's sure about one thing, they are not going let one hundred grand slip through their fingers without a fight. Should he give the money back or run for his life?

*(Hmmm. What is that amount again?)*

Two: Second paragraph expands the situation. Introduces the antagonist (person or situation that blocks the protagonist). Shows the thoughts and emotions of the protagonist as they struggle against the antagonist.

Over the next few months, bits and pieces of the past two years return. Jack's struggle intensifies as he meets Susan, a woman who says she's his lover. Her multiple personality, and the possibility she's a murderer give him thoughts of running, but to where? He may run right into the arms of the two guys looking for their money. *(Why does Susan become the antagonist? She didn't create the problem.)*

Three: Third paragraph moves the protagonist closer to goal .  
Hints at the possibility of failure.

As he grows closer to Susan, he learns how her husband mysteriously disappeared and wonders if he could be next? He witnesses Susan's split personality, Jane, who can be violent if provoked. After some investigation, he finds the missing husband's car buried behind the barn with two bodies inside. On confronting Susan, she admits how it was Jane who actually pulled the trigger when she found her husband and his secretary in bed together. Jack's thinking he may be Jane's next victim. *(don't repeat information)*

Four: Fourth paragraph heads toward the goal post. A "red herring" might suggest that failure (not success) is eminent and irreversible. Jack makes friends with the local Sherriff and tells him the truth about his situation. The Sherriff, Tom Tuttle, arranges a meeting between each of those looking for their money and the money is returned. In exchange the gangsters pledge not to retaliate. Jack isn't 100% sure they mean it, but what other choice does he have? *(Jack's resolution has been given to someone else. Doesn't happen because of his own actions)*

Five: Fifth paragraph reveals the story resolution as the protagonist succeeds or fails.

Jack is visited by an angelic being named Michael who explains how Jack, like himself, is from another dimension. Jack was sent here to help mankind by cleaning up a loan shark operation and drug ring. Although he gave his word, the former loan shark boss wants him dead because he's afraid Jack might know too much. Jane materializes, in human form, shooting the boss in the chest. Michael then appears in a bright light which surrounds Jane and assures Jack that all will be well in the future. Jack and Susan are left alone to explain how this body, full of holes, ended up in their driveway.

*(Confusing. If Michael is hanging around to help Jack, where's he been up until now? Suggest you weave him into your story earlier. Flashes of someone Jack knows, but can't place. Jack's involvement*



*with Susan throws off the story and pulls the tension away from Jack as he tries to regain his memory.)*

*(As written, the last paragraph has gone far afield from your story core. This may need to be adjusted, or your query and synopsis may need to be more fully developed along Jack's memory issues, flashes and situations that reveal a bit more about who he is.*

*+I feel a story about a being from another dimension, who has lost his memory, knows he has an important task, senses a helper floating in and out of his mind, and whatever else would occur as he struggles to achieve his goal, is interesting and engaging. Plus, will he receive flashes of what will happen if he fails? Will the community he's supposed to help fall into chaos? Are their consequences to his failure to remember and complete his mission. However, this may not be the story you want to tell. You have to decide then refine your query and synopsis accordingly.)*

Thank you for your time and consideration.

### **Questions/Comments:**

**FROM CAROL**

#### **STORY CORE:**

Shaylee wants to maintain friendship with Brott but her father prohibits it and she fears she has lost her best friend forever.

*Carol: Write your story core out **one issue per line.***

**WHO** is your story about? Shaylee.

**WHAT** does she want? To maintain her friendship with Brott.

**WHY?** He is her best friend ever.

**WHAT stands** in her way? Her father forbids the friendship.

**WHAT is the terrible “or else”** if she doesn’t get what she wants. She will lose her best friend forever.

**QUERY:**

Fairies and pixies have always been enemies. Secret friends, Fairy Shaylee and pixie Brott, want to change that with what they call Fairies and Pixies – Friends Forever. When the king finds out about their friendship, he forbids Shaylee from ever seeing Brott again. Is there a way around this and still stay in her father’s good favor?

One day when Shaylee is out riding her pony, she hears Brott calling out for help. She knows she must obey her father and not have any contact with him, so she continues on her way home. But Brott’s cries get more intense. She listens to her heart and goes to Brott who is tangled up in some bushes. She gets him loose and he gives her important information to relay to her father. Information about impending preparations that endanger the fairy kingdom. Does she do this, admitting to her father that she disobeyed his decree, or do the right thing and tell him?

