



JERICHO WRITERS

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Please note: In addition to an editorial report like the one below, authors who use the Developmental Edit service will also receive a marked-up copy of the manuscript featuring the editor's in-text comments. In comparison, the Manuscript Assessment service includes an editorial report but not a marked-up manuscript.

IN-DEPTH EDITORIAL REPORT

Please find below your commissioned Editorial Report from Jericho Writers.

This report has been prepared with care by your editor and will help identify what is working and give you practical and constructive advice on your next steps. We advise you to read the report carefully and then put it aside for a few days. After that time you may have questions so do remember that you have the opportunity to follow up with your editor in order to understand better any comments made. This is all part of the service.

Introduction

Many thanks for sending your novel *THE NOVEL...* to Jericho Writers, I have enjoyed reading your manuscript. You write confidently with a clean and clear writing style, and I feel as though I've spent the last week experiencing university first-hand, but without the hangovers, well done!

I can see the potential for your novel to be published in the new adult genre which has an ever-growing fan base. As you mention in your submission, *THE NOVEL...* focuses on university culture and highlights the struggles many students face; with a strong focus on LGBTQ+ experience I can see the possibility for great commercial appeal. That being said, this is a smaller market than other genres and so to stand out, I feel you need a much stronger hook to be able to break into this competitive market.

There are plenty of potential plot developments and a good cast of characters. Currently, the first half of the novel from Penny's point of view is too centred on her inner journey, and even though this is a gentle and beautiful reveal, as it takes the first half of the novel to unfold, the pacing of your manuscript is slower very early on. I believe this is due to a lack of external plot

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which in turn may affect your ability to have a strong and distinctive pitch when submitting to agents or publishers.

In contrast, in the second half of your novel, we have plenty of external plot from Lucy's point of view but her inner journey tails off which could leave the reader feeling a little unfulfilled which is due to an unclear motivational goal. Although I do recognise the message in your story is that Lucy feels lost and is *herself* unmotivated towards the end of the story, for your novel to work, we need to see the things she cannot and be able to predict how she can find her way. Achieving this is incredibly important. Letting your reader peek behind the curtain and see exactly what your character's motivation is (even if she doesn't), by *showing* the scenes where her character is growing rather than *telling* the reader it is happening, will provoke more empathy from your audience to your character's dilemma.

I know this might sound harsh, but you will see as you read through the report, that I have suggested simple ways to fix this, so please don't despair at this point!

What you have here is a solid first draft with potential, but there are issues that need to be addressed going forward, as such, your manuscript would benefit from several levels of editing. You will find that the majority of the following centres around your plot, structure and character arc, as well as a few helpful hints and tips around 'show don't tell' and setting.

The good news is that you have a natural ability to write, all that follows is how to dig a little deeper to really get the best out of your manuscript.

My hope is that you will find the feedback below, on aspects such as structure and writing style, helpful for decisions around this book, as well as in a general way for writing projects. I can see a range of possibilities, but the ultimate choices will be yours as to which paths you decide to explore further. You will see that I include both general and more detailed comments, which cover specific issues, as well as giving an idea of the publishing context and potential. In a report like this, whilst I am keen to emphasise the positives, I will also spend time offering suggestions where I think the work might merit or benefit from improvements. I hope you will be able to appreciate that my comments always come from a desire to be constructive and supportive towards you, the author of your work.

COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL:

With a little work, your novel does have commercial appeal, and I feel that in particular, it could really tap into a university-years and LGBTQ+ readership.

Coming-of-age/new adult stories continue to thrive with titles such as *Before I Fall* by Lauren Oliver, *Sweet Sorrow* by David Nicholls or in a more literary sense, *The Secret History* by Donna Tartt. Having said that, these genres own a smaller subscription than, say, women's fiction so if you're hoping to break into this market, you must be prepared that it will be extremely competitive as fewer coming-of-age novels get published.

