



Course description:

Once that manuscript is finished and polished until it shines, the next step is writing the synopsis. Usually this is viewed as a daunting task and to be avoided as long as possible.

Wrong.

There are many ways you can look at it. Look at this as another challenge like writing your book was. With the right frame of mind a synopsis is not a daunting task. It is fun and exhilarating. This workshop takes you from beginning to end of writing a synopsis. Embracing it for what it is--a way to sell your book for the great work it is. This workshop has five parts after which you will have a lovely synopsis. At the end of each part is a homework assignment so you can put the information into practice.

Part One: Writing the killer hook.

In this section you will learn how to build a hook with one sentence to start off your synopsis with a bang.

Part Two: My Hero who is he really?

This section discusses who your hero really is. This is where you sell the agent or publisher your hero. Making them love your hero as much as you do. We go into detail on how to bring out your character's best to make him real to your targeted audience.

Part Three: The truth behind my heroine

This section discusses your heroine. You have to be able to sell your heroine and make her real to the agent or publisher. Make them feel her as you do. We go into detail on bring out your character's best to make her real to your targeted audience.

Part Four: MIND BEN

This section uses a technique I like to fondly call MIND BEN. It shows how to go for the emotional jugular and get all your points in you novel across with the limited space you have.

Part Five: Wrapping it all up in a fancy bow

The last line will stick with you. So instead of the standard, go for something memorable. This section deals with ways to make the last line in you synopsis count as much as much as the first one did.

[From the Heart Romance Writers](#) is chapter #177 of the [Romance Writers of America®](#).



This workshop will include an assignment after each part. I will read and look over each assignment and offer feedback.

About the Instructor:

McKenna Jeffries has been writing since she was a child. Writing her own fairy tales as a child and entertaining her friends and family, she kept on doing what she loved--writing that next entertaining tale. It wasn't long before she read her first romance novel and was hooked. Years later, she decided to write her own. Writing about living breathing characters and sweet and spicy novels is a passion that keeps her very busy.

McKenna writes spicy contemporary, emotional mainstream fiction and nail biting mysteries. You can read more about McKenna at www.mckennajeffries.com.

Introduction:

Good Morning Everyone

I don't claim to be an expert on writing a synopsis but like any good writer I can tell a kick butt story.

Writing a synopsis wasn't a hard thing to me at first .. at least .. not until I heard that whispered phrase "Dreaded Synopsis" and I will readily admit like most people I let it influence me though I said to myself I wouldn't.

Today I say shame on me for letting this "cognitive suggestion" influence me and making me doubt myself or ability.

I'm in no way knocking how important a synopsis is but with that thought- "Dreaded Synopsis"- you have already given up the battle. I want you to never say those words again -"Dreaded Synopsis".

Instead this is what I want you to say "The Lovely Synopsis". Come on repeat it a few times.

No I'm not crazy (at least not that I know of LOL.) Although you said the words you're

[From the Heart Romance Writers](#) is chapter #177 of the [Romance Writers of America®](#).



probably not ready to believe in them yet but by the end of the workshop I hope you will be.

This is how we will achieve that "Lovely Synopsis" I was talking about.

The workshop is done in five parts each part has an assignment after it.

- 1.) Writing the Killer Hook- This will help you build a sentence (yes just one) to hook that agent or publisher from the beginning.
- 2.) My Hero who is he really? - This section discusses who your hero really is. This is where you sell the agent or publisher your hero. Making them love your hero as much as you do. We go into detail on how to bring out your character's best to make him real to your targeted audience.
- 3.) The truth behind my heroine - This section discusses your heroine. You have to be able to sell your heroine and make her real to the agent or publisher. Make them feel her as you do. We go into detail on bring out your character's best to make her real to your targeted audience.
- 4.) Mind Ben- This section uses a technique I like to fondly call MIND BEN. It shows how to go for the emotional jugular and get all your points in you novel across with the limited space you have.
- 5.) Wrapping it all up in a fancy bow - The last line will stick with you. So instead of the standard, go for something memorable. This section deals with ways to make the last line in you synopsis count as much as the first one did.

Those are the parts to achieve your synopsis.