“Fairy Princess Shaylee” is an early chapter book of 2600 words. I have sold more than two dozen stories and articles to a variety of magazines including Highlights for Children, Girl’s Life, the Writer Magazine and am the author of seven children’s books. I was a writing mentor for, and have given presentations for the Minnesota chapter of the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators, and also taught classes at the Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis.

**SYNOPSIS DRAFT:**

Fairy princess Shaylee and pixie Brott accidentally run into each other one day and after spending time together, they become best friends. They keep this a secret from everyone as fairies and pixies have been enemies since time began. They don’t understand why this needs to be and write up an announcement that proclaims “A New Kingdom. Fairies and Pixies. Friends Forever.”

Shaylee wants pixie dust so her pony, Janzi, can fly. *Is that the basis of her relationship with Brott? Is it a shortcut to being pure and honest?*

*Hmm????*. Her father, the king, said that when she must wait until she is old enough, has a pure heart, and puts the good of the kingdom first. Being known as the impatient princess, she asks Brott to get some for her, which he does. Shaylee's parents catch Shaylee and Brott together and forbid her from ever seeing him again.

One day when Shaylee is exploring the kingdom, she hears Brott crying out for help. She must obey her parents but Brott's cries increase. She decides to listen to her heart and goes to him. Brott is tangled up in some bushes and as she untangles him, he informs her of a plot by a band of unruly pixies to take over the fairy kingdom. She is afraid to tell her father because she wasn't supposed to have any contact with Brott, but he is thankful and heads out to take care of the matter. Is Brott identified as a bad pixie? Does he get caught up in the conflict.

The king's army captures the bad pixies who want to take over the fairies. Shaylee earns her pixie dust by having a pure heart and putting the good of the kingdom first. The king unveils Shaylee and Brott's new pact called "A New Kingdom. Fairies and Pixies. Friends Forever."

**What works?** Good job of fleshing out this story. Can you reveal more about Shaylee's inner world? About her fears of facing her father? Her fear about not telling him and thus, endangering the entire kingdom? This would be a big issue for a kid. BTW: The synopsis is five paragraphs, not three. Use all five paragraphs to flesh out Shaylee and a bit more about Brott. Does he face retribution from his clan or the unruly Pixies?

## FROM VICKI

Subject Line: It followed her to school one day, breaking all the rules.

**Who** wants what and why? Sadie wants to be a normal teenager.

**What** stands in her way? Lack of self-esteem

## **What is the terrible or else? Suicide**

Query for Crooked - YA

Born with cerebral palsy, Sadie's walk attracts attention with every step she takes. The real Sadie hides from the world, for people only see a cripple when she slithers by, except for her one friend, Finn, and Sadie's convinced she'll never see him again. Sent to her grandmother's isolated Catskill Mountain home for the summer, it is a perfect refuge to end her life. But in the forest, as in school, Sadie senses someone watches her, once again.

When Sadie wakes to a failed suicide with crystals in her lap, she is devastated that she is still on this earth. And why are there crystals? Her instincts are right. Someone is stalking her. Soon she comes face to face with a malevolent fairy, Devilia, and she is stunned. Did this creature thwart her suicide? If so, then why does it torment her so? Suicide plans are put on hold, for Sadie is intrigued enough to stick around and find out what happens next. When Devilia becomes homeless, Sadie takes her in. But the volatile fairy complicates Sadie's life to the fullest. In a butterfly conservatory, Devilia attracts unwanted attention to Sadie's disability, which causes her to become a "viral" Internet sensation. Finn emails Sadie how magical she looks, but Sadie doesn't see it that way. Humiliated beyond despair, Sadie is ready to rid herself of Devilia for good, until she learns that Finn's life is in danger. Sadie persuades Devilia to help rescue him. In a critical moment, Sadie learns the true meaning of love and loss. Is Sadie ready to see what Finn sees in her, crooked legs and all?

My YA novel Crooked is complete at \_ words. I have been a part of a writers' group since 2004, attended conferences and workshops, and am a member of SCBWI (spell it out). I live in Manhattan with my husband and am the mother of a "sometimes" crooked young adult. I also live with a wirehair dachshund, Clancy, my muse.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

## Synopsis:

Sadie hates being noticed. She hides her palsied walk under long skirts and her true self from the world. The best school year of her life is over, for Finn, her one friend, has gone back to London. Sent to the Catskills to spend her summer with her grandmother, she believes her only option is to end her life.

