

## **DEFINING My Job:**

I am an editor of many names: story, substantive, style or content are just a few. What this means is that I review your manuscript and make comments and suggestions about:

**Narrative Flow:** Is the story moving along at a pace that is satisfying for the reader?

**Style:** What is the writer's "voice" and style and is it consistent throughout the manuscript and compared to other published books with any similarity? Is this style working well to bring the story to life?

**Logic:** Are there any factual errors or points of logic that differ?

**Character Development:** Are characters believable and three-dimensional? Do they change over the course of the story? Is a backstory implied? Can the reader relate to your character?

**Plot Development:** Does the plot have a clearly established premise with complications and setbacks? Does the plot resolve, one way or another, in the end? Are subplots effectively developed to thematically support or reflect aspects of the overall plot?

**Thematic Development:** What is your story *really* about, down deep? Can you articulate it? Are you expressing the theme at every opportunity, through characters, plot, symbol, metaphor and style?

**Pesky Bits:** Are you using your dialogue tags correctly? Are you using run-on sentences or repeating words unconsciously? Do you have any bad writing habits that you are not aware of? I'll find 'em.

**What I do not do:** I do not rewrite your manuscript, or any portion of it, for you, as I see this as a creative trespass of the highest order. It's your manuscript. I do not make corrections for usage or grammar errors, I point them out to you and it is your job to make sure you get a proofreader and/or to correct them yourself. While this seems to be a bit of a pain for you, there's are two reasons for this: 1) I am not a proofreader and 2) Making the corrections yourself ensures that you will be forevermore aware of and on guard for these types of errors. It will save your proofreader time, you money and make you a better writer. Sometimes I cannot help myself and I will make some small corrections but that's just my logophile tendencies coming out.

## **Using My Notes:**

If I commented every single time you wrote something funny, beautiful or otherwise terrific, your manuscript would be covered with these notes. Sometimes I just can't help myself, so watch out for those comments but my job is to make your manuscript much better than it was when I began to work with you. I know you need encouragement and I'm a writer too - but I take my job very seriously.

My comments will be centered on all of the categories I outlined above, and fall under “types” like:

**Conscious Choice?** This means just what it says: Have you made this choice of word, phrase or description consciously, and if not, if I point out what it might infer, do you wish to keep it or change it?

**Global Note:** Please make this change over the entire manuscript. Not just this page, or this chapter but the whole manuscript. This might be a style issue, an inconsistency in the spelling of a name or place, or a consistent misuse of a word, etc.

**Repeated:** You are repeating a word or phrase and are not aware of it. Use your search function to search for and replace other examples of this repeated word or phrase.

**Word Salad:** This sentence, paragraph or section of your manuscript is overly complex and confusing. Simplify please.

**Subtext/Easter Eggs:** Subtext and symbolism, or "Easter eggs" as they are sometimes called, would make this sentence or paragraph much more powerful.

**Bounce:** The reader could be "bounced" out of the story by the use of a jarring word, image, or non-sequitur. Double-check that this is a conscious choice, and if it is, it's the best choice here.

**Use it or Lose It:** A moment in your manuscript seems superfluous and is taking up room for no apparent reason. Either make it work or get rid of it.

**Subjective Note:** This word, phrase, technique or other aspect of your manuscript could be problematic for readers. Take that under advisement and use your personal taste or other feedback to decide.

**Objective Note:** This is an error, mistake or something that is objectively incorrect. You must pay attention to this note.

**Suggest:** Something needs to change and here's what I suggest as to how. Your creative license comes first but you are free to use my suggested fix.

## **HOW We'll Work Together:**

I use Google docs, a cloud-based software, to perform the editing I do for my clients. If you are comfortable with Google docs that's a big plus, but if not, I expect you are comfortable with Word.

In the event that Google docs is something you are currently or can become quickly comfortable with (it's very simple), I share the document with you when I am done editing a chapter. You'll receive an email notification of this.

In the event that Word is more comfortable for you, I will do my editing on your word doc and send it to you as an attachment, but store it, ultimately, in my Google Drive so I can keep track of client work.

I prefer to receive book chapters in individual documents and I like them labeled as such: 1CHAP, 2CHAP, 3CHAP, etc. In the event that your manuscript is still a work in progress, I prefer to receive five chapters at a time so I can stay in the flow. If your manuscript is complete but not organized into individual chapters, please do so before we start work.

Version Control: When you send chapters back to me for a 2nd pass, label them 1CHAP2 to indicate it's another version. Should I ask to see yet another version, it would be 1CHAP3 and so on.

You are 100% responsible for the safe keeping of your manuscript. With a little bit of focus and a good system, we will never lose work that was done on your part or mine. Some writers email themselves chapters or the manuscript, others use cloud services like Google Drive or Dropbox. Make sure you have a handle on this as there is nothing more heartbreaking or frustrating as losing work!

Each time I finish a chapter, I will share the Google doc with you and you'll receive an email notification. Each completed chapter will complete notes as I described above, AND an overall note. If an overall note on the chapter is needed, I'll email you separately.

Working together with me entitles you to three meetings in person or via Skype or Google Hangouts. Our first meeting will be when we get started, and the other two are as needed, but they generally take place around the midpoint of the project and toward the end. The scheduling of these meetings is your call, as you need them.

### **Your Responsibilities:**

- It bears repeating: You are 100% responsible for keeping updated copies of your manuscript in any way you see fit.
- Remember, your fealty is to your manuscript. Would a note - even one you don't like - improve the manuscript? Then take the note. If you don't like a note, don't take it.
- If I make a global note about, for example, a usage or grammar issue, it is your job to correct all future appearances of this same error. If I see the same errors on a second pass of the manuscript, I will of course point it out again.
- When you see a note in the manuscript you have one of three actions you must take. Fix it. Ask me about it. Ignore it. If you can make a great argument for why you made a particular creative choice, if you can really back that up - great. It's your manuscript and I admire a writer who sticks to his or her style or point. You are under no obligation to change a darn thing.
- Though I will bug you about it and probably make suggestions, it is your job to be aware of the market for your book. If you belong to the [Fabulists](#), you will be exposed to a variety of resources and interests about writing - including the current marketplace.

Further resources:

[Punctuation in Dialogue](#)  
[Publisher's Weekly](#)  
[The Writer's Market](#)  
[Publisher's Marketplace](#)