



## Rund ums Exposé

Ein interessanter Aspekt im Schreiben eines Kurzinhalts und auch der Synopsis legt Lynn Price in ihrem Behlerblog dar. Lynn ist Direktorin des Behler Verlages in den USA:

<http://behlerblog.wordpress.com/>

Es ist leider in Englisch und ich werde es auch nicht übersetzen, sorry. Wichtig ist, dass sich das Gesagte auch auf die Synopsis anwenden lässt.

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It goes without saying that the biggest sphincter pucker in a writer's life is the query letter. "Argh!! I have a fabo story, but how do I get that across to the agent/editor?"

You pucker because you know that we decide whether to ask for pages based on the strength of that query. So it has to rock. Far be it for me to tell anyone what the quintessential query letter looks like because there is no one right answer. There guidelines that have been discussed here and a gajillion other places. And yet, I've seen query letters that I loved and broke all the rules. What was the difference?

The authors knew how to pitch their stories. They had a great voice and understood that their stories were either character driven or plot driven, and closed in for the kill.

### Plot driven

A plot driven story is about the movement of events within a story and how the characters influence those events. Obviously one still needs engaging characters, but the story doesn't center solely on their emotions, desires, and personalities.

If you have a plot driven story, then make sure that you focus on that plot. But be mindful; plot driven queries have a tendency to get lost in trying to tell too much detail. A query is supposed to be short – 1 page. So keep it to the big picture. We understand there will be plot twists and such, but we need to see the main story.

There's a great example of a plot driven query over on Kristin Nelson's blog.

### Character driven

Unlike plot driven stories, character driven stories are all about the characters. It is they who are the main dish in your personal banquet. Their personalities, motives, and desires are the yin and yang to the plot, and their actions are a driving force to influencing the story. The plot can be on the thin side because it's secondary to the character(s).

So if you have a character driven story, that is where you must put your focus in your query letter. This is where voice plays a big role because you need to make them come to life and make us care about them.

Here's an example that I lifted from one of our authors, CBS journalist Barry Petersen, author of the upcoming book Jan's Story:



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Quote:

Even today, if you met her, you would be struck by her charm and beauty. Is it any wonder I am so in love with her?

And that is why this is a story not just about Early Onset Alzheimer's Disease, but also of our love for each other. People said we were an unusual couple. I only knew that we were lucky to find and to have each other.

And because of this disease there came the day when truly loving Jan meant saying goodbye and leaving her behind at an assisted care facility. I wasn't sure I could do it, but I had to — for her.

There is no medicine and certainly no book that can help Jan as she drifts deeper into her Alzheimer's Disease. And no book can help me as I lose her. That time has passed.

But this book will help others beginning or in the midst of this horrifying journey.

That is the heart of Jan's Story...when we came together, celebrating how we lived and what we did. And then together battling this disease and, as it moves towards its end, how I fight on alone, without her but for her.

I couldn't call his agent fast enough to order pages — through a used Kleenex. Barry instantly sucked me into his world, his heart. And even though this is nonfiction, the same rules apply. This could have just as easily been a fictional query.

Just for giggles, let's pretend that Barry had missed the mark and focused on the plot. It boils down to, "TV newsie goes through the agony of watching his wife sink into the depths of Early Onset Alzheimer's." This is a good tag line, but it's not really much of a hook for an editor because there are a gazillion Alzheimer's books crowding the shelves.

What is going to suck me in? What makes this unique? Ok, there are precious few books on Early Onset Alzheimer's, which really is a totally different set of books compared to Alzheimer's. So there's that. But what else?

I have no emotional link to the characters involved in the story, and the plot is too thin. Since I have no character references, I'll be looking for the twists, the tension, the conflict, the choices that the character is given and what happens depending upon those choices. In short, you can't sell this story based on plot. It must come from the heart.

It's Barry's personality, his motives, and desires that are the cause and effect to the plot, and his actions are a driving force to influencing the story.

I see too many queries that miss the mark between character vs. plot, and all I usually see is an incredibly thin plot populated with flat, dry characters. Little wonder I send out a rejection letter.

In short, define your story. Is it plot or character driven?



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If it's plot driven, concentrate on the movement of events that drive and define the story, and be mindful of sticking to the big picture.

If it's character driven, let me see, feel, empathize, and understand your characters because it's the difference between "send me pages," and "no thanks."

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Anmerkung: in den USA ist meistens das Anschreiben = Query letter, der erste Kontakt, und Leseproben werden erst nach Anforderung durch den Agenten abgeschickt. Aber auch in den USA gilt, sich sehr genau die Anforderungen an ein Angebot durchzulesen. Manche Agenten wollen eine Synopsis und keine Leseprobe, manche nur ein Anschreiben, andere Synopsis und Leseprobe... und so weiter und so fort.

Was sind Plotgetriebene Romane?

Meistens finden sich plotgetriebene Romane im Krimi / Action / Thrillerbereich, wobei - wie so oft - auch hier die Übergänge fließend sind. Dan Brown's Bücher sind Beispiele, auch Tom Clancy, Michael Crichton schreiben und schrieben im plotgetriebenen Bereich.

Aber das Thema ist wiederum eine ganz andere Baustelle.

Lesen Sie [hier](#) die komplette Diskussion zu diesem Text ([PDF](#)).