A malevolent fairy, Devilia, stalks her, and inadvertently **saves** thwarts her. Lost and jealous, Devilia wanders, and unlike Sadie, she longs to be noticed in this world in which she has no place. As their lives intertwine, Sadie slowly begins to escape the darkness that had consumed her and finds she has an impassioned desire to help Devilia. As the infantile Devilia overcomes her jealous nature and starts to trust Sadie, a cautious alliance eventually leads to a friendship.

Through emails, Sadie informs Finn of Devilia's existence. He is in disbelief, until a computer accident puts Devilia before him. On Sadie's end the fairy just vanishes, nowhere to be found. Finn doesn't need a fairy to report his shady business to Sadie. It would destroy her. Finn finds a way to send Devilia back. When Devilia arrives back to the Catskills, a sudden loss debilitates her. Sadie takes her to her Manhattan apartment. The fairy can stay if she promises Sadie two things; no magic and remain invisible when in public. Devilia breaks these promises. In school Devilia protects Sadie from being bullied. This thrills Sadie and gives her a new confidence. But then Devilia causes Sadie's disability to be bared to the world. Betrayed, and exposed, Sadie is furious at Devilia. Can Sadie fully trust Devilia's volatile nature? Sadie is torn.

When drug dealers threaten Finn's life, Sadie convinces Devilia to travel to London to protect him. While protecting Finn, Devilia is critically injured. Sadie and Finn reunite in a desperate attempt to save Devilia. But Devilia disappears. Sadie is heartbroken.

A small miracle occurs, and Devilia reappears. Relief floods Sadie, and buried emotions spill forth. Both Sadie and Finn realize how deeply they care for one another. Sadie is transformed and ready to accept herself as

she is, for she realizes she is like every other girl. Her disability no longer defines her. **An unhidden Sadie belongs in the world and has much to offer.**  
SO WHAT HAPPENS????

## WHAT WORKS?

I suggest you work with your query first paragraph, from last week. With a few tweaks. It basically set up your story and ended with sufficient tension to keep the agent reading.

Like I've said before, when revising your submission materials, don't keep throwing away portions of it that work. Build on these:

Last week Vicki wrote:

Born with cerebral palsy, Sadie's tangled walk attracts attention with every step she takes. The real Sadie hides from the world, for people only see a cripple when she slithers by. Except for her one friend, Finn, who has moved back to London. Sadie's ~~She's~~ convinced she'll never see him again. Sent to her grandmother's isolated Catskill Mountain home for the summer, Sadie decides this is ~~the~~ it is a perfect refuge to end her life. But in the forest, as at school, Sadie senses someone watches her, ~~once again.~~

*Comment: This works. Keep it, i.e., stop futzing with it already!*

## WHAT DOESN'T WORK?

Is Devilia truly malevolent? Or is she trying to understand humans through interaction with Sadie? Has she been thrust into our world by a mistake, or is she on a mission of learning? Earning her wings, so to speak.

This needs to be clarified because you are building the case that Sadie recognizes someone who is also crippled by attitudes/beliefs/impairment or ????. What pulls Sadie to want to help Devilia, especially if she tortures her? And why does Devilia do this? What exactly does she do? What is her payoff for bad behavior?

*Exchange student lived with Sadie's family. Like a brother. And then there is Finn. Did Sadie know he was dealing? Is he also a user? What's his*

emotional/mental challenge? What is the basis for their friendship? Similar intelligence? Similar interests? (What are these?)

Devilia getting sucked into the internet is great. Might be a good way to not quite kill her. Spread her atoms around the universe during a blackout while Finn is trying to send her back to Sadie. (Like problems with the Star Trek transporter. Devilia goes all sparkly and then kaboom! The sparkles dissipate and so does she . . . for the moment.)

Finn's inclusion in the story feels awkward, probably because you haven't quite made the case for his place in Sadie's heart.

You have a great deal of information and interesting issues in your story. The challenge seems to be sifting through these to define the most important. Only you know what would these be? What do you think they are?