What I think stands out about your novel is that it gives an insight into the whole university experience and its strong LGBTQ+ link, which with a clear and distinctive hook, a good marketing strategy could be concentrated around.

VOICE & STYLE

You have a natural fluidity to your writing and there are many moments throughout which stood out to me on reading. One of your biggest strengths is how – in a succinct and not overly dramatic way – you reveal your character’s inner thoughts and reflection, for example on pg. 17: ‘[REDACTED]’ is so powerful without having to over-explain. On pg. 20, from Lucy’s POV we have: ‘[REDACTED]’ which is again incredibly emotive and yet subtle.

On pg. 57, you have included a text message conversation where Lucy adds an ‘x’ at the end. Again, this is so subtle and yet shows the reader how they are taking the next step in their relationship. As an aside, you do also explain this later on, though personally, I think it is stronger without the explanation.

As well as this natural subtlety, there are moments that you use figurative language beautifully as on pg. 70: ‘[REDACTED]’.

I also love the little bits of humour; this was one of my favourites on page 101: ‘[REDACTED]’ This was also a nice touch on pg. 123: “[REDACTED]” - it really made me smile!

Another of your strengths is how you highlight deeper subjects, making the reader pause to contemplate your themes. On pg. 329, you do this brilliantly: ‘[REDACTED]’.

CHARACTERISATION

You have written two good characters with various internal issues to overcome, but there are times that I felt that I never really knew them in a three-dimensional way. Often, I had to check the headings to see which point of view I was hearing from, especially if I had put the manuscript down and continued reading mid-chapter. This is due to not showing their personality more in their actions and not using a more varied variety of settings. While you use inner dialogue to tell the reader their feelings, I felt that I wasn’t shown enough of their personalities through their actions. For example, we are told that Lucy often puts others before herself, and sorry if I’ve missed something here, but I couldn’t see any evidence of that. We learn that she is good with her social media, but we never see it, never see the photos she uploads or see her passion for being [REDACTED] other than being told she was [REDACTED] because her mother was. This is a simple fix though, just by pulling back quite so many nights in bars, clubs and bedrooms, and adding more variety to the setting for example. To strengthen her character through actions, you could show the picture she is taking through the lens, describing the way she is focusing on something that she feels passionate about [REDACTED]. Perhaps you could add a scene [REDACTED].

where Lucy [REDACTED], you could then use this to add depth to her decision to [REDACTED].

I felt that I knew Penny a little more, but again, I would have liked to have seen more of her personality through her action rather than just through inner thoughts and dialogue.

So, let's dig a little deeper into your characters and focus on how using a variety of settings, and including depth to these scenes, will add value to your characters and make their points of view easier to identify.

Who is your protagonist?

As *THE NOVEL* is written as a dual narrative, it is easy to assume that they are both your main protagonists, and as we closely follow both women's story, this is almost the case. However, in any novel, there will always be one voice that the reader will identify as the protagonist; this is usually the voice you begin with, but another easy way to identify this person is to ask yourself who has the most transformative character arc.

In the case of your novel, although Lucy has a lot more to overcome: her [REDACTED], her lack of direction, the implications of [REDACTED] and potential [REDACTED], it is actually Penny who changes the most. She begins as a girl who hasn't really found her place, who is unsure of her own sexual identity and as a result, doesn't really know who she is. By the end of the novel, Penny has learnt to say goodbye to the girl she was and accept a new version of herself who is gay, this is demonstrated in the paragraph on pg. 322 which includes this wonderful turn of phrase: '[REDACTED]'. By the end of the novel, we know she is going to succeed in life, because she has accepted herself and having done that, we know that she has the tools to overcome adversity.

Lucy, in contrast, is almost as lost at the end of the story as she is at the beginning and for the reader, this is problematic because we are left with a sense of unfulfillment having followed her story so closely. Although Penny is the main protagonist, as you have written this from first person for both characters in an even split, we also want to root for Lucy, and it is in Lucy's character which I feel needs the most attention in terms of character arc. You will see later in the report that I have expanded on this, showing how structurally Lucy's character arc could be plotted.

