Welcome to
[Submission Central](http://getpublishednow.biz)
QUERY WORKSHOP

THE QUERY SECOND PARAGRAPH~

QUICK REVIEW:

Each paragraph of your query has a specific purpose.

Paragraph #1:

Your first paragraph is written to "hook and hold" agent interest. This is done by introducing the core of your story core: who wants what, why, what stands in their way, and the terrible "or else" that could occur if the protagonist doesn't get what they want.

The second paragraph expands the first and ends with a tease that propels the agent to wonder, "Hmmm, what happens next?"

Curiosity about the story will propel the agent to keep scrolling and read your synopsis which shows the full story arc, from beginning to end.

Most writers, in their first draft, pack the second paragraph with so much information it doesn't allow sufficient space to expand the story or reveal more about the protagonist.

Paragraph #2:

Your second paragraph needs to:

- reveal more the antagonist or situation that blocks your protagonist from achieving their goal.
- focus on your protagonist's inner world as shown by their thoughts, words, and actions.
- include a brief description of the setting/place/era if appropriate.
    - For example: crusty-poison salt marshes surround the witches' castle.
- end with a tease that heightens the agent's interest so they'll wonder, "Hmmm, what happens?"

At that point, you have captured their interest. They will move on to skim over your third paragraph, then read your synopsis to find out what happens and how the story is resolved.

THIS WEEK'S QUESTIONS:

First, about fonts~

Courier was the industry standard since the days of typewriters. Large type and open spaces in between the letters. Back in the old days,12 point courier was the only font available and came as standard on many typewriters. .

Then along came Times Roman. Similar to courier, but smaller, and tighter. This quickly replaced courier as the font of choice, even though it is actually smaller than the 12 point Courier.

Courier and Times Roman are recognized on almost all computer systems. This may not hold true for either of them when being read on a smart phone.

Remember, you may discover a font that you absolutely adore, and decide to use it on all of your documents, but then discover that it doesn't translate from one system to the next. This is a good reason to always test any new font. Send it to a friend or two in order to determine that it stays true and in place as you have intended it.

And then came a slew of fonts called "sans serif," like Arial. Does not have the little foot on the bottom of the letter stem. Originally designed to be read more cleanly on a computer screen.

This is Georgia which I prefer. It's similar to Times Roman, but larger, with rounder letters and is friendly and easy to read. It has become a standard and can be read by all computer operating systems. Not necessarily true when read on a smart phone.

We are trained to read by following the little foot at the bottom of each letter stem. Most books, magazines and textbooks are printed using a "serif" font.

Set in Times Roman:

Typefaces like Arial look clean on your screen, but cause you to read more slowly since you've lost your guide, the little foot on each letter.

Question: Where are videos and transcript?

After each workshops, the transcript and video are placed, within 24-hours on this link.

http://www.getpublishednow.biz/on-demand.html

Thank you, Submission Central members, for being so gracious and sharing your work as you progress from query to synopsis to first pages and master everything you need to order to create a slam-dunk submission package that lands an agent.

THIS WEEK: query letter second paragraphs~

Your second drafts of the first paragraph are included to lead into the second paragraph. It's a good exercise to read your first paragraph, just like an agent will read it. This helps you ensure that the tease at the end of the first paragraph engages the agent so they will keep reading.

Note: Query first paragraphs often are the only portion of most queries to be read. Agents can tell within one or two sentences if you write well and

have a story that people will want to read. (When I was an acquisitions editor, I made this "yes" or "no" decision after reading three sentences).

This means you need to sharpen and revise your first paragraph so it's a quick read and includes your story core:

- Who wants what and why?
- What or who stands in their say?
- What is the terrible "or else" that will happen if they don't get what they want?

From Vicki~

Born with Cerebral Palsy, Sadie's tangled walk attracts attention wherever she goes, and no matter how much of herself she hides, she will never end the cruel scrutiny from her peers. To add to her pain, the only friend she has ever known left for London. Sadie'ss convinced she will never see him again. When she's sent to her grandmother's isolated home in the Catskill Mountains, she decides it the perfect refuge to end her life. But Sadie senses something continues to watch her.