### **Questions/comments from the group?**

#### **FROM DOREE**

Correction: Query: Doree  
Story Core

**Who:** Levi Yokum

**What?** Levi wants his status quo to stay as is.

**Why?** The loss of his family dynamics

**What** is the terrible or else if/when the status quo changes? Early death.

Core: Levi's acceptance on his future

Email SUBJECT line: Opioids . . . can you hear me now?

When seventeen-year-old Levi Yokum learns that his mother has cancer, life goes from steady to confusion. Since the age of three, he and his mother have been a team, and together, the two have taken on everything. They've fought breast cancer twice and won each time. Levi's unwavering in his mind that they can battle this new development and be victorious again. She disagrees. She's dying, and the damage to her body has already begun. Levi can't grasp the logic behind her wanting to accept her fate and leave him. Arguments arise. Levi fears that without his mother's guidance and security, he'll be homeless and then survival will be his monster that he'll have to fight alone. His anxiety leads him to make irrational decisions. He steals a bottle of OxyContin hoping that all the answers are within the pills.

Coriander High's junior running back, Levi Yokum and his mother have been planning to tour colleges in and around their state. He's relationship with his mother is close and he'd like to keep it that way. So when he learns that she has liver cancer, he considers it a detour, not the end. At the age of seven, Levi helped her in every step of the way as she went through chemo and radiation with breast cancer. He sat beside her in the hospital and held the bucket when she got sick. Levi used his little body to hold her up when she'd been at her weakest. He has no doubt that as a team, this outcome could be the same, and life would revert to before her diagnosis. Still, she tries to explain that it's progressed to the point that any radical means won't help stop or repair the damage to her body. Levi refuses to grasp the magnitude of her illness. He accuses her of wanting to die and leave him to rot out in a gutter on the streets, destitute and alone. The tension turns their home into a war zone of slamming doors and yelling words that will never be 'unheard.' It's turning him into a person that he, his friends and his mother don't like being around. In desperation, he begins looking for something to give him strength. A prescription of narcotics fascinates him to the point that he wonders just what the little pills can do. After studying the effects ten tiny OxyContin's can accomplish, he hides them in his closet. The sight of his mother's deterioration finally breaks through to him, and he realizes that her death is inevitable. His hidden treasure, he's learned can offer her a gentle passage to eternal sleep. Or he can use the pills to end his problems and never have to worry about anything once she leaves.



*(460 words to here) Reads like a combo-query/synopsis.*

Completed at 54,500 words, "One Eighty" will appeal to readers of "Fault in our Stars" and "Thirteen." My background includes three years as a reporter for the Salt Lake Valley Journal. For seven years, I've been an active member (and past vice president and president) of the Utah RWA (Romance Writers of America) and participate in SCBWI, the Utah League of Writers and Absolutely Writers as well as two critique groups. Thank you for your time and consideration.

**What works?** Doree, you're honing in on your story core. But, what's missing, still, is the "terrible or else" that needs to be at the end of your second paragraph. You want to engage the agent to wonder, "Hmmm, will he escape with pills or will he accept the changes in his "status quo" help his mom make a pain-free transition?"

What doesn't work?

Your query first two paragraphs are 460 words. Max number of words in a query is 350. Time for some editing revision, eliminate all duplicates of information. End your first paragraph with a tease that indicates his anxiety drives him in a direction he'd never considered before.

Your challenge is one you can master. It's much easier to edit and prune than to think of what you need to/want to say.

I've yellow-highlighted what I feel you need in your query first paragraph below.

When seventeen-year-old Levi Yokum learns that his **mother has cancer**, life goes from steady to confusion. Since the age of three, he and his mother have been a **team**, and together, the two have **taken on everything**. They've **fought breast cancer twice** and won each time. Levi's unwavering in his mind that **they can battle this** new development and be **victorious again**. She **disagrees**. She's dying, and the **damage to her body** has already begun. Levi can't **grasp the logic** behind her wanting to **accept her fate and leave him**. Arguments arise. Levi **fears that** **without his mother's guidance** and

security, he'll be homeless and then survival will be his monster that he'll have to fight alone. His anxiety leads him to make irrational decisions. He steals a bottle of OxyContin hoping that all the answers are within the pills. *This raises the question of what types of answers?*

NON-FICTION

FROM ALAN

OVER-ARCHING QUESTION: WHO WAS THIS MAN WHO HELPED DEFINE OUR RACIAL CULTURE?