Points of View

Although you have written two very different characters, Penny and Lucy's voices are quite similar as two women of a similar age in the same environment, and I found myself often having to check the title heading for the POV. There are a number of ways to help this transition between points of view without the reader having to rely on the chapter headings.

If you use a variety of tools at the beginning of each chapter to steer your reader, they would then be guided to the correct POV without realising it's happening. You could, for instance, give the character a favourite swear word or accent. Maybe Lucy uses specific swear words that are slightly out of the norm 'feck' or 'shite', anything that helps the reader switch without them having it pointed out to them. I write first person from multiple viewpoints and so I have found that giving a character an accent helps with this transition; it also has the added bonus of being able to identify the different characters should you sell audiobook rights.

Another way, is to use a turn of phrase specific to that character, so maybe Penny often lists things, for example you could use: 'Five reasons to get out of bed today are...' or 'Five reasons I hate the rain are...'

Habits are another good way to mentally switch, maybe Lucy always taps the door three times when she leaves a room for luck, perhaps Penny has a habit of always losing things, hairbands, pencils, shoes... that way at the beginning of a chapter she could be looking for something, again, just to help with the switch.

Another way of doing this is by using specific details in the setting that jump out as being in that character's house or referring to their hobbies, so for example, you could begin Lucy's chapters sometimes mentioning throwing her kit in the corner or hiding her [REDACTED]. For Penny, it could be opening her subscription to her favourite magazine or a food parcel box from her mum or printing off her latest [REDACTED]. Just little touches to reset the reader's mind without much effort, this is also a good way of setting the scene clearly and putting a picture in the reader's mind of where they are as well as strengthening your character's personalities.

So, now we know your characters a little better, let's look closely at the pace and structure of your novel.

STRUCTURE/PLOTTING & PACING/TENSION

At a surface level, your structure works, there is a clear beginning middle and end. So far, so good, but there are areas that need attention, which is primarily down to the pacing in the first half of your novel. I feel that is due to a lack of action in the external story.

To be able to pitch your novel successfully with a view to getting that all-important publishing deal, you need four key elements: a protagonist we want to root for, a clear goal they are striving to get to, an event or catalyst which upsets their world, and plenty of hurdles that stand in their way that they must overcome. This in turn gives you a simple yet effective blueprint to ensure your novel hits all the right beats in terms of pacing, tension and structure. As it stands, I found it hard to identify these key elements. Let's take a closer look at each of them.

For the purpose of this explanation regarding the exterior plot in the *first* half of your novel, I am going to focus on Penny as it's Penny that I see as your main protagonist.

Penny:

A protagonist should always have two journeys, the plot-led or external story and the inner story or self-discovery. The external story will be the part of your novel that hooks the reader in, often shown in the middle section of a blurb. The inner journey is what your character learns about themselves. As it stands, Penny's story mainly focuses on her inner journey.

Let's look at adding some more information and possibly a few new opening chapters. I'm sure you could come up with something much better suited to your story than my ideas below and I'm not at all suggesting you use them; these are just ideas to get your creative juices flowing and to demonstrate how by adding some key elements earlier on, we would immediately be more invested in your plot.

1. A protagonist we want to root for/can relate to

So, what do we know about Penny? We know that she is struggling with her sexual identity, we know that she comes from a good home, is a high achiever academically and is succeeding in her university life, but why should your reader root for her? Readers love to champion a protagonist who has been wronged in some way and that works hard to overcome obstacles that are not of their own doing. Someone who is naturally clever from a good background and is high achieving, will not draw as much empathy from a reader as a student succeeding with dyslexia or who has come from a deprived background for example. Can we tap into that by just adding a little more vulnerability in Penny's background perhaps?