Class Schedule:

- 1 - Introduction and Lesson 1 and assignment: Writing the killer hook.
- 2 - Lesson 2 and assignment: My Hero who is he really?
- 3 - Lesson 3 and assignment: The truth behind my heroine
- 4 - Lesson 4 and assignment: MIND BEN
- 5 - Lesson 5 and assignment: Wrapping it all up in a fancy bow
- 6- Any other Questions

[From the Heart Romance Writers](#) is chapter #177 of the [Romance Writers of America®](#).



Lesson 1 and Assignment: Writing the Killer Hook

The opening phrase of your synopsis is just as important as the first line of your novel. Yep it's true and I know a lot of you know this already but what you probably didn't realize is unlike the first line of your novel, the beginning line of the synopsis doesn't leave you room to build on.

Let me break it down for you.

When you write the opening sentence of your novel you write a sentence like this.

"Pain scorched through Synnda as she tried to hold on to her little bit of sanity she had left."

This gives you space to build up to where you are going . In your synopsis the first sentence has to take you from beginning to end while still portraying all the tension, sexuality and character's in one measly sentence. How do you accomplish such a miraculous task you may ask.

We'll first you ask yourself a few questions and answer in detail.

- 1.) What are my character's to each other? (IE. friends, enemies, strangers, etc.)
- 2.) What do each of them want from each other?
- 3.) What happened to make them want more than what they had before?
- 4.) Why are or were they unable to get together?
- 5.) What is the catalyst that finally makes them realize that they are meant to be together?

Take a look at your answers then pull out five- seven words that capture your attention. These words should strike a cord in you and portray what your novel is about.

Now that you have complied your five - seven words. It's time to make it into one sentence. First re-read your words mull them over. Does this get to the gist of your novel? If it does good if not try again then continue.

[From the Heart Romance Writers](#) is chapter #177 of the [Romance Writers of America®](#).



After mulling over your information bring it into perspective. What my novel is about is in these words, now to get it out into one sentence. Whoa what a daunting thought. First strike that from you mind along with the you know what phrase I told you to do earlier. It can be done and you will do it.

Open up your mind to what you have in front of you. This is yours. Your idea, your story, your writing that you know like the back of your hand until you are sick of seeing it. You can do this. This is your story in there and you can sell it in one sentence.

Here are my five words:

Friends, lovers, break, rules, love.

Now look at what you have and define each in relation to your novel. These are mine in relation to my novel.

Friends- hero and heroine are friends

Lovers- they become lovers

Break- the hero wants more and breaks their pack

Rules -they agree to be together for just sex and nothing else

Love- heroine realizes what the hero has always know

These five little words convey a lot of information about my entire book.

My hook is already done all I have to do now is take it and unite the sentence.

Assignment: Play around with the words you choose and put them into a sentence. Send in your best two efforts along with your five or so words with a description of how each relates to novel. Remember to mention the name of your novel in the sentence. __Next Lesson: My Hero who is he really?

Please feel free to ask any questions about this part of the lesson.

EXAMPLES

I'm giving you two examples of an opening sentence. The opening sentence format is not set in stone it may feel right to do more than one or as in my second example comparisons.

[From the Heart Romance Writers](#) is chapter #177 of the [Romance Writers of America®](#).



1.) Below is my opening sentence I came up with using the words I stated before. For reference here are the words and the breakdown of what they mean in relation to my story.

Friends- hero and heroine are friends

Lovers- they become lovers

Break- the hero wants more and breaks their pack

Rules -they agree to be together for just sex and nothing else

Love- heroine realizes what the hero has always know

Synopsis Opening Sentence: In Conquering Jazz, friends become lovers and discover that true love breaks all the rules.

2.) Now my variation. After writing then checking to see what I had I came up with some very strong words I decided to have them play off of each other. I've given you two examples one with comparison and one without. This is for a paranormal romance that I have written and netted me an agent.

Prince- hero is prince of his people

Man - also a man but so much more

Duty - he is duty bound to protect man kind

Desire - combat's with his sense of honor

Loss - he has loss so much

Salvation - looking for redemption

Longs - a need to be part of heroine

Soul - lost to him but maybe found

Synopsis Opening Sentence:

A.) Johannes Warwick duties as the prince of his people battles with his desires as a man who longs for salvation of the one thing he thought lost decades ago - his soul.

B.) Prince or man. Duty or desire. Loss or salvation. Johannes Warwick duties as the prince of his people battles with his desires as a man who longs for salvation of the one thing he thought lost decades ago - his soul.