WHO WANT[ED] WHAT: 300LB BLACK BOXER “KING DICK” CEPHAS—DID HE WANT GREATNESS, OR WAS IT THRUST UPON HIM?

WHAT [STOOD] IN HIS WAY? RACISM, ILLITERACY, POVERTY  
WHAT IS THE TERRIBLE “OR ELSE”? WE’VE FORGOTTEN HIM, AND THE WONDERFUL LESSONS HIS LIFE HAS FOR US.

OR WE’LL STAY STUCK WITH OUR RACIAL DIVISIONS AND CONTINUE TO MISTAKE WHO WE ARE

*Comment: Non-fiction manuscripts do not require a story core. This ONLY pertains to fiction.*

TO:

SUBJECT/[PITCHLINE]: First ever biography of legendary black American King [: P-O-W leader, boxer, jokester, literary star ]

Imagine a combination of Mohammed Ali, Paul Bunyan and Bill Cosby. It’s still tamer than the true story of Richard “King Dick” or “Big Dick” Cephus (1790?-1831). The 300-pound boxer ruled over American P-O-W’s during the War of 1812. He policed the birth of the anti-slavery movement. His skeleton was exhibited in public for decades. Now for the first time we can trace his true story. It’s even more amazing than the dozens of novels, plays, séances, scholarly works and the Hollywood movie he inspired. It will

surprise and delight anyone who hopes to be popular in life and famous after death.

Dick grew up among slaves, yet ruled thousands. His jokes were famous nationwide. He's forgotten because he was black, working class, and probably illiterate. *The Last Black King of Boston: The Mysterious Life and Stranger Afterlives of King Dick!* is fully drafted at 95,000 words. It's a jigsaw puzzle of police, prison and genealogy records, memoirs, news-anecdotes and tall tales which could only be assembled during the internet-age. I tell it through the lives he touched, the work he did and the cultures he changed, including our own. I interviewed top-selling US- history and race scholars Eric Foner, Ray Arsenault, Timothy Tyson, the late John Hope Franklin and dozens of others while getting ready for this project. James Earl Jones narrated one of my award-winning documentaries. Now King Dick's hilarious and tragic story will entertain adventure and mystery fans, inform history and literature buffs, inspire social-justice seekers, and give hope to Black Lives and spiritual believers. That's because Big Dick's spirit triumphed over ignorance, poverty, vice and violence to achieve cultural immortality.

*The Last Black King* is based on six years of research. It builds on my fifteen-odd-years of writing (and producing, reporting and directing) nationally-broadcast public radio documentaries about race in America. My *Between Civil War and Civil Rights* series won an Edward R. Murrow Award, the NY Festivals Grand Award and Gold World Medal, and other prizes. Its newly-rebuilt website includes a forum/blog about our continuing racial predicament. I worked as print-journalist and stage director for more than a decade. I've a theatre degree from Yale and two Masters degrees. I'm a member of the Tampa Writers Alliance and re-founded its nonfiction critique group. Thank you for your consideration,  
Alan Lipke

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Alan, two things:

THING ONE: Why have you included Bill Cosby on your first line? Are you purposefully trying to alienate every female agent who open your query?

THING TWO: Shifting your work from paragraph to paragraph is not going to enable you to write an effective query. Overwriting and “boasting” (your word) is not marketing. It’s a waste of your time. And mine.

I have given you a protocol to follow. I’ve told you what you need to do, three times. This is not working. I am unable to communicate clearly to you, and will try one more time.

Instead of nit-picking at your work, I’m telling, one last time, what you need to do. Period.

eniate I suggest you follow the protocol in the NF tutorial draft I sent you. If you chose to stick with your own protocol, and simply shift information about instead of totally re-writing and simplifying it, I can’t help you write this.

For example, problems with your first paragraph. I’ve highlighted what needs to be here.