A malevolent fairy, Devilia, is obsessed with this new mortal girl who has invaded her territory. Why is this girl getting so much attention from a bunch of old ladies? Envious and beset with Sadie's strange moves, Devilia accidentally thwarts Sadie's suicide attempt. Once Sadie comes face-to-face with Devilia, she is forced to take a deep look within, which is far more terrifying than anything Sadie could imagine. After Devilia suffers a tragic loss, Sadie feels empathy for this homeless creature that has been taunting her, and cautiously agrees to bring her home. While on a field trip, Devilia is the cause of a miraculous event that puts Sadie further in the limelight. A picture of Sadie goes viral and her disability is on display before the world, making her an overnight sensation. Humiliated beyond despair, Sadie wants to rid herself of Devilia for good. But Sadie discovers she needs Devilia more than she realized. Plus she needs her help, the kind of help that could put the fairy's life in danger. Would Devilia be willing to risk her life for Sadie? In a mad race against time, Sadie learns the true meaning of

love and loss. In the aftermath, is Sadie strong enough to face the challenges of the path laid before her?

My YA novel "Crooked" is 90,000 words. A member of SCBWI, I live in New York City with my husband, our sometimes "crooked" young adult, and my muse, our wire-haired dachshund Clancy.

WHAT WORKS? Nice comment (almost a tease) ending the first paragraph. It could be rephrased to read, "even though she's alone in the woods, Sadie wonders, is someone watching her?"

WHAT DOESN'T WORK?

2nd paragraph tells too much about the story and doesn't reveal enough about Sadie. Two teases are written, although you want only one and it has to be compelling. No mystery here. Tell what the peril is.

Yes, introduce Devilia (great name), but don't spend so much time on her. Your focus needs to remain on Sadie. Deep dive into her inner world, her thoughts, perhaps show her suicide attempt. What does she do? How is she saved by the fairy?

Length, for a first novel, will be a challenge. Agents believe (and rightly so) that wet-behind-the-ears novelists who long novels (above 70K words) don't understand how to self-edit and tighten their work.

As written, the third paragraph needs to include writing experience (if any) and affiliations with writers' groups (which proves that you're striving to improve your writing skills).

COMMENTS from the group? Multiple questions at end of 2nd paragraph. Comment about revising into two books? Could work, but that doesn't deal with overwriting (extraneous adverbs and adjectives).

Email SUBJECT line: A Chinese wife chooses between obedience and independence. Does she dare travel ten thousand miles to join her husband?

First paragraph:

Newlywed Wu Meichen hates the Chinese traditions that dictate her actions and even the ideas she should believe. Deeply in love with her husband, Chung, she wants a marriage that makes them partners as they plan their future, but her mother-in-law interferes at every opportunity to pull the couple apart. When the family patriarch sends her husband to work in America, Meichen fears they'll be separated for years, perhaps for life.

Second paragraph:

Meichen get**s** one benefit from Chung's departure. Her father-in-law sends her to a missionary school after her mother-in-law attacks her. As five years pass, Meichen YEARNS desperately <u>hopes</u> Chung might return for a visit, but her dreams come to nothing. American laws are tightened to keep Chinese workers out; if Chung leaves, he may not be allowed to return to his job. Meichen refuses to wait any longer. She defies Chinese tradition and the anger of her husband's family, traveling ten thousand miles, risking her life, freedom, and honor. But what will her husband say when they meet again? His family orders him to divorce her. Chung must choose between his duty to his family and the longing in his heart. And if he clings to Meichen, they must find new ways to deal with each other as husband and wife.

WHAT WORKS? Story is more clear than your first draft. And yet, the focus on Meichen needs to be stronger with more powerful verbs and descriptions about how she feels when sent away from the in-laws she hates.

WHAT DOESN'T WORK? End of second paragraph must focus on Meichen, and how her journey hasn't ended yet. She must convince her husband to defy his parents, his traditions, and enter into a new life with

her in America. Keep the question on her. Will her husband divorce and abandon her, or can she convince him to xxxxxx (you fill in the blanks).

At this point of your story, you want the agent to care about Meichen and to find out if she is successful, or if not, what will happen to her.

Subject line needs to be much shorter, like: A journey of 10,000 steps begins with a choice. (Ick! But you get the picture).

COMMENTS from the group: Add her age in the first paragraph. Child bride. Arranged marriage. Promised to each other.

<mark>From Doree~</mark>

Email SUBJECT line: Opioids-Can you hear me now?

(suggested revision to: Opioids . . . can you hear me now?

When change is mentioned to seventeen-year-old Levi Yokum, he thinks it's a new strategy on the coach's play board, nothing as permanent as death.