Here are some more random opening synopsis sentences.

[From the Heart Romance Writers](#) is chapter #177 of the [Romance Writers of America®](#).



1.) A betrayal so deep it has caused scars that can only be healed when a man and woman come together to get pass the pain to find compromise and eventually love.

2.) The physical and emotional battle scars of the past haunts a woman who must open her heart to trust a man who may be more than he seems.

Remember this is your story and you know what works best for it. I know that the idea of just one sentence for opening can be daunting but as I showed above one sentence can tell a whole lot about your novel.

Lesson 2 and Assignment: My Hero who is he really?

"Mr. {insert your hero's name} I'd like to introduce you to Mr. or Ms. Publisher/Agent." Your Synopsis says with much fanfare.

"It's wonderful to meet you I can't wait to get to know you better." Agent/ Publisher replies looking interested in what you have to say.

This is a mythical conversation between a publisher/agent and your synopsis because when it comes down to it that's what the synopsis is for. The synopsis introduces your novel. Think of it as how the presenter who is giving those achievement honors in an award show tells you about all the accomplishments of the recipient of the award. The presenter "your synopsis" tells the audience "the agent/ publisher" all about the recipient "your hero". In your case the award is a book deal or agent representation.

The characters are a major selling point of your novel. How many times have you started to read a book and kept on reading it and you hated the characters? I hope you said none. Personally if I can't enjoy the characters I won't read a book no matter how interesting the plot is. If you can't empathize with the characters then how can you enjoy a novel?

In the Synopsis you need to bring out your characters. You know them like the back of you hand however the publisher/agent needs to feel the same way. Just like my fictional meeting if the character and publisher/agent took place so will the meeting between your characters and the publisher/ agent except on paper. Giving the best attributes to sell your character is easy. I know you could probably go on for pages and pages with information but in a synopsis we have limited space to get the best of the character in the limelight. Putting it all into a few sentences will take more work and ingenuity.

First let's take a look at the hero.

[From the Heart Romance Writers](#) is chapter #177 of the [Romance Writers of America®](#).



Hero

Whether he is an alpha male or a more laid back kind of hero. He is the driving force to either make the heroine shed her inhibitions or want to knock him flat on his butt. Either way you there is something about him that brings out a strong reaction in the heroine or anyone who meets him. Bring that out for the agent/publisher to see.

When thinking of your hero think about this:

- 1.) What make him who he is?
- 2.) Why is he afraid to commit? OR if he is not afraid to commit why is he not?
- 3.) What drives his desires and wants?
- 4.) What obstacle (internal or externally) is keeping them apart or at arm length form each other?
- 5.) What about the heroine makes him want her above all else?

Answer's to these questions or any more you can think of will bring your hero out. When you meet anyone you automatically form opinions of them and when the agent/publisher will form and opinion on your hero from your synopsis so make him shine.

Think of this an interview with someone you don't know. When conducting an interview you have interview question that will help you get to know that person. You will need to ask as much about them as you possibly can to get to know them. The agent or publishers do not know what makes your hero stand out you have to tell them. Capture there attention with the hero.

The character's drive the book with there needs and wants. If the reader cannot love your characters how can they love the story? Bringing them alive to the agent/publisher as they are to you. This is the key to selling your hero.

Assignment: Ask yourself some of the questions above about your character (hero). Format your answers into a description of the hero. Not what they look like but who they are inside. Make sure some of your answers are in relation with how the heroine and hero interact with each other. Give clear and detailed answers that takes your view of the hero and makes him real for me to see. Then using your answers to the questions write a brief description of the hero. Not what they look like but who they are inside. Keep it to no more than 3 - 5 sentences. Make me love your hero or hate him according to how your

[From the Heart Romance Writers](#) is chapter #177 of the [Romance Writers of America®](#).



novel is written.

Combine your hero information your opening synopsis sentence.

The order:

Opening Synopsis Sentence

Hero information

Lesson 3 and Assignment: The truth behind my heroine

The heroine rushed into the room looked at the people waiting for her. She strolled to the table took a seat smiled a warm inviting smile and said. "Hello. I'm {insert your heroine's name} I have so much to tell you."