Imagine a combination of Mohammed Ali, Paul Bunyan and Bill Cosby. *(Why are you referring to Cosby who is on his way to prison for drugging and raping women?)* It’s still tamer than the true story of Richard “King Dick” or “Big Dick” Cephus (1790?-1831). *(Pick one name and be consistent)* The 300-pound boxer ruled over American P-O-W’s during the War of 1812. He policed the birth of the anti-slavery movement. *(what does that mean?)* His skeleton was exhibited in public for decades. *(Why does this matter?)* Now for the first time we can trace his true story. *(who is we and why should we care?)* It’s even more amazing than the dozens of novels, plays, séances, scholarly works and the Hollywood movie he inspired. *(What could you possibly add to what has already been written?)* It will surprise and delight anyone who hopes to be popular in life and famous after death. *(This has nothing to do with anything. Be specific about who will want to read your book)*

*(Your first paragraph is a **few** sentences that tell about your book. A **few**. They must be captivating and engaging. Stop overselling and drowning your reader with meaningless information.)*

Alan, If you insist on crafting a non-fiction query outside of the established format, you will not be able to engage agents or encourage positive response to your query letters.

I strongly suggest that you at least try to write this query according to the format for the non-fiction proposal which I sent you before class.

Remember, your non-fiction query is a sales pitch about your project and you, the writer. It's not a book description with a few tidbits of marketing info tucked in here and there. Time-pressured agents will not dig through to find out more about the market and how you can assist in reaching out to potential readers.

It matters that your query engages agent interest by responding to their unspoken question: "What'cha got for me?" Continual and clever description of the book doesn't make your case *about* your market, *who* they are, *why* they will care, and *how* you can assist the publisher in reaching them.

FOLLOW THIS FORMAT. PERIOD.

Your opening paragraph describes your book in two or three sentences. What is it about? Then, in the same paragraph, a one sentence explanation regarding your market. Who will care?

Your second paragraph expands information about your market.

What benefits will your market gain from reading your book?

Where are these readers?

What you have done to create a platform: meaning those in your universe who know and/or follow your activities?

Does your book inform, teach, comfort, inspire, amuse, introduce, or what?

Include title, word count, information about the market, and any unusual

features of your book such as graphics/illustrations/audio/DVDs/templates/worksheets/video links, etc.

Your third paragraph tells why you are the expert, the *best person* to write this book. Include information about your education, writing credentials, experience in your field, etc.

Do you have question or comment?

Dick grew up among slaves, yet ruled thousands. His jokes were famous nationwide. He's forgotten because he was black, working class, and probably illiterate. *The Last Black King of Boston: The Mysterious Life and Stranger Afterlives of King Dick!* is fully drafted at 95,000 words. It's a jigsaw puzzle of police, prison and genealogy records, memoirs, news-anecdotes and tall tales which could only be assembled during the internet-age. I tell it through the lives he touched, the work he did and the cultures he changed, including our own. I interviewed top-selling US- history and race scholars Eric Foner, Ray Arsenault, Timothy Tyson, the late John Hope Franklin and dozens of others while getting ready for this project. James Earl Jones narrated one of my award-winning documentaries. Now King Dick's hilarious and tragic story will entertain adventure and mystery fans, inform history and literature buffs, inspire social-justice seekers, and give hope to Black Lives and spiritual believers. That's because Big Dick's spirit triumphed over ignorance, poverty, vice and violence to achieve cultural immortality.

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journalist and stage director for more than a decade. I've a theatre degree from Yale and two Masters degrees. I'm a member of the Tampa Writers Alliance and re-founded its nonfiction critique group.

Thank you for your consideration,

Alan Lipke

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If you can, write factually, without all the fluff. If this isn't a quick and clear read, it will not be read.

Questions/comments?

## COLD READING: LATE SUBMISSION

From Linda

Title: Unbound

**Who wants what and why?** Wu Meichen wants freedom to control her own future.

**What stands in the way?** Chinese cultural traditions

**What will happen if** Meichen doesn't get what she wants? Her husband will go to America, and they may be separated for years until he's allowed to return.

Query:

Newlywed Wu Meichen hates Chinese traditions that restrict her freedom. Although their marriage was arranged, Meichen falls in love with her

husband, Chao Chung. She wants to be his partner with a voice in his plans for their future. Meichen soon learns the Chao family adheres to Confucian beliefs; the oldest male controls the family's destiny and decides the job each person will do to help achieve his goal. Chung knows he will go to America to work for his second uncle after he marries and sires a son. Meichen prays that something will happen to change Oldest Uncle's plans for Chung. They change, but not in the way she desires. American laws are passed to stop Chinese immigration. Chung must enter America before the laws take effect. Meichen fears he'll be gone for years while she grows old with no chance to have children.

