

# Conquering the Dreaded Synopsis: A Series of Ten Lectures

By Lisa Gardner

*Lisa Gardner is the New York Times best-selling author of multiple suspense thrillers, including THE PERFECT HUSBAND, THE OTHER DAUGHTER, THE THIRD VICTIM, and THE NEXT ACCIDENT. In her eleven-year career, she has written romantic suspense novels for Silhouette Intimate Moments as Alicia Scott as well as mainstream suspense for Bantam Dell as Lisa Gardner. Nineteen novels later, synopses are still her least-favorite thing to write, but something she likes to think she has mastered. Please don't shatter her illusions.*

*This lecture series first ran in 1999 as an on-line class offered through the Kiss of Death Chapter of the Romance Writers of America. Fabulous writing classes are still available each month thru KOD; you can check the website at [www.rwamysterysuspense.org](http://www.rwamysterysuspense.org) for current courses.*

*Originally, Q&A was part of the class structure. In this format, however, the lectures are being offered as a simple download. If you want more information on synopsis writing, you can continue to check with KOD on when the on-line course might be taught again.*

*Hope you enjoy!*

## **Introduction**

Synopsis writing is one of the most difficult tasks any writer faces. Most novel-length authors have an undying love for the written word. We craft wonderful 70,000-100,000 word books with beautiful descriptions, complicated plots, and complex characters. Now, we're supposed to summarize our magnum opus in merely three pages?

It seems impossible. But for any writer serious about selling her work, sooner or later she must undergo the submission process with its boilerplate query letters and stringent length requirements. The purpose of the following ten lectures is to help guide a new writer through this complicated, formalized process. The lectures are:

Lecture One: The Market  
Lecture Two: The Query Letter  
Lecture Three: Synopsis Overview  
Lecture Four: Short Synopsis Examples  
Lecture Five: Creating a Strong Hook  
Lecture Six: Identifying Plot Points  
Lecture Seven: Short Synopsis Outlines  
Lecture Eight: The Long Synopsis  
Lecture Nine: Full Submission  
Lecture Ten: Final Summary of Submission Do's and Don'ts

The first lecture covers how to view a novel as an objective product to be marketed, versus the precious child it has become. Then we will go through the submission process step-by-step, starting with the query letter, then spending significant time on developing the short synopsis before covering the long synopsis. The lectures on the query letter and short synopsis include generic outlines for a writer to follow, as well as award-winning examples of proposals. Finally, we'll cover the complete submission package along with proper follow up protocol as you anxiously wait for an editor to read your work.

By the end of this fifty page lecture series, you should have a good idea of what an editor expects in the submission package, as well as some best-in-class examples for you to follow.

Ready? Let's begin.