

The Virgin and Her Modern-Day Knight by Helen Sanchez

Mitzi Verducci could not believe her luck. She should have trusted her instincts and just stayed in bed today. Not only did she get fired from waitressing job earlier this morning, but now her car has just broken down. She definitely would not have won any awards at being a waitress, she thought with a frown and a sad shake of her head. She just did not have the sharp memory or coordination that it took to really do a good job. Her boss, having watched her constant struggle, let her go without so much as a “by your leave.” Now being without a job means she could not afford to catch up on her rent, on which she was two month’s behind. That was due to the fact that she did not make much money in tips, and her wages were not that good. So that is why her prized possessions and necessities were crammed into her now non-working compact car. She laid her head on the steering wheel in frustration. With a gusty sigh, she uncoiled her long legs out of the driver’s side door and went to check under the rusting hood of her car. “Great,” she muttered to herself in disgust. Just what was she hoping to see? A sign that blatantly pointed out what was wrong with her ancient car? She was not a mechanic by any stretch and she had not the slightest clue what was wrong with her vehicle. As she pulled her head out from under the rusting hood, she glanced up at the sky. To top things off, the weather was turning foul. The fast approaching clouds looked downright ominous, and she could smell the rain in the air.

Editor’s Critique: First of all, I love the title. It tells the reader what this story is about. The first line introduces the heroine and her less than desirable predicament. In reworking this opening, I would set the scene a bit more. Where is she, in the country, in her town? You give us some setting information toward the end of the page, but this could be moved up. The first several sentences tell the reader what’s going on, but you could easily weave this information more gradually in the first chapter. The crux of the first page should be: 1. She got fired. 2. Her car won’t start. 3. Then ease more into her point of view about how awful this is. On a technical note, I’d separate this long paragraph into three.

The reader gets a sense of this heroine and she’s easy to identify with. Who hasn’t had a phase when every bad thing seems to happen at the same time? This is a good time for a hero to show up. ☺

Thank you for letting us read your first page and best of luck with the contest!