Chung asks his father to send Meichen to a missionary school while he's away. She meets Li Biyu, a Chinese teacher, who helps Meichen overcome paralyzing grief. While she enjoys learning, Meichen still longs for Chung. After five years Meichen's sorrow turns into anger and then rebellion. If her husband can't come home, she'll go to him. When First Uncle learns Meichen has left China, he catches her in San Francisco, determined to send her back. She escapes, disguises herself as a boy and crosses America by train. Even when she sees Chung again, her troubles aren't over. First Uncle expects Chung to divorce his disobedient wife. If Chung keeps her, his family will disown him. Without love, Meichen sees no point in living. But will Chung still love her when he remembers her actions caused the loss of his family? Can Meichen find a way to make peace with her in-laws and stay with her husband?

Complete at 80,000 words, *Unbound Woman* won first place in an ethnic novel contest sponsored by Romantic Times Magazine. I belong to the Augusta Writers and am an active member of RWA (Romance Writers of America) and Georgia Romance Writers. Thank you for your time and consideration.

### Second Draft of Synopsis

On her wedding day, Wu Meichen becomes a member of the Chao family. They are all strangers, even her husband, Chao Chung. As a new bride, Meichen is on the lowest level in this large family's hierarchy, and under the thumb of her hyper-critical mother-in-law. After a rocky start, Meichen



and Chung become comfortable with each other, and Chung does his best to protect Meichen from his mother.

When Meichen learns her husband is going to America, perhaps for many years, she panics, but she has to accept it, because the head of the family, First Uncle Chao Gang, has given the order. Her father-in-law sends her to a missionary school where she is occupied by her studies and safe from her mother-in-law. She makes her first female friend, Li Biyu, her teacher. But even Biyu cannot change Meichen's impatient nature. After five years, she decides she will go to America and join Chung, and she convinces Biyu to go with her.

Meichen's journey nearly ends in San Francisco. Oldest Uncle lives there, and he is furious that she dared act without consulting him. He tries to send her back to China. She slips away and begins the second part of her journey. When Meichen reaches Chung after traveling four weeks on a train, he decides he can't divorce her after her courageous journey. But Meichen knows he's wracked with guilt, and she tries to be patient with his unpredictable behavior. During an argument, he tells Meichen he kept her only for sexual pleasure and he is ashamed he abandoned his family. With her heart crushed, Meichen tells him to divorce her, and she joins Biyu, who is touring the south to raise money for girls' schools in China.

Meichen discovers her power as a speaker when she brings in impressive contributions for Biyu's campaign. She suspects she is pregnant, but she keeps speaking until Biyu guesses her secret and insists she go home to tell Chung the news. When she arrives at her house, Chung is not there. He is on the way to China to remarry. Regret tortures her. She agreed to divorce, and it's too late to take back her words.

Chung returns a few days later. He tells Meichen he visited one of her tour stops and watched her speak. He is proud of her talent and awed by the way she mesmerized the audience. She is the only wife he wants. He writes Chao Gang to say if he goes to China, the Americans might not let him return, and then he can't earn money for the family. Chao Gang decides he wants

money more than he wants to punish Meichen. He rescinds the order for divorce, and Chung and Meichen are once more part of the family.

*(463 words)*

*Suggest you trim this by 100 words. Focus on Meichen and her feelings and her personal expansion as she discovers her power of public speaking and fund raising. This strengthens her so she can help Chung*

## WHAT WORKS?

Your core matches the context/flow of your story. Good job. Now it's time to refine and trim.

I suggest, in your last synopsis paragraph, that you bring the power back to Meichen. She suggests a negotiation with Uncle. She helps Chung craft the letter. *Together* they resolve the issue.

For whatever reason, you've expanded your query beyond where it needs to go. I suggest you go back to last week's version, I've added a few revisions.

### Query from Nov 4:

Newlywed Wu Meichen hates the Chinese traditions that dictate her actions and thoughts. Although at that time, late 1800s, marriages were arranged. However, Meichen falls deeply in love with her husband, Chao Chung. She wants him to accept her as a partner and give her a voice in his plans for ~~his~~ their future. But Chinese tradition demands all family members obey the orders of the oldest male who's responsible for the family's welfare. When First Uncle ~~the head of the family~~ sends Meichen's husband Chung overseas to work, she is devastated, fearing he'll be gone many years while she faces a lifetime of waiting. Will influence further reading.

