

Elements of a Great Book Description

Meghan Pinson



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A book description is a powerful piece of copy that declares in one compact paragraph what your story is about and why it's worth reading. Once you've nailed the essential elements in a master draft, you can adapt it for jacket copy, Amazon book descriptions, media kits, marketing campaigns, and more. Sometimes you'll need a shorter version, sometimes a longer one; maybe you'll want to target a subgenre for an ebook

promo, maybe you'll want to use it for a pitch to a publication or a blog tour. For every version of your book description, you'll need to present a few vital points.

Character: Who are the central characters in your story? Describe them with vivid language. A "disgraced veterinarian" is better than a "young woman."

Desire: What does your character need to accomplish? What is at stake? It's tempting to list your plot points here, but don't. Focus on

what your character wants most. If her desire is mundane but her method is peculiar, include it.

Setting: What sort of world does your story take place in? The picture you paint should convey something about your book's genre and tone.

Stakes: Why should we care? This is the hardest part to nail. You need to find that juicy bit of irony, the unexpected obstacle in your hero's path, the ticking time bomb that makes us need to know what happens.

BONUS POINTS: ADD A LOGLINE!

Loglines are used in the movie industry to pitch films to studios in a sentence or two, and this form can be applied with great success to book descriptions.

These might be the most important two sentences you write for your book, whether you're pitching to agents or self-publishing. Revealing the heart of your story with a logline gives you a chance

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LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER: Meramec Self-Publishing Workshop

In this four-hour workshop, you'll learn the realities of independent publishing, how to get the best results out of editing and design, and options for getting your book published and sold.

Saturday, April 14, 2018, 8am, at St. Louis Community College—Meramec. \$39.

To learn more or register, visit

stlcc.edu/Continuing-Education/classes/index.asp?Cat=XWRT

and click on "How to Publish Your Own Book: What You Need to Know."

Brave Rave: Writing & Marketing Children's Books

Raquel Hunter

Raquel Hunter, author and publisher of the Brave Rave series of children's books, will speak about the journey of self-publishing surrounding branding, marketing, and merchandising. The writing and especially the marketing of children's literature is a bit different from books meant for adult readers, although authors of novels and nonfiction for grown-ups will come away with tips and advice they can use, too. Raquel will cover:

- 1) writing and illustrating your story
- 2) branding, marketing, and merchandising
- 3) networking

Join us at THE HEIGHTS on May 9 at 7pm to learn

(Brave Rave continues on page 2)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Apr 14, 8am @ STLCC—Meramec:

How to Publish Your Own Book:

What You Need to Know

with Warren Martin, Andrew Doty,

Peggy Nehmen, and Bob Baker

— stlcc.edu/Continuing-Education/classes/index.asp?Cat=XWRT

May 9, 7pm @ THE HEIGHTS:

Brave Rave: Writing & Marketing

Children's Book

with Raquel Hunter

— stlouispublishers.org/event-2818627

Jun 15–17 @ Renaissance St. Louis Airport Hotel:

Gateway Con

presented by the St. Louis Writers Guild

▶▶ **\$20 DISCOUNT FOR SLPA MEMBERS** ◀◀

— stlwritersguild.org/gatewaycon/conferenceregistration.html



Raquel Hunter

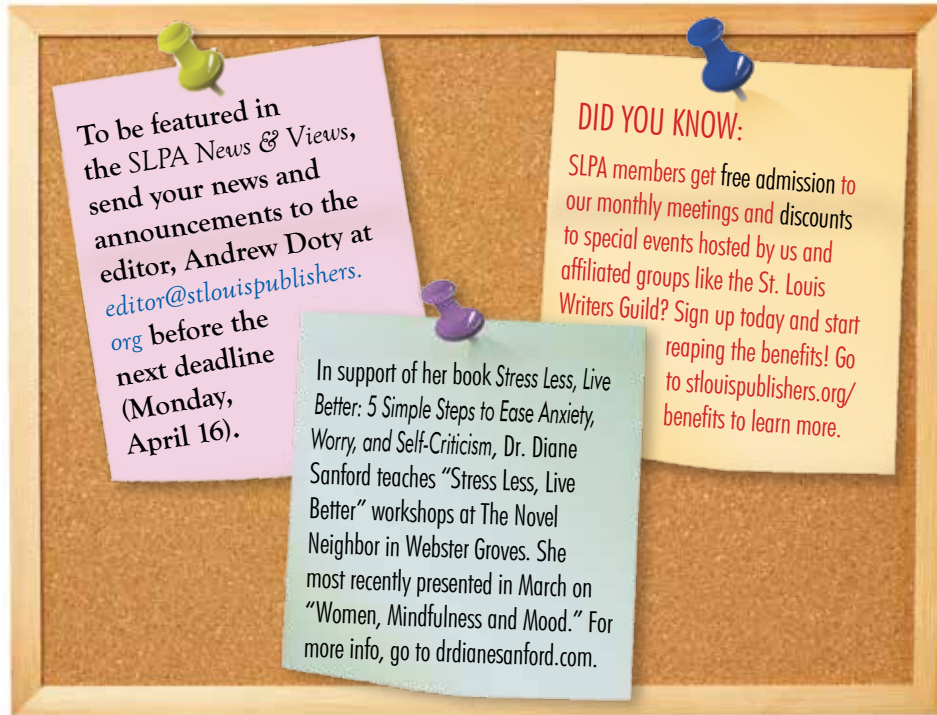
(Brave Rave continued from page 1)

about the art of creating, publishing, and marketing children’s books – and bring home tips you can use to market other genres, too!

St. Louis native Raquel Hunter is the author of the *Diary of Brave Rave* children’s book series, written to encourage literacy, promote diversity, and empower youth. As a frequent youth literacy workshop speaker relaying a message of grit and compassion, she was recently honored as 2018 University City Returning Artist for her inspirational works.

St. Louis Publishers Association Monthly Meeting:
2nd Wednesday of the Month, The Heights: Richmond Heights Community Center, in The Argus Room, 8001 Dale Ave., Richmond Heights, MO, 63117

Doors open at 6:30pm for networking; meeting begins at 7:00pm
Monthly meeting cost: FREE for members, \$10 for non-members (guest fee will be applied to membership if you decide to join at that meeting)



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to grab your ideal readers: the ones who will love your book and give it great reviews. If your book description misses the target, you risk disappointing your audience – or never finding it in the first place.

The best loglines include the elements listed above – in one or two sentences.

Writing loglines is a game of tug-of-war between specificity and brevity. Reading a ton of loglines – both good and bad – can help you get your head around them. You can find them in each movie description on IMDb.com.

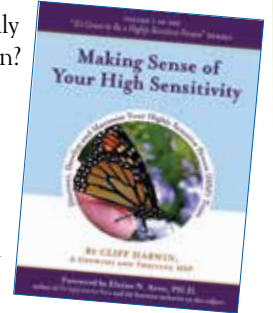
It’s also a great idea to go to any bookstore and camp out in your favorite aisle. Read the backs of all the books on the shelf you want your book to land on. How are your favorite books being pitched? Do the loglines reflect the stories you remember? Can you identify a pattern or a formula in the way the jacket copy has been crafted? The more you know about your chosen genre, the better you’ll be at finding a place for your own book.

THE BOOK CORNER

Making Sense of Your High Sensitivity

Cliff Harwin

Are you a highly sensitive person? Do you feel like a “human sponge” that deeply takes in everything (physically and emotionally) around you?



Have you been accused of being too “touchy or too sensitive”? Perhaps you’re a highly sensitive person, an inherited character trait that 15% to 20% of the population is not aware of. This book will give you a deeper understanding of what’s it means to be a highly sensitive person, as well as strategies to maximize your unique and exceptional qualities. Visit thehighlysensitiveperson.com/product/ISBN978-0-9793477-0-2 for a special price of \$9.95 and free shipping.

Meetings on the Second Wednesday of the Month

Richmond Heights Community Center (THE HEIGHTS)
The Argus Room • 8001 Dale Ave.
Richmond Heights, MO, 63117
(Child care available at THE HEIGHTS)

Doors open for networking at 6:30pm
Program begins at 7pm

The meeting concludes around 8:30pm
Networking until 9pm

Regular meetings are free to members
Membership \$60 per year
Guests: \$10 at the door

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