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Agent/Query Submission Central

Workshop #5 – February 3, 2017

Formatting your submission

In the old days (prior to 2014), query, synopsis and sample pages were submitted in print and via snail mail. Times Roman was the standard type face, everything was double spaced.

When agents made the shift to digital, this changed everything. Your submission is submitted via email as one long document. Query letter followed by synopsis followed by sample pages.

It might be read on a desktop computer, or a notebook, or the small screen of a smart phone.

Obviously this requires that you format your submission to be agent-and-device-friendly document that can be read on any sized-screen. This is that format.

But first, double check exactly what the agent wants to receive. Most will request query, synopsis, and a specific number of pages. If your sample is within a page or two of the end of a chapter, go to the end. It's OK. If they're still reading when they reach the end of the requested pages, they'll keep reading an extra few pages.

Regarding the font:

In the interest of making it easier for the agent to read your submission, consider shifting from Times Roman to Georgia. In the sample below, both are 12 point, but Georgia letters are more round and therefore easier to read, even on a smart phone screen.

Example:

Text in Georgia, 12 point.

Place the requested materials (query, synopsis, and sample chapters/pages) into one long document. Hit Cntrl A and highlight the entire document. Set the font to Georgia, 12 point, single spacing, like this. Extra space between paragraphs and sections, as shown below.

Text in Times Roman, 12 point.

Place the requested materials (query, synopsis, and sample chapters/pages) into one long document. Hit Cntrl A and highlight the entire document. Set the font to Georgia, 12 point, single spacing, like this. Extra space between paragraphs and sections, as shown below.

SYNOPSIS is set flush left with one space above and one below.

MANUSCRIPT SAMPLE PAGES “Glass Promises” also is set flush left, with one space above and one below.

Double check the agent’s email address.

Double check the subject line. Did you write it as they have instructed? Some agents want the word “Query” and/or their name in the subject line. Whatever they request, do it!

Cut and paste the entire submission into an email and send it to yourself and to a friend who has a different internet browser than yours. It’s smart to double check that your query arrives in the same form you’ve sent it.

One at a time, send out six queries the first go around. Wait at least two weeks. While you’re waiting, write your next novel. If you don’t receive any response, send out to six more. Wait at least two weeks. While you’re waiting, write your next novel.

After 12 non-responses, take a hard look at your submission materials, especially the text that follows your first page(s), and consider some revision and tightening of those pages.

This is why. What often happens is that writers revise and tighten their first 350 to 500 words, but neglect to do the same for the rest of the novel. This becomes evident to the agent

Also, be sure the agent you are contacting is seeking what you have to offer. This is the beauty of researching agents who are scheduled to attend Writers' Digest conferences. In their conference bios, they state exactly the types of projects they want to represent.

(Speaking of Writers' Digest, here's a link to their grand-daddy conference some of the attending agents. Check 'um out: <http://www.writersdigestconference.com/index.php/agents-editors>)

Submission document (query, synopsis, and first pages) set in an agent-and-device friendly format.

Email SUBJECT line: Glass Promises

Professor Grace Stone was happily married(or so she thought) when her husband and his mistress were killed weeks after her daughter's birth. The pressures of single motherhood are multiplied for her when her four-year-old Lily, demands she "find her a daddy." As an orphan and the offspring of an illicit affair, Grace knows the heartbreak of rejection all too well. Is the possibility of love worth the cutting pain of glass promises?

Despite a persistent fear of being vulnerable again, Grace begins to date. She meets Beau, another victim of a cheating spouse, but is reluctant to pursue a relationship with him. Without intending to, she falls into Beau's passionate embrace spurred by a strong attraction. At a ritzy charity event, Grace's uncanny resemblance to her dead mother reveals relatives she didn't know existed. She believes her days of longing for a family are over, but complications arise when she discovers her lover is a step-cousin and his sister refuses to accept her, the bastard girlfriend. Grace reassesses the value of a family when Lily is terrorized in an attempt to drive the newcomers away. Although mounting pressures trigger an estrangement from Beau, Grace is determined to secure a place in his love-scarred heart. Will her efforts succeed or will she and Lily be forced to soldier on as a lonely family of two?