What if the year before she went to university, Penny had leaned in to kiss one of her friends when she was drunk? Maybe she got caught cheating in an exam, but it was a bully who was copying her work? What if she took the blame to protect them? What if that group of friends bullied her in college until she left for university? What if she found it hard to make friends at university fearing the same thing would happen again?

Looking back at those key elements you would now have a protagonist we immediately want to root for:

'Outcast and bullied by her childhood friends, Penny came to university for a fresh start and after a year of hard work, things are finally going her way.'

2. A clear goal:

Right, so what is Penny's goal? Is it to get through university without being bullied and ashamed, to make friends and to accept herself and her sexuality with an end goal of becoming a writer perhaps?

'And when she meets the beautiful and enigmatic Lucy, a third-year happy in her sexuality and lands a job as [REDACTED], Penny begins to discover the person she wants to be.'

3. A catalyst to upset her world

Now what is the big event that upsets her world? We could say that beginning to recognise her feelings towards Lucy is the catalyst, but this event unfolds gently and doesn't really instil a sense of jeopardy if they don't get together. Penny's feelings towards Lucy are sensitively and beautifully written, however, it's a slow-burning plot and not quite enough to keep the reader interested in such a large chunk of the opening half of your novel. What you need is something else in the early stages of your plot, an event that creates a sense of jeopardy to ramp up the pace and most importantly, keep the reader turning the page; without it your pace will remain flat.

So, what could happen to Penny? One thing I thought would help is an outside influence on the story. Perhaps her father has asked for a divorce out of the blue making Penny question everything that she thought was the truth about her upbringing? Could she be contacted by a

sibling she never knew about, a result of a former affair? Could she become the target of online bullying or be excluded from a friendship group?

Let's take that last idea and use it as a catalyst, again, this is only to show you how these elements will help your pace and add tension, you know the story you want to tell much better than I do!

'But when she begins to receive messages from her former best friend, Penny fears that the new life she has tried so hard to build is about to crumble around her.'

By throwing a spanner into the works, your pace would immediately pick up because we now feel a sense of jeopardy, that 'Oh no! What is she going to do?' question that will keep the reader invested. The example I have used is quite a dramatic one just to explain my point, it could be something much more subtle, even just a hint of a secret would be enough.

4. What is standing in her way?

What are the hurdles Penny needs to overcome? Lucy's problems becoming apparent? The fear that accepting her sexuality will subject her to the bullying she's experienced in the past, maybe?

With her feelings towards Lucy intensifying, Penny turns to Lucy for support, but Lucy has problems of her own; beneath the enigmatic fun-loving woman Penny has begun to fall for, is a woman broken and bruised. With her degree in the balance, and as Lucy's behaviour begins to spiral, Penny has to find the strength to save her friend, but can she save herself in the process?

From the above, you can see that little has really changed in the second half of your novel, but we now have a much stronger beginning with a clear external plot. Commercial publishing submissions are at an all-time high, with agents often receiving over thirty submissions a day, for you to be able to stand out, especially in the YA/NA market, you need a strong pitch to be able to break into this hook-led space. You have such a strong inner journey for Penny, adding more to your outer plot will overlap and complement Penny and Lucy's inner journey highlighting the areas you have mentioned in your Jericho submission, struggles with mental health and the pressure of university culture.

Before we go on, let's have a look at how this would look on a blurb. Remember, I'm not implying you should use this (although feel free to use it if you wish!) it's just to show how important those key elements are to your plot and pitch:

Outcast and bullied by her childhood friends, Penny came to university for a fresh start and after a year of hard work, things are finally going her way.

When she meets the beautiful and enigmatic Lucy, a third-year happy in her sexuality, Penny begins to discover the person she wants to be.

But when she receives threatening messages from her former best friend, Penny fears that the new life she has tried so hard to build is about to crumble around her.

With her feelings towards Lucy intensifying, Penny turns to Lucy for support, but Lucy has problems of her own.