The Agent/ Publisher looking skeptical but willing replies. "Good ahead. We've listening."

This is the meeting of your synopsis with the agent/publisher. You must keep the momentum going as long as you have their attention. This will fuel them onward. Each part has to keep them reading on to find out what makes your novel something they want to represent or buy.

Let's take a look at the heroine.

Heroine

No matter if she is a damsel in distress or maybe acting like she is one. An alpha female with a hidden feminine side or seems weak but actually has a hidden core of strength that will knock the hero for a loop. The heroine is the other character to drive your story. She's the person who is able to bring a strong man to his knees yet build him up until he feels like he is a king. Bring out what are her hidden depths. Facets of her personality that make her perfect compliment to the hero or him to her. Ask the same questions as you did for the hero but tailored with her in mind.

In addition to the question you used for the hero also ask:

- 1.) What emotion does the hero invoke in her?

[From the Heart Romance Writers](#) is chapter #177 of the [Romance Writers of America®](#).



2.) What will she do to win his heart?

Usually the heroine is generally more driven by emotions. You should tap into her emotional center. Bring her to life make her human and likeable.

Imagine the heroine is your best girlfriend and you had to describe her. Tell us everything you know about her and let us know her to. As I said before characters drive the book with their needs, emotions, and interactions. It is up to you to make them alive to the agent/publisher.

Assignment: _ Answer the questions you used for your hero applying it to the heroine. Also find that emotional center of your heroine. Format your answer into a description of the heroine. Not what she looks like but who she is. Give clear and detailed answers that takes your view of the heroine and makes her come alive to me. Using your answers to the questions write a brief description of the heroine. Keep it to no more than 3 - 5 sentences. Make me want to be best friend's with your heroine or according to how the novel is written want to leave her alone.

Combined your opening synopsis sentence, hero information and heroine Information. (Note: the order of these are interchangeable according to how your novel is written.)

Order like this:

Opening Synopsis Sentence
Hero information
Heroine Information

Or

Opening Synopsis Sentence
Heroine Information
Hero information

Lesson 4 and Assignment: Mind Ben

I have a {insert page number} manuscript how am I supposed to tell my story in only 4 to

[From the Heart Romance Writers](#) is chapter #177 of the [Romance Writers of America®](#).



5 pages! It can't be done... We'll maybe it can.

There is not maybe or probably it can be done. It just takes some ingenuity and a little thing I like to call MIND BEN.

What is **MIND BEN** you wonder?

This is the way to get the facts and just the facts of your story in the synopsis. Here are the steps to MIND BEN.

Meeting- the first time you introduce your hero and heroine. Their eyes meet across the room. Or they hit into each other no matter how they meet this needs to be in your synopsis.

Interaction- Now that they've meet what keeps throwing them together how do they react when they keep meeting. Build the longing and tensions add their sexual encounters.

Need- Now that they have been together in the most intimate way. How do they feel about it? Do they run or come back for more? Is the heroine/hero fallen head over heels? Are the feelings reciprocated?

Dissent- the steps that lead up to the dissatisfaction on how there relationship are going. Example: They want more but the other partner is afraid or refuses.

Black Moment- The turning point of the story. They break up after a harsh exchange or leave feed up with everything. Play up on this. Make it emotional and intense.

Enlightenment- after being without the hero/heroine they see how wrong they have been they hate themselves for hurting the other person.

Nirvana- They are finally ready to be together after they make some gesture to get the person back.

The MIND BEN incorporates all the elements of your novel down to the basics. This part of the synopsis is a concise short story of what your book is about. You have to touch the tension, passion, and love within a short amount of space so use it wisely. Think of it as telling friend how you and your loved one meet and fell in love. You won't tell her about each date, when you made love, or every time you hinted at your love.

[From the Heart Romance Writers](#) is chapter #177 of the [Romance Writers of America®](#).



You would give an emotional description of you meeting, how long you dated. When you knew you loved him and when they knew it too and why you decided to be together maybe how you almost didn't make it and what you did to make it together as a couple.

If you really MIND BEN you can have that synopsis filled out in no time at all. The story of your novel brings everything out into the open begging you to get all the emotions - good and bad- out while leading to a satisfactory end.