My 68,000 word completed romance, GLASS PROMISES, won third place in the 2016 Royal Palm Literary Award competition hosted by the Florida Writers Association. I am a member of Romance Writers of America, Florida Romance

Writers, Coral Springs Writers Group, and assistant chairperson for the annual Coral Springs Literary Festival.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Janet Franks Little

Address

Phone number

Facebook

Other social media

SYNOPSIS

A widow with an infant daughter to raise, Grace achieves her PhD in record time. Four years later, she has a tenured position, close friends, and a mortgage-free home. Life is good—except for pressures from her daughter, Lily, with preschooler persistence, lobbies for a daddy. Despite her vulnerability and fear of rejection, Grace cannot deny her child the love of a father. She reenters the world of male-female relationships with speed dating.

Weeks later, when her car is totaled in a freak construction accident, Grace encounters Beau, one of her rejected five minute dates. After he assists Grace with the purchase of a new vehicle, they become intimate—in her garage—on the trunk of his car. Appalled by her loss of control, Grace shuts down the relationship. However, Beau’s persistence and genuine feelings for Lily compel her to give him another chance.

When Grace discovers a family connection to Beau’s stepmother, she’s overjoyed to have finally found a family. However, she soon discovers that the family dynamics may not be what she’d hoped. Tension flares when Beau’s sister that this illegitimate interloper be banned from the family.

When Grace presses Beau for a commitment, this reveals the emotional scars inflicted by Beau’s his ex-wife and his fear of risking his heart again. With no hope of a future, but still in love with him, Grace is heartbroken and ends their relationship.

When she and Lily are invited to the family’s Thanksgiving dinner, Grace worries what will happen when she sees Beau again. Although there is some awkwardness, the get-together goes well until Lily is traumatized by a step cousin. Grace wonders if an extended family is worth all the drama until she acknowledges the depth of her love for Beau and a growing attachment to her warts-and-all relatives. She initiates a campaign to win his love and his sister’s acceptance.

Tapping into her natural intelligence and adapting her mother’s tricks-of-the-trade, Grace appeals to Beau’s masculine desires with flirtations and food. She also provides survivor support to his hostile sister, recently wounded by marital

infidelity. On Christmas Day, Lily cries when Beau gives her his gift because “only daddies can give bikes to little girls.” Grace’s efforts, with a little help from Lily, are rewarded when Beau acknowledges his love for her and offers an ironclad promise for a future together.

REQUESTED SAMPLE PAGES “Glass Promises”

“Whoa, Dr. B!” A male student raced toward the English department just as Grace headed to the exit. “Your Beemer’s been beamed.”

“What are you talking about?”

He pointed outside. “You gotta check it out.”

Grace hustled past him and swatted open the double doors. Campus security cruisers blocked the street. A fire truck rumbled in the faculty parking lot.

Then she saw it. The obelisk of an I-beam rose into the air. A chain attached one end to the long arm of a tower crane. A second, shorter chain dangled in the wind. The girder had pierced the middle of the BMW and folded it upward like a taco. Her dead husband’s babe-mobile was impaled with the biggest phallic weapon of destruction she’d ever seen.

Grace choked down a snort of hysteria as she skirted milling spectators and headed to the curb. A fireman who sprayed a chemical around the car shouted and backed away as the girder swayed in a gust of wind.

One man sprang forward from a cluster of hard-hatted workers and climbed into the crane’s cab with nimble grace. He lowered the beam toward the upturned front bumper. Metal screeched as the BMW collapsed under the weight.

Another worker in a hard hat intercepted Grace when she crossed the street. “You have to stay back, Miss.” With his hand on her elbow, he turned her around. “Do you know the name of the professor who owns the BMW?”

