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~5-Paragraph Synopsis Template~

The fairytale featured in this template is a childhood favorite, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, published in 1894, BC (Before Computers). When you practice synopsis writing on a story you've known most of your life, the process becomes less arduous and more like an exciting adventure with an old friend.

Dear writer, be gentle with yourself. Acknowledge you're going through an intense learning curve between completed manuscript and agent acquisition.

Is this stressful? Yes indeed!

Can you do it! Of course!

Write on! *May the words be with you!*

Molli

Molli Nickell, The Publishing Wizard

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During 30+ years in the biz, I've been associated with the big players including:



12-year old Jack must save himself and mom from starvation when their country suffers a drought, causing crops to fail. Bossy (the cow) goes dry. Inexperienced at bartering, Jack swaps Bossy for a handful of “magic” beans which mom, in a fit of anger, throws out the window.

The next morning, Jack discovers the beans have sprouted into a mile-high stalk. He climbs up and into another dimension. Timidly, Jack sneaks into a humungous castle. He cowers under furniture to hide from a nasty-tempered giant (the antagonist) who adds fiber to his bread by kneading human bones into his dough. Terrified that he might be captured, Jack grabs a gold coin and scoots down the beanstalk to safety.

When mom heads for the market, Jack hurries back up the beanstalk to nab a goose that lays golden eggs (thereby ensuring residual income). The giant smells Jack, but can’t find him. Jack escapes by the hair of his chinny-chin-chin. Elated by his newly-discovered thievery skills, Jack decides to climb the beanstalk one more time to nab a *special* gift for mom.

Jack sneaks back into the castle. So far so good. He grabs a singing harp and heads for the beanstalk. The harp rats him out and screams for help. The giant (murder and lunch in mind) pursues Jack down the beanstalk.

The moment Jack reaches home, he chops down the beanstalk. It collapses and the giant smashes into the earth and disappears forever. They lived happily ever after.

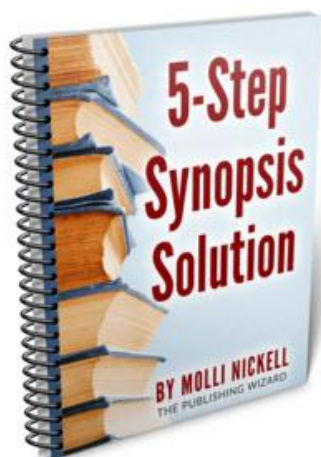
ONE: Reveals who wants what and why.

TWO: Expands the situation, introduces the antagonist. Protagonist takes action to overcome the obstacle(s).

THREE: The protagonist moves closer to goal achievement. The possibility of failure is introduced.

FOUR: The goal post is in sight. But, the potential for failure looms on the horizon.

FIVE: Reveals the story resolution as the protagonist succeeds or fails.



This template was excerpted from my 5-Step Synopsis Solution,” a 24-page tutorial to help you learn *what* to put *where* and *why* as you reveal your story core. You’ll discover how to convince the agent that you’re the real deal: a writer with skill *and* a salable manuscript. My “5-Step Synopsis Solution” is available at MolliMart, along with an ever-expanding library of low-cost tutorials to help you achieve the dreams of your heart: agent/contract/shelf space at Barnes and Noble.

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Tip Sheet~

The synopsis—*like* the query letter—focuses on the core of your story as revealed through the emotions and actions of your protagonist (main character).

The synopsis—*unlike* the query letter—*reveals* the resolution to the challenge/problem confronting your protagonist.

Once you have written your query, you have the basis for what you need in your synopsis.

- You know what your protagonist wants. *Goal*.
- You know what blocks goal achievement. *Obstacle*.
- You know what actions they've taken to accomplish their goal.
- You know what emotions came into play.
- You know the identity of the antagonist. (The bad guy or situation that blocks their path toward goal achievement.)
- You know how the story is resolved. *Resolution*.
- You have everything you need to write a synopsis that will motivate the agent to read your sample pages . . . your *goal* all along.



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