Levi Yokum uses teasing and laughter to prepare his mother, Camellia Josephine (CJ) for his graduation day. As his only parent since Levi turned three, the two are very close. So when her bright smile starts to dim, Levi assumes the change is a reflection of his pending departure. Except she's soon showing signs of something far different then simple sadness. Her cancer has returned, only this time it has metastases (spelling?) to her liver. She'd had breast cancer, twice when he was seven, and they beat it, victorious and united. Not this time. CJ's already made the decision that she's not interested in any medical intervention. Levi is devastated at her news. The situation becomes a roller coaster of arguments, slamming doors, and late night crying sessions. Witnessing his mother's rapid deterioration, Levi realizes he needs to step up, and give her back the son that offers her support and love. He can't stop his mom from dying, but he researches ways to assist her into a peaceful transition if her pain should become unbearable. He steals the needed medicine and squirrels it away in his bedroom. That is when he gradually learns that opioids have a strange way of taking over the sturdiest of minds.

WHAT WORKS? Nice job expanding your story. It's clear about Levi's struggles and confusion.

WHAT DOESN'T WORK? First paragraph needs to follow industry standard to present your story core and end with a tease. A declarative statement, or information about the story will not keep an agent reading.

Second paragraph needs to end with a question about Levi? Will he succumb to the temptations of drugs (ten little voices), or step up and help his mother into a peaceful transition. Will they both be lost, or will one survive? Make the agent want to know what happens to Levi.

COMMENTS from group: Great sentence that reveals the setting and pain in a nutshell: "The situation becomes a roller coaster of arguments, slamming doors, and late night crying sessions."

From Lisa~

Email SUBJECT line: Woman loses mind. Must find to stop murderer.

(Revision suggestion: Finding her past is the only way Kay will have a future. Or, revise to make the subject line engaging enough to motivate a "CLICK" and open the email. Perhaps: Memory, murder, and mayhem.)

Kay Smith, a victim of a suspicious car accident, awakens with only vague memories about her life/past. Hazy recollections and vivid, terrifying dreams about a notorious serial strangler leave her panicked about what her past may hold. While tracking down leads to reclaim her identity and life, Kay discovers she's being stalked by a murderer. She realizes her own survival hinges on remembering her dark history before it catches up with her. Will she remember the dark secrets of the past before they catch up with her?

Kay turns to a new friend for help in hiding her from the killer hot on her trail, Nick Costa, a decorated war hero, security specialist, and the secret object of Kay's smoldering passion. After narrowly escaping the stalker's

bullets, the two take refuge in a seedy motel. There Nick confesses the deadly truth he's hidden from her--Kay is really Angela Lockhart, the missing First Lady of the United States. As the head of her Secret Service detail, Nick is keeping Angela's location and condition hidden from his superiors, part of a lone, desperate attempt to protect her from a killer in the White House. Determined to put an end to the killing spree that follows her every move, Angela leaves/ditches/sneaks away from Nick behind to confront her husband about his role in the murders of her sister and a young, pregnant intern. Her life is on the line when she finally comes face-to-face with the truth that everyone has deadly secrets to hide, even her.

WHAT WORKS? Much better clarity about the story. Still needs tease endings that are more than declarative statements. Tease endings are provocative questions that lead the reader to stick with the query and read more about the protagonist and the story. For example, first paragraph: Will she remember the dark secrets of the past before they catch up with her?

WHAT DOESN'T WORK?

In the second paragraph, combine the collision course that occurs between present actions and past truths as they meet during Angela's face-to-face with her husband, and the truth. Will the present win the faceoff, or will the past conquer all. (Ick, but you get the picture.)

Not sure if it's important, to mention that Nick is the object of Angela's smoldering passion.

COMMENTS from the group. Keep working on the tease endings. Submit them on our Facebook page to receive feedback from everyone.

NEXT WEEK~

The next Submission Central workshop meets next Friday, October 21. 1PM Eastern

CLICK HERE to open the registration link:

Write your query third paragraph, all about you, your title and word count, writing background (if any), critique or writers' conference activities (if any). Examples are in the query tutorial.

Remember:

Every segment of your submission is written to engage agent interest and encourage them to read your entire query, synopsis, and finally, your sample pages: the goal all along.

You're invited~

Thank you to those of you who have attended this workshop today, but aren't yet members of Submission Central. I hope you'll join us.

PS: The introductory rate for Submission Central will remain at $37 per month for those who join us before January 1st. What do you receive for that? Four workshops, weekly one-on-one evaluation from me, the tutorial of the month, private Facebook group access 24/7 for Q&A . . . is that a good deal or what? Pay month to month. Stay as long or as short as you want.

Catching up is easy~

You can review the video(s) and read the transcripts, on-demand, to catch up. CLICK HERE.

Thanks to all of you for being here today.

Write on!

Molli