“Black-Stone.”

“Is he in there?” He nodded to the building ahead of them.

“I’m Dr. Black-Stone.”

His eyes widened. Without a word, he spun and propelled her back toward the scene of the accident.

Meanwhile, the quick-thinking hero descended the crane’s cab. With long strides toward the men, he shouted, “Where the hell is Joe?”

“He’s getting the professor who owns the BMW.”

“Goddamn it!” The man joined the other hard hats “Why couldn’t the four-eyed, pencil-necked nerd have a Kia or Escort? This is a fucking disaster.”

“Uh, Boss.” Joe halted with Grace behind the group. “This is Dr. Black-Stone.”

The boss spun around and cocked his head. He stood over six feet tall, tanned, and muscled. Thick dark brows arched above golden eyes. Cropped brown hair furred his head and stubble darkened his cheeks and chin. He frowned as he peered at her. “Gigi?”

She forced a smile at her tenth rejected speed date. “Hello, Beau.”

.....

Follow-up research report from Linda plus a date certain when she will begin her agent quest.

from Vicki~

Who is the story about: Sadie

What does she want 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

“It followed her to school one day, breaking all the rules.”

Query and synopsis:

Query

Born with cerebral palsy Sadie hides her disability behind long skirts. Taunted by her peers, they torture the “cripple geek” whenever she wobbles by. Until Finn, a British exchange student, looks beyond her insecurities. With Finn, Sadie finds laughter, learns to cheat at poker, and harmonizes on her original songs. When the school year ends Finn returns home. He vows to 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 a handful of pills, Sadie wakes, dazed from her failed suicide. An unseen entity plays Beatle songs on Sadie's iPod, and sends strange sparks to her computer. Soon she comes face to face with her watcher, Devilia, a mischievous hand-sized fairy. Devilia, alone in the human world, and Sadie, lonely in a cruel teenage world, only want acceptance. A tentative friendship evolves. When school begins Sadie allows Devilia to live with her in the city. Although Devilia promises not to leave Sadie's room, she disobeys. On a field trip to the Natural History Museum Devilia lures hundreds of butterflies to Sadie, causing them to lift her long skirt and reveal her crooked legs. The event becomes a viral sensation. Humiliated beyond despair, Sadie feels even more like a freak. Finn IMs "How cool! Wish I'd been there." He reveals that he's helping a mate sell "merchandise" so he can make money to visit her. Intuition tells Sadie that Finn is not telling the whole story. She begs him to stop. He responds "no worries." Sadie convinces Devilia help Finn in person. ASAP. Although terrified she'll die in cyberworld, Devilia conjures up fairy magic and disappears in a huge spark of energy emailing herself to Finn. Sadie waits and waits, but gets no response. Nothing. Even though she messages Finn frantically. Finn is gone. Devilia is gone. And without them in her life, Sadie wants to be gone as well. My YA novel, "Crooked" 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 and writing partners since 2004. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Synopsis

15-year-old Sadie knows a lifetime of heartache and scrutiny, for her cerebral palsy attracts attention to her crooked walk. But Finn, an exchange student from London, doesn't seem to notice. He throws himself at Sadie like a never-ending freight train, refusing to accept her closed doors. Sadie tries to distance herself, but Finn is relentless, and Sadie opens a part of her heart that is joyous, a part she didn't think she had in her. Her wild side flies with Finn throughout Manhattan. When Finn returns home, she is left with a shattered heart and the cruelty of classmates who have tormented her all her life. So her next plan is suicide.

In the Catskill Mountains for summer vacation, Sadie soon meets an impulsive fairy, Devilia, who thwarts her suicide attempt. 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

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 companionship. At summer's end, Sadie allows Devilia to live with her in the city. Only no magic, and Devilia is to remain invisible in public. At school, Devilia assists Sadie in a fight with her peers. Although Sadie is filled with empowerment, she hesitates to celebrate. The worst of all possibilities happens when Devilia causes a small miracle and Sadie's palsied self becomes a viral YouTube sensation.