Meichen's father-in-law sends her to a missionary school after her mother-in-law attacks her. While she enjoys learning, Meichen never stops longing for Chung. Months pass, then years. Meichen has no comfort except the few letters her husband sends, his photograph, and memories of their short time together. In the fifth year Meichen's sorrow turns into anger and then rebellion. If her husband can't come home, she'll find her way to him. When she reaches San Francisco, the family patriarch, is furious. He tries to send

Meichen back to China. but she disguises herself as a boy and crosses America by train. Meichen rejoices when she sees her husband again, but she soon learns there is more trouble ahead. Her husband has been ordered to divorce her or his family will disown him. Without love, Meichen sees no point in living. But will her husband still love her if her ~~when he remembers her~~ rash actions cause the loss of his family? **Can Meichen find a way to make peace with her in-laws and stay with her husband?** Live in both worlds and make it work. This is compelling.

Complete at 90,000 words, Unbound Woman won first place in an ethnic novel contest sponsored by Romantic Times Magazine. I belong to the Augusta Writers and am an active member of RWA (Romance Writers of America) and Georgia Romance Writers. Thank you for your time and consideration. *318 words*

**Question/comments?**

## **In closing~**

To those of you in our “audience,” thank you for joining us. There will be a limited workshop transcript posted on the public “on-demand” page at [getpublishednow.biz](http://getpublishednow.biz).

If you’d like to receive the full transcript and video of every Friday workshop, delivered to your inbox within 24 hours after the webinar, you can subscribe for automatic delivery, at a super low rate. Information about this new subscription program will be posted on the public “on-demand” page of my website, along with the PayPal button.

## **NEXT WEEK:**

**The next Submission Central workshop will** meet Friday, November 18, 1 PM, Eastern.

**HOMEWORK:** Continue to evolve your story core, email SUBJECT line, query, and synopsis.

The format for this next workshop is going to be a bit different. It is going to be a combination of trouble shooting and “ask me anything.”

November 18<sup>th</sup> is a trouble shooting workshop. We’ll evaluate/critique submission as a group. This will help you develop important evaluation techniques, and also make you more aware of similar issues within your submission documents.

**PLEASE SUBMIT:**

Your revised story core (if you’re still defining it), revised query and synopsis, of synopsis first draft.

For this week alone, your **deadline is Wednesday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, noon.** As usual, I’ll set up the workshop page and scan your submissions ahead of time. But no comments will be written.

Webinar on November 25<sup>th</sup>, will be a replay of the first Submission Central video that introduced the program.

**December** focus will include manuscript first pages and how to revise them for the only audience that counts (at this point), the agent. As usual, evaluations and assistance on query and synopsis will be included.

As you finalize the context/flow of your query and synopsis, writing mechanic issues will be covered.

**If you feel stuck in the synopsis swamp**, my 24-page tutorial, available at MolliMart, will reinforce much of the information we've covered in these work shops.



Or, if you want to look ahead at what we'll be covering in our "first pages" workshops, this "first page" tutorial is a valuable aid.

[Here's the link for more information.](#)

## **BTW:**

Regardless of *when* you join Submission Central, your submitted homework always will be evaluated weekly.

"On-demand" videos and full transcripts of the meeting only are available on the private on-demand page at [www.getpublishednow.biz](http://www.getpublishednow.biz). Here's that link. <http://www.getpublishednow.biz/on-demand-private.html>

If you're not yet a member of Submission Central, thank you for being with us today.

Would you benefit from receive weekly evaluations of your submission documents in our Friday workshop? Or access to Q & A, and discussions between Submission Central members on our private Facebook group?

Both of these will help you learn what you need to know in order to land an agent who will help you navigate the publishing maze. Join us! [CLICK HERE](#) to read more about the AgentQuery Submission Central program.

## **Catching up~**

Regardless of when you join Submission Central, if we're working on the synopsis, but you haven't written a query, no problem. Begin with the query. Use my query template and jump right in. Move through the query, week by week, until you've mastered the format. Regardless, if the workshops are focusing on synopsis, first pages, or submission protocol, etc., join in regardless of where your focus is placed.

Really truly, the query is the document that must be written first because it forms the basis for the synopsis and structure of your manuscript first pages.

I'll help you, as will members of the group who have progressed beyond where you may be at the moment.

Thanks to all of you for being here today. See you next week.

Write on! May the words be with you!

Molli