



Editorial Summary

This is a composite of several I've done and so is not specific to any client

- ❖ Overall, a fascinating read. Good writing for your target audience. I like the way you lead with examples that allow a reader from any background to find the material approachable. You also have a good ear for alliterative juxtaposition and an obvious love for good wordsmithing.
- ❖ If I've made a change associated with a particular style guide, I cite the style guide reference on the first occurrence and then just do the markup on any subsequent occurrences without further comment.
- ❖ In general, I've recommended use of the Oxford comma. In some cases, that can make an enormous difference in the actual meaning of the text ("eats shoots and leaves" or "eats, shoots, and leaves"?). I don't think I've changed your intent anywhere, but wanted to call your attention to it as you process accepting or rejecting changes. You'll note, however, there are several places where I've not recommended its use, primarily in dialog where it looks like you intend to convey that the speaker is talking on and on and running all of his or her sentences together.
- ❖ Don't forget or hesitate to use the em dash. It's a very effective way to set off explanatory material and is particularly helpful in complex sentences that already have lots of punctuation. CMS explicitly recommends its use in these situations. I've marked such changes where I think it would be helpful for your reader.
- ❖ Just a bit of FYI, passing on a tip I got from a session at the 2015 Writer's Digest Conference. The speaker said to always check your writing for present participles ("is standing," "is hoping," "are seeing") and try to change them to present indicative. The primary basis for her recommendation was that the simpler "stands," "hopes," and "see" are actually cleaner and flow better for the reader, eliminating superfluous words ... and I do agree in most cases. (She also said that agents and editors are often really put off by excessive use of present participle and that she'd learned this the hard way.) This isn't a hard-and-fast rule because sometimes present participle is exactly correct.
- ❖ There is a tendency in your work to use passive voice when active would be more effective in propelling the story line.
- ❖ Beware of dangling participles. Even the best writers can miss these, and they occur with both present and past participles. Examples:

- Thinking this would be the best Christmas ever, new ornaments for the tree were Sheila's top priority.
- Doomed to spend Christmas alone, decorations were the last thing on Sheila's mind.

In both of these examples, the leading participle phrase describes Sheila (it's not the ornaments that are "thinking" or the decorations that are "doomed"), so "Sheila" needs to be the first word following the comma.

Dangling participles occur frequently in this manuscript, and I've made recommended changes. It's usually the case, however, that there are multiple ways to fix these problems, so I've marked each as "DP" and occasionally suggested more than one possible solution.

- ❖ I like the way you use dialect to distinguish between the characters of the servant class and those of the nobility. It adds nice coloring to the dialog and a real sense of "being in that place and time" for the reader. I did find several oversights where a servant's words included "for" instead of "fer" and "you" instead of "ye". I've corrected all that I found and mention it here so that you can pay close attention to any further changes to the servant dialog as you do your final revisions.
- ❖ You've done an excellent job relative to gender neutrality. The "he's" and "she's" are nicely intermixed. The places when you've chosen to use "she" where the casual reader might be expecting "he" are very nice—a pleasant surprise that does not seem at all contrived.
- ❖ It looks like you struggle with "It's" and "Its". An easy way to avoid this problem is to ask yourself each time you type either one: "If I said 'it is' right here, would that be correct?" If the answer is "yes," then it should be "It's." Otherwise, it's "Its."
- ❖ Continuity is spot-on whenever it's within a scene. I found several continuity lapses, however, when the events were in different chapters. I could resolve one or two of them, but the rest will need your attention. As examples, Amanda has dark hair when we meet her in Chapter 2; but she's "blonde like her sister" when the two are reunited in Chapter 9. In Chapter 5, Roger drives a Porsche Boxster; but when he and Amanda set out on their road trip in Chapter 14, they put their luggage in the trunk of the Corvette — and nowhere in between did we learn of Roger trading cars. There's no way I can know which is right in either of these cases. Is Amanda dark or blonde? Does Roger drive a Boxster or a Corvette?