Television stations clamor to hear Sadie's story. Her grades fail, and her "girl torturers" create a Facebook page calling her a witch. Sadie blames Devilia, and wants her gone. But she wonders if Devilia could survive without her. And even worse, could Sadie survive without Devilia?

Sadie worries further when she learns that Finn hangs out a friend named Grocer, a dropout. Finn tells Sadie he wants to make money to visit her. It all seems suspicious, and Sadie has a bad feeling about Finn's "Grocer" friend. A big drug deal is coming down and she begs Devilia to fly through the Internet and force Finn to go back to school and stay away from the Grocer. Devilia arrives at Finn's, going with him to the Grocer. The Grocer accuses Finn of stealing money, and Devilia attacks, saving Finn, but getting seriously wounded in the scuffle. In a rush to save Devilia, Finn uses Grocer's dirty drug money to fly to New York. With Devilia hidden in his pocket, he feels the impact of three fragile lives deeply connected to one another. Sadie and Finn reunite in the Catskills, and together they take Devilia to her magical garden with a healing stream. As they try to revive her, Devilia fades away, apparently gone for good.

In mourning, Sadie appears on national television and discloses that a little fairy caused her miracle. Sadie will no longer be hiding from anyone. Devilia comes out from hiding as well, in Sadie's pocket. A frenzy of confusion ensues at the TV studio and Sadie, Finn and Devilia escape back to Sadie's apartment. On a Manhattan rooftop, Sadie and Finn kiss. Devilia lights the sky with shooting stars, ready for her own journey. Finn returns to London to attend a therapeutic boarding school. Sadie plans to visit him for the holidays. Proudly, Sadie tells Finn she won a part in the school play, as Puck in A Midsummer Night's Dream. Oh, and she will be wearing tights and a short top, her legs for the world to see.

COMMENTS:

Born with cerebral palsy Sadie hides her disability behind long skirts. HER PEERS TAUNT THE “cripple geek” whenever she wobbles by. SHE’S FRIENDLESS AND LONELY until Finn, a British exchange student, looks beyond her PHYSICAL CHALLENGES and insecurities. With Finn, Sadie finds laughter, learns to cheat at poker, and harmonize on her original songs. When the school year ends Finn returns home. He vows to 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 a handful of pills, Sadie wakes, dazed from her failed suicide. An unseen entity plays Beatle songs on Sadie’s iPod, and sends strange sparks to her computer. Soon she comes face to face with her watcher, Devilia, a mischievous hand-sized fairy. Devilia, alone in the human world, and Sadie, ALONE lonely in a cruel teenage world, only want acceptance. A tentative friendship evolves. When school begins Sadie allows Devilia to live with her in the city. Although Devilia promises not to leave Sadie’s room, she disobeys. On a field trip to the Natural History Museum Devilia lures hundreds of butterflies to Sadie, causing them to lift her long skirt and reveal her crooked legs. The event becomes a viral sensation. Humiliated beyond despair, Sadie feels even more like a freak. Finn IMs “How cool! Wish I’d been there.” He reveals that he’s helping a mate sell “merchandise” so he can make money to visit her. Intuition tells Sadie that Finn is not telling the whole story. She begs him to stop. He responds “no worries.” Sadie convinces Devilia help Finn in person. ASAP. Although terrified she’ll die in cyberworld, Devilia conjures up fairy magic and disappears in a huge spark of energy as SHE EMAILS HERSELF TO FINN. ~~emailing herself to Finn~~. Sadie waits and waits, but gets no response. ~~Nothing. Even though~~ she messages Finn frantically. Finn is gone. Devilia is gone. ~~And~~ without them in her life, Sadie ALSO wants to be gone ~~as well~~.