Assignment: Using MIND BEN write a concise description of your story limit it to 3 pages 1.5 Line Spacing Courier New font 12 (this would give you approximately 5 sentences per parts of MIND BEN). Add the opening synopsis sentence, Heroine Information, Hero Information. (Note: the order of the hero and Heroine are interchangeable according to how your novel is written.). After adding the other items you should have approximately 4 - 4.5 pages this leave enough for your fancy bow closing.

The order:

Opening Synopsis Sentence
Hero information
Heroine Information
MIND BEN

Or

Opening Synopsis Sentence
Heroine Information
Hero information
MIND BEN

Lesson 5 and Assignment : Wrapping it all up in a fancy bow

"Your honor my client is a trustworthy honorable man who is should be set free. He is a pillar of the community and .."

I've always admired the closing statements lawyers make to wrap up their case. They use words that resound in your head and you will remember when you go back to that jury

[From the Heart Romance Writers](#) is chapter #177 of the [Romance Writers of America®](#).



room. They use a persuasive tone and argument to get you to believe it what they are saying. You might not believe it but the last thing that someone says can have major impact on you. Whether you find someone guilty or innocent can rest on the believability of the lawyer's closing statement. In your case this statement is to make the agent/publisher want to read your worthy manuscript.

The hook summed up the entire idea for the novel in one sentence now the closing will wrap it up in a nice bow that is aching to be pulled off opened and read.

You can go for the standard traditional line "they live happily ever after with three kids a dog named Bill and a cat name June" or something more fun and zinging. Break out of the shell and get their attention. Yes we know the girl gets the guy or vice versa but it's the way you state it. It can be said in any number of ways. Find the best one that suits your needs but make sure it resounds in the mind of the agent/publisher. If it leaves you cold it will do the same to the agent/publisher. Tap into the same zing you used with the rest of your synopsis and pour it into the ending. Bring it all out think of it as you're closing argument for your client (your manuscript) convince the jury (the agent or publisher) why your client (your manuscript) deserves a chance to be read.

Then sell it.

Here are two examples of selling it:

The traditional route.

"James and Elaine get married have kids and live in the joy of there love."

Or the more emotional tugging ending

"Standing shoulder to shoulder with Avril and Candice, Elaine thought of all they had been through. The battles that they fought to come as far as they had and the support that they each had found. With a glance over at James who stood with the other men she saw he was watching her. Leaving her friends behind she marveled at how this one man had changed her life forever."

Which one captured your attention more? Again this goes back to your characters and story. My favorite one was the second. I not only left it with an emotional ending I also played up on the title of the novel "Life Changing". This will help imprint the name of

[From the Heart Romance Writers](#) is chapter #177 of the [Romance Writers of America®](#).



your book on the mind.

You have to decide if you want to go for a more steamier ending, or emotionally tugging, or even subtle. It boils down to what your whole novel is about. Leave it off with something memorable.

Just as you asked yourself some questions for the hook ask some more here.

What was my entire novel about? IE: steamy, emotions or anything else.

After the black moment who made the first move and what did this reveal about their hidden depths?

Where are the characters going after here?

Any other questions that may be helpful to your closing.

Take everything that has led up to this moment and pour it into the closing statement all the tension, passion and stress finally leading to this last second to savor and appreciate. The hero and heroine has gone through it all and come out together stronger and more in tune with each other. Give an ending that suits all of this don't leave the reader guessing, finish it.

Assignment: Sell your closing to me. Give me a closing that will make me want to read your novel. Take the zing and zap me with it. Add the opening synopsis sentence, Heroine Information, Hero Information, MIND BEN. (Note: the order of the hero and Heroine are interchangeable according to how your novel is written.).

Use the formatting: 1.5 Line Spacing Courier New font 12

The order:

Opening Synopsis Sentence
Hero information
Heroine Information
MIND BEN
Fancy Bow Closing

[From the Heart Romance Writers](#) is chapter #177 of the [Romance Writers of America®](#).



Embracing the Synopsis

McKenna Jeffries
August 2005

Page | 15

Or

Opening Synopsis Sentence
Heroine Information
Hero information
MIND BEN
Fancy Bow Closing

© 2005 McKenna Jeffries

[From the Heart Romance Writers](#) is chapter #177 of the
[Romance Writers of America®](#).

Copyright (c) 2001-2013, From the Heart Romance Writers. All rights reserved.
Do not copy any images or text without permission.