Beneath the enigmatic fun-loving woman Penny has begun to fall for, is a woman broken and bruised. With her degree in the balance, and as Lucy's behaviour begins to spiral, Penny has to find the strength to save her friend.

Can she save herself in the process?

By including those key elements, we now have a protagonist we are championing, a sense of jeopardy, an intriguing and enticing plot with a much stronger hook to grab the attention of an agent or publisher ... and all that in just one short paragraph.

Lucy:

When looking at Lucy's story structurally, her external plot is much stronger, especially in the second half of your novel as we have plenty of action: forgetting the anniversary of her mum's death, her struggles with her career choice and dissertation, the missed football game etc. So, in contrast to Penny, it is Lucy's inner journey and character arc that I feel you need to focus on.

Here I have broken down Lucy's inner journey structurally so we can see a clear story arc, emphasising where you need to add more, and where her journey is already solid:

Beginning: 0-30% of your novel

You often refer to Lucy as being a little out of control in her second year and yet, apart from her on-off relationship with Holly and a few one night stands there is little evidence to support this apart from the first night in the toilets where she is very drunk with lipstick on her face. To help with her arc, and again to strengthen your earlier chapters, I think you should show more of her reckless behaviour rather than tell the reader about it.

Maybe Penny could see her asleep outside a club with vomit in her hair? Could Penny see her kissing one girl earlier in the night and then see her with another girl later the same night? Could we also see some evidence of self-harm in her past? We would then really have a sense of a girl with deeper problems than just being off the rails.

Middle – 30%-50%

You've done a fantastic job of showing Lucy's behaviour changing for the better as Penny begins to have a positive impact on her. There are moments, however, that we are *told* about Lucy's changes for the better and the woman she is deep down as on here on pg. 182 ' [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. I would like to see more evidence of this. Maybe Penny's shoes are hurting her after a night out and so Lucy gives her a piggyback all the way home? Could we see Lucy going out of her way to offer a homeless person a hot drink and a sandwich? In regard to her sense of adventure, what about having a scene where she arranges for both of them to go paragliding or abseiling for charity?

Your manuscript is weighed down by settings in bars, clubs and shared housing, and I know this is to immerse the reader in university life, but it does become a little repetitive and stale to read. Just a few more scenes here and there with different settings could lift your narrative and reveal to the reader the kind, loving and adventurous person Lucy is.

There is little that needs to change in this section with regard to their relationship growing, but with the above changes, this would be much more powerful as we head into the midpoint of your novel.

Middle: 50% - 70%

The day that Lucy forgets [REDACTED], and it was a perfect scene for the middle of your novel and I had tears in my eyes when I read it. You then clearly show Lucy's deterioration after that scene and in this section of the book, the reader can feel how this, coupled with missing the game, sending Lucy in a downward spiral is powerful and we can see how this impacts on their relationship.

Ending 80%-100%

This is where I feel Lucy's character arc flatlines a little, especially towards the later pages as Lucy's repetitive monologue of negativity becomes a little wearing, for example here on Pg 323

[REDACTED].

You do start to show her taking steps to recover when she seeks out advice from the careers advisor, and Lucy begins to accept [REDACTED] doesn't necessarily mean she's made a huge mistake. We also have the wonderfully emotive [REDACTED]. On pg. 329, you begin to explore this change for the better when Lucy [REDACTED] but you *tell* the reader about it rather than *showing* it, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Because this is rounded up in a few short sentences, it can be missed, if you show this happening, if we see Lucy saying no to her friends, see her working and looking up at the clock, drinking cold coffee as she sits typing away, her face lit up by the blue glow from the screen, we would start to believe she is going to change – more on show don't tell later in the report. As we don't see this improvement, by the end of the novel, we are not convinced that she is going to. This is also due to the last few chapters where her thoughts on the future don't feel fully committed.

On pg. 343 Lucy says she *may* have depression: "[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]."