My YA novel (POSSIBLY ALSO FOR UPPER MIDDLE GRADE), “Crooked” 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 and writing partners since 2004.

Synopsis

QUESTION: Where does your novel begin?

SHOULD BEGIN IN THE FOREST? HOW CAN YOU JUMP INTO YOUR STORY. IT BEGINS THE MOMENT IT BEGINS.

15-year-old Sadie knows a lifetime of heartache and scrutiny, for her cerebral palsy attracts attention to her crooked walk. But Finn, an exchange student from London, doesn't seem to notice. SUGGEST YOU TELL WHAT ATTRACTS HIM TO SADIE: HER BRILLIANCE, HER SPUNK? ARE THEY CHEMISTRY PARTNERS OR ??? He ~~throws himself at Sadie like a never-ending freight train, refusing to accept her closed doors.~~ EVENTUALLY Sadie opens TO a part of her heart that FEELS JOY, AN EMOTION SHE DIDN'T THINK WOULD EVER BE PART OF HER LIFE. SHE AND FINN EXPLORE MANHATTAN, VISITING GALLERIES, SIPPING COFFEE AT SIDEWALK CAFES, VISITING THE ZOO. ~~is joyous, a part she didn't think she had in her. Her wild side flies with Finn throughout Manhattan.~~ When Finn returns home, SADIE'S ~~she is~~ left with a shattered heart AND NO DESIRE TO CONTINUE LIVING, ALONE AND FRIENDLESS. ~~and the relentless cruelty of classmates who have tormented her all her life. So her next plan is suicide.~~

CAN YOU BEGIN YOUR SYNOPSIS THE MOMENT THE STORY BEGINS. FRUSTRATED WITH EVERYTHING, SADIE SWALLOWS THE PILLS, VOMITS THEM UP AND MEETS DEVILIA.

WATCHING.

In the Catskill Mountains for THE summer vacation, SADIE ATTEMPTS SUICIDE WHICH IS THWARTED BY A FAIRY, DEVILIA WHO WANDERS THE FOREST, ALONE, LIKE SADIE. ~~Sadie soon meets an impulsive fairy, Devilia, who thwarts her suicide attempt. Lost and jealous, Devilia wanders BUT unlike Sadie, WHO DESIRES INVISIBILITY, THE TINY FAIRY she longs to be noticed. in this world in which she has no place.~~ As their lives intertwine, Sadie begins to RELEASE ~~escape~~ the darkness that had consumed her and DEVELOPS A DESIRE ~~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 companionship. At summer's end, Sadie allows Devilia to live with her in the city AS LONG AS SHE FOLLOWS THE RULES AND REMAINS INVISIBLE TO PUBLIC VIEW. ~~Only~~ no magic, and ~~Devilia is to remain invisible in public.~~ NEED A BRIDGE HERE At school, Devilia assists Sadie in a fight ?????? with her peers. Although Sadie is filled with empowerment, she hesitates to celebrate. The worst of all possibilities happens when Devilia causes a small miracle and Sadie's palsied self, SURROUNDED BY BUTTERFLIES, becomes a viral YouTube sensation.

Note: not sure of the value of introducing Devilia's willingness to enter into a physical fight, unless it sets this up for later when she steps in to help Finn. Let's discuss. DEVILIA HUMILIATES NASTY GIRLS WHICH IS A TRIUMPH FOR SADIE. THEY RECEIVE THEIR COME UP A TENCE. THIS WORKS. REPHRASE.

Television stations clamor to hear Sadie's story. Her grades SUFFER ~~fail~~, and her "girl torturers" create a Facebook page calling her a witch. Sadie blames Devilia, and wants her gone. ~~But she wonders if Devilia could~~ THE FAIRY survive without her. ~~And even worse,~~ could Sadie survive without Devilia? THIS NEEDS CLARITY. SURVIVE IN WHAT SENSE?

