

December 12, 2011

Dear Erika:

I have enjoyed editing the first three chapters of your novel *Of Airships and Shapeshifters*. You incorporate an engaging cast of fun, unique characters, the voice is personal and passionate, and the world is creative and complex enough to keep your reader interested. It has been a pleasure editing your work to help bring out the characters' personalities and the originality of the universe you have created. As you requested, I have provided an intensive content edit of these chapters, focusing on consistency in character actions and world details, an inclusion of more explanatory descriptions, and correctness in grammar and punctuation to help you prepare your manuscript for publication.

Manuscript Survey and Work Process

Before starting on the editing process, I read through the first ten chapters of the manuscript to gain an understanding of the characters, basic plot, and voice. I then wrote down my priorities and goals to help keep myself on-track and therefore ensure maximum efficiency during the editing process. I drafted a work schedule with biweekly deadlines for reviewing the chapters, which allowed me to move quickly through the editing process. And I reviewed each chapter several times before e-mailing it to you, guaranteeing meticulous, detailed editing. All of these decisions enabled me to implement a thorough content edit.

Audience Research

As part of my research, I looked into the viability of using five or more viewpoint characters in a first-person narrative. This helped me to understand the marketability of this technique, such as if it has been done before by other authors, and if so, how it has generally been accepted by readers. I also researched the steampunk genre that your story best fits into. Through researching the trends and themes typical to the steampunk genre, I was better able to give suggestions on how to improve reader interest and also what reader expectations are for a steampunk novel. Going through the research process enabled me to implement my goals and your goals for the manuscript more effectively.

Client Correspondence

To ensure that the work I was doing met your expectations, I kept in constant contact with you throughout the process through e-mail. I explained my priorities and goals to you and made note of the additional goals you had for your manuscript. I also discussed a basic timeline with you, establishing deadlines for having each chapter completed, and complied with your request to e-mail each chapter as soon as it was finished and give an update on my progress. After sharing my research with you, we discussed in detail some of the larger structural and contextual changes that could be made to your manuscript to improve readability, such as the pros and cons of using multiple first-person viewpoint characters, choosing a main character, and the benefits of utilizing a prologue to set up the story. And in answer to your questions about publication, I explained some of the basics of the publishing process and steps you will need to take when approaching publication. Lastly, I responded to all of the questions and comments you had about the changes and comments I made on your first edited chapter.

Computer Checks

I used the find and replace function in Microsoft Word to address formatting errors in the manuscript. These changes included replacing all of the non-directional apostrophes with single quotation marks, the non-directional quotation marks with directional quotation marks, and the double spacing between sentences with single spacing. This ensured that your manuscript now follows the standard rules of digital word processing, which is important when submitting a manuscript to be considered for publication. I also

took note of words particular to your story that were marked as unidentified in Microsoft Word and recorded them on the style sheet to ensure consistency in treatment and spelling.

Manuscript Editing

To make sure I met the goals you had for the editing of your manuscript, I concentrated my editing on creating a clear, consistent, and technically correct text. Whenever I came across a place I felt needed more explanation, such as details or events that needed to be clarified through rewording or rephrasing, I marked that spot and made suggestions for changes that could be made to clarify that part of the manuscript. I focused on places where the descriptions were either lacking or excessive and suggested ways to insert or delete details for clarity. In addition, I made suggestions on ways to clarify the beginning and ending of certain chapters by establishing/reestablishing context or coming to a conclusive stopping point, respectively.

A large part of my editing focus was on creating consistency and believability in the world, plot, and characters. I pointed out details about the world that were not consistent or realistic; I researched the viability of the history and technology portrayed in the manuscript and made suggestions for ways to change them to be more believable. I also highlighted places where the characterization needs to be altered to improve believability, such as in the characters' narrative voice, dialogue, mannerisms, and actions. There are occasionally words, content, or dialogue that do not fit the setting and mood of the story, such as clothing and the characters' word choice in dialogue or narrative, which I called attention to and then suggested alternative options. And I pointed out places where the story could benefit from you sounding more in-control in the narrative by making definitive statements instead of using vague or generalized vocabulary.

For the technical editing, I focused on implementing the standards set out in the sixteenth edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* concerning spelling, punctuation, mechanics, grammar, and capitalization. I also used the online edition of the Merriam-Webster dictionary as a standard when checking correctness in hyphenating compound words and phrases. I changed all sentence fragments to complete sentences and suggested alternate words or phrases that could be used to fix repetition of words or phrases. And to improve overall flow, I restructured some of the sentences by removing unnecessary words or phrases.

I have included a time sheet detailing the time I spent working on the manuscript as well as a style sheet documenting the style decisions I made for the content edit. I have tried to be as thorough as possible in describing my work and thought process, but if you have any further questions, please contact me at kjspontaneity@gmail.com. I hope you find my editing helpful as you move forward to finish refining your manuscript and submit your story for publication.

Best regards,

Jessica DeLand