If you reworded this to 'so I'm going to see how that goes,' to 'I've already spoken to the therapist and my first appointment is next week.' We would believe that she is actually going to try to actively change.

And again, there is this sense of half-hearted plans when Lucy then says she *may* [REDACTED] as here on pg. 342: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. "As we have seen Lucy go off the rails before, as a reader, I wasn't convinced she was going to do any of these things; it would be great if we finally believed that her relationship with Penny really has had a positive impact on

her as a person. She doesn't need to have all the answers here, but the reader needs to *believe* she is on the right path to *finding* them. This could be re-worded to something like: [REDACTED]

For her character arc to be fully concluded for the reader, we need to be able to see that she is going to do these things or at least believe she is going to *try*. I understand that the message you are giving is that [REDACTED] and so many readers can relate to that. [REDACTED] from a reader's perspective, we need to believe that she is actively doing something to change her path. Just a few tweaks here would give that sense of completion.

As an aside, I did wonder if [REDACTED] could be an option for her, given her original love of [REDACTED]? Just a thought.

I also had an idea for an epilogue. [REDACTED]

What I love about the [REDACTED] in particular is it gives Penny's inner journey full recognition and understanding. What if you echo that with Lucy? I thought that you could perhaps show Penny in [REDACTED], maybe getting ready for an award for [REDACTED] and just as she leaves, there is a [REDACTED] that catches her eye, [REDACTED]. Just a thought!

DESCRIPTION AND SETTING/KEY SCENES/SHOW DON'T TELL

As I've mentioned, there are moments in your writing where you use wonderful figurative language. I feel your manuscript would benefit by adding more of this in your setting descriptions to compliment your narration. Often, your dialogue overshadows the scene.

I would suggest working on each scene individually and question if you have added enough detail to the scene so that the reader can picture it in their mind. For example, on pg. 110 you begin with: "[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. For the reader, whilst we can imagine the [REDACTED], and the [REDACTED], we are missing the little touches that make it feel real. This [REDACTED] is set in December, are they [REDACTED]? Is it beginning to hail? Rain? Or is the sun low in the sky making it hard to see? Is [REDACTED] cupping her hands around her mouth as she shouts? Are Taylor and Lucy out of breath? Does Taylor have [REDACTED]? How has the [REDACTED] exactly? Are [REDACTED]? Of course, you don't need to answer all of these questions, but I feel your manuscript would feel much more rounded with a few tweaks here and there.

As another example, on pg. 111 you *tell* the reader details about the room: [REDACTED]

If you add a few incidental details, and *show* these, immediately the room becomes more real to the reader. This is just a quick illustration and I know you could do more with it!

[REDACTED]

I'm not suggesting you should do this with every scene. 'Show don't tell' is about balance, too much 'tell' and your novel could lack depth, too much 'show' could begin to overload the reader with lengthy descriptions that are not needed.

Key Scenes

Throughout the book, we are building up to the moment where Penny accepts her sexuality and 'comes out' not only to a few close friends but to her parents. This is her main inner goal and one we are waiting for which happens on pg. 328: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This may seem anticlimactic to the reader as you have *told* the reader the scene not *shown* it. To really get that emotive punch and give the reader what they have been waiting for, you need to make much more of this scene. Show the reader the scene by adding all of those little details that make it feel real: a song on the radio that Penny becomes aware of as she sits down; having inner dialogue to explain that by the end of the song, her parents will meet a new daughter. Let the reader experience the dialogue between them in real-time not as a recount and the same with Simon, show the reader his eyes widening, the pause before he reacts, Penny noticing a chip on the edge of her cup as she begins to talk.

The key thing to take away from this section of the report is to look at each scene individually and question what its purpose is, is its word count working hard for your plot and characters? Would it be stronger by just adding one or two lines of description or is it a key scene and needs to be explored a little deeper?

