

The Ultimate Cheat Sheet for Better Book Descriptions

Cheat Sheet

The end goal of every book description should be to sell more books. Most authors stop after writing a synopsis, but that leaves them three key elements short of a proper book description.

Here are the four parts to a bestselling blurb:

1. A short, punchy, above-the-fold tagline
2. A present tense synopsis that uses as few words as possible to demonstrate the plot's best selling points
3. A selling paragraph that uses emotional adjectives and genre cues to get readers in the right mood
4. A call-to-action at the end that asks readers to buy

Part 1: Tagline

Authors often don't use taglines, which is a mistake in the mobile age, where only a few lines of description text are displayed. Grammar isn't important in a tag line. What's important is enticing readers to click the "Add to Cart" or "Read More" buttons.

Examples of strong tag lines:

- "Start and Finish the Book You Were Born to Write"
- "Without sleep, her life became a living nightmare."
- "Bram Stoker wanted fame. What he got was pure evil."
- "A missing girl. An international underworld. A PI who won't quit."

Part 2: Synopsis

Most authors write half-decent synopses, but there are a few problems that tend to crop up. They often do a fair job of summarizing the plot, but they may fail to entice readers of a certain genre. For instance, if it's dark urban fantasy, readers don't care about the history of the main character. They care about his or her emotional stakes in the plot.

Examples of a strong synopsis:

- "The world is driven by wizards, gods, and an imperial space marine 20,000 years into our future. Fame-hungry female mercenary Zicca is willing to skirt the edges of her warrior's code if it brings her the fame she desires. Her

hopes of making a name for herself by spying on assassins are dashed when she's forced to kill the assassin she was hired to watch.

Part 3: Selling Paragraph

Few authors use this, and as a result they fail to evoke an emotional reaction from their readers. It's also an opportunity to let folks know if the book is part of a series, what genre it's in, and if the author has anything of note worth mentioning. Additionally, it taps into the power of the word "you," which is a proven selling term.

Example of a strong selling paragraph:

"What Must Come is the second book in David Carson's Planet Wars, a military sci-fi space opera. If you like Tom Clancy, Stephen King, and James Michener, then you'll love a series that combines all of their best traits in a fast-paced, captivating, intergalactic adventure."

Part 4: Call to Action (CTA)

Most authors end their description with a synopsis and hope the reader will scroll up and buy. The CTA asks the reader to do it, which much improves the chances of it happening.

Examples of strong CTAs:

"Buy this classic romance filled with sensuous heat today!"

"Buy this book if you want to change your life today!"

"Buy the book to start reading Marion Alexander's tale of tragedy and love today!"

"Buy this book to continue the epic series today!"

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I hope this cheat sheet was extremely helpful! I've got some video training coming out soon to get into the nitty-gritty of what makes descriptions and other sales copy work. Keep your eyes on that inbox and be prepared for your first training video!

Thanks so much for reading!

Sincerely,
Bryan Cohen