WHEN Sadie ~~worries further when she~~ learns that Finn IS HANGING WITH A NEW ~~hangs out~~ a friend named Grocer, a dropout SHE WORRIES. Finn tells Sadie he'S ONLY INVOLVED WITH GROCER TO BUILD A STASH SO HE CAN VISIT HER. ~~wants to make money to visit her.~~ It all seems suspicious, and Sadie has a bad feeling about Finn's "Grocer" friend. FINN DOESN'T TELL HER HE'S DEALING, BUT SHE FIGURES IT OUT. ~~A big drug deal is coming down and she~~ SADIE begs Devilia to fly through the Internet and TALK FINN INTO force Finn to go back to school (when did he drop out?) and stay away from the Grocer.

THIS IS UNCLEAR Devilia arrives AS THE DRUG DEAL IS GOING DOWN. CLARIFY WHAT HAPPENS. AN ARGUMENT ENSUES, HE IS OUTNUMBERED, SO DEVILIA FLIES IN. at Finn's, going with him to the Grocer. The Grocer accuses Finn of stealing money, and Devilia attacks, saving Finn, but getting **seriously wounded** in the scuffle. In a rush to save Devilia, Finn **uses Grocer's dirty drug money**

to fly to New York. With Devilia hidden in his pocket, he feels the impact of three fragile lives deeply connected to one another.

Sadie and Finn reunite in the Catskills, and CARRY together they take Devilia to her magical garden with a healing stream. As they try to revive her, BUT, Devilia fades away, apparently gone for good.

In mourning, Sadie appears on national television and IN A SURPRISING MOMENT OF CLARITY, DECIDES TO STOP HIDING WHO AND WHAT SHE IS AND HER INVOLVEMENT WITH A FAIRY. discloses that a little fairy caused her miracle. Sadie will no longer be hiding from anyone. (Out of place here)

Devilia FLIES OUT OF SADIES POCKET. comes out from hiding as well, in Sadie's pocket. A frenzy of confusion ensues at the TV studio and Sadie, Finn and Devilia escape back to Sadie's apartment. On a Manhattan rooftop, Sadie and Finn kiss. Devilia lights the sky with shooting stars, ready for her own journey.(needs to be clarified) DEVILIA HAS DISCOVERED THE BIGGER WORLD, COULD BE MORE FAIRIES, JOURNEY OF ENLIGHTENMENT AND DISCOVERY. TIME TO MOVE ON. WHAT ELSE MIGHT THE UNIVERSE HAVE IN STORE FOR HER., Finn returns to London to attend a therapeutic (clarify) boarding school. SCHOOL FOR TROUBLED KIDS/KIDS WHO DON'T FIT IN AND ACT OUT BECAUSE OF IT. KIDS WITH DISABILITIES, ASBURGERS, ADHD, JUST SAY BOARDING SCHOOL. Sadie plans to visit him for the holidays. Proudly, Sadie tells Finn she won a part in the school play, as Puck in A Midsummer Night's Dream. Oh, and she will be wearing tights and a short top, her legs for the world to see. HAVE SADIE SHOW THIS INSTEAD OF TELLING. WHIP OFF HER SKIRT. REVEALS BRIGHT RED TIGHTS.

HOMEWORK:

Linda, bring us up to date on your agent research responses.

Doree, (same as last week) Redefine story core. Revise first and second paragraph.

Janet, finalize your query, synopsis, and first page. We'll nitpick to help you make this perfect. Then, please, further define your research process, and where/when do you plan to begin?

Vicki, Keep plugging away on your synopsis. BTW: Good job on your first draft.

Tammy, revision two: Clarify by showing more and telling list.

And to our audience~

Thank you for being with us.

If you'd benefit from weekly evaluations of your submission documents, please join us at Agent/Query Submission Central. Take advantage of a special price when you join agent/query submission central: pay for two months and receive the third at no charge.

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Any other questions or comments?

That's it for today. Make it a great one!

Bye for now.

Molli