PRESENTATION

Your manuscript is fairly clean but there are a few presentation errors. My role in providing this structural report is not to copyedit your manuscript, however, here are a few examples that have jumped out at me on reading. To iron all of them out before submitting to agents and publishers, employing a copyeditor may be beneficial.

[All removed to protect author's work.]

TOWARDS PUBLICATION

I can see a great deal of potential in your work, but it is not quite there yet. I do hope this doesn't come as a huge disappointment to you. Before you go any further, I feel that it would benefit from several levels of editing before you submit, focusing primarily on the first half of your novel to make sure it has plenty of plot, pace and intrigue and a sense of jeopardy, before digging deeper into description, setting and conclusion.

The good news is that I believe *THE NOVEL*... has the potential to be published, however, taking into the contents of the report, I would not suggest you submit to agents and publishers just yet. You have a long but exciting road ahead, and there will be times when you may feel disheartened, but I truly believe in you and your future as a writer.

FURTHER READING

- To help you along the way, especially with your first structural round of edits, I would highly recommend *Save The Cat! Writes a Novel* by Jessica Brody. This is a great explanation of how to dig deep into the structure of your novel, by helping you identify the specific beats of action and reflection within your story.
- [Show, Don't Tell: What This Means and Why it Matters | Jericho Writers](#)
- [Character Arcs: What They Are And How To Create Them - With Template \(jerichowriters.com\)](#)
- [How to Plot a Novel \(Using our Easy Plot Template Technique\) – Jericho Writers](#)
- [How to Write a Great Scene \(and Nail It Every Time\) – Jericho Writers](#)
- [Character Development – And The Ultimate Character Bio – Jericho Writers](#)

CONCLUSION AND KEY POINTS ROUND UP

You have a good novel here; you are a talented writer! I have described this as a solid first draft and I do hope that doesn't offend or dishearten you. Writing a novel takes guts, commitment, and talent, all of which you have. So many people say, "I could write a book", but very few achieve this. You should congratulate yourself; it's hard work!

You are approaching publication at a time that is fiercely competitive, so it's more important than ever to get it right before you submit to agents or publishers.

Writers have to be fully committed when faced with several rounds of editing. I know how daunting this list of things to improve must be, but please don't let this take away from your achievement this far.

Here is a suggestion of how to tackle your edits:

- Keeping in mind your new knowledge of plot and character arc, go through your manuscript scene by scene and question its purpose, is it needed? Is it pushing the story forward? This will be a tough process, but it may help you see that some scenes – particularly in the first half of your novel – are simply redundant which will result in the

nerve-wracking decision to cut a great deal of words. Just so you know, most writers discard a high percentage of their first draft. In my second novel, I had to delete forty-thousand words, a subplot and three side characters, and let me tell you, it was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do but the final book was much better for it.

- Highlight your pivotal scenes - the scenes which drive the story forward.
- Once you have established your key scenes, dissect the scenes around them. Would the scene be better if you show the reader more detail? Is the setting working hard enough for your story and character arc? How can you add some tension leading up to the key scenes? How can you make the chapters following the key scenes more emotive?
- Go through each chapter and highlight show vs tell – edit to make sure it is balanced.
- You will then be at the stage of editing which will involve writing new scenes, chopping and changing original work. It will be messy and frustrating, but you CAN do it.
- Once you have a second draft, listen to the whole document using the Read Aloud feature. It is a slow process but invaluable in helping you spot mistakes, both grammatically and from a broader point of view.

I know this sounds like a great deal of work, and it is, but I hope I have helped you see what value will be added to your work by making some changes, and hopefully they will help you along the way to publication.

Once you have had a chance to take in the contents, should any of the points I have made in the feedback need further clarification, you are welcome – by way of brief follow-up – to email your queries on those; this opportunity is included in the service you have already paid for.

I'm wishing you the very best of luck with your edits and am keeping my fingers crossed that one day I will be sharing the bookshelves with you.