



JERICO WRITERS

Please find below an example report from one of our experienced editors: prepared with care and attention for a writer like yourself. Identifying details for the author, editor, and the content of the book have been blocked out or changed to preserve anonymous identity and the author's intellectual property. Please note that this is a sample used to reflect the quality of our editorial service. By nature of the service, as feedback is tailored to each individual manuscript, reports may vary in length and content. Wondering if this service is right for you? Drop us an email at info@jerichowriters.com and one of our writer support team will be happy to discuss your options.

OPENING SECTION ASSESSMENT 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. If you would like more detailed feedback on your complete manuscript, then our In-depth report is a great way to improve your work.

INTRO

[REDACTED]

This was an enjoyable and atmospheric read. You have a strong and appealing writing style, a colourful and deliciously enticing story world, and a strong contemporary romance plot in this tale of an aspiring [REDACTED] who has to choose between her head and her heart in both work and love. To make sure your novel has a good chance of attracting agent/publisher/reader interest, I would suggest some tightening up of the

chapters to ensure that there's a good mix of action in with the reflection. In addition, making sure that the motivations of your characters and the stakes of the story are clear will help ensure that your story satisfies.

COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL

You have a great commercial writing style, added to an equally commercial genre and story world. From the pages I have read, and from what you have listed in your synopsis, you seem to be hitting the necessary story beats for a satisfying rom com, and the setting of the [REDACTED] world, with all its evocative elements and sensory details, just adds to the appeal. I would say your novel has the potential to hold strong commercial appeal, and, as long as the rest of the story plays out in a dynamic and satisfying fashion, with a strong emotional trajectory and character arc, I think you'd have a good chance of attracting agent/publisher/reader interest.


POSITIVES

Your prose style is wonderfully descriptive, creating vivid moments and scenes that help your story come alive on the page. Your dialogue is also strong. The characters are colourful and engaging, with two potentially compelling love interests, and from what we see in these pages, and from what is promised in the synopsis, you've got a dynamic and emotionally satisfying storyline here in Emily following her ambition whilst also learning to follow her heart. This is all wonderful work!

STRUCTURE

Obviously I haven't read the whole novel, but from what I can glean from this opening section, and from what is covered in the synopsis, it looks like you have a solid structure. The way you are introducing the love interests as being a natural part of Emily's new role is great. You have some powerful moments of betrayal from Ben, and I enjoyed the idea of Emily working her way to finding herself – and opening her own place – through these different stages of success that are good but not quite enough. Do make sure that all of her motivations feel realistic. It's not clear from the synopsis why she's not progressing things with Damian, for instance, or why she's so seduced by Ben (apart from his obvious hotness and fame). I'll say more on this when I comment briefly on the synopsis at the end of the report.

VOICE, STYLE & DIALOGUE

characterisations, such as the exchange with her friend Verity – “
.” (Pg.38)

echoes natural speech. “ [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]” (Pg.28)

visual scene – ‘

_____." (Pg.3)

Emily's voice is great – likeable and relatable. She can be pleasingly wry– ' [REDACTED] [REDACTED]' (Pg.16) And also a vulnerable mix of doubt and determination – ' [REDACTED] [REDACTED]' (Pg. [REDACTED])

You are very good at creating a strong visual scene – your descriptions bring your story world effortlessly to life and your protagonist's passion for this world is communicated well – ‘[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]’ (Pg.10)

What does need a little bit of tweaking is the amount of reflection, exposition and backstory that is happening in amongst the action of this opening section. While some passages of reflection are useful and necessary in a novel, they need to be placed judiciously for them to have the right impact and not interrupt the flow of the novel. At the moment, it feels like something happens and then the protagonist comments on it. This is leading to a slightly at-arms-length feeling and it slows the pace of the story as we can't get into the scene as deeply when we keep zooming out to get the context/commentary on it.

An example: In the prologue, there's a little too much exposition and reflection. We hear that, '[redacted]' (Pg.3) And then a page later we get a description of how the business started: [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted].' (Pg.4)

If you are going to add exposition into a scene, it's best if it is done in one small chunk so we can get back to the action of the scene as it plays out. But also, ask yourself, does this all need to be told now? Or could it be filtered through the story as we go along? Think about what it is you want to convey in this prologue – perhaps you need to convey the pertinent points – that things are tight for them but that her dad loves what he does and he dreams of having his own [REDACTED] – and then drip feed the rest of it through the main narrative, perhaps as part of your protagonist's 'ghost' (the difficult thing from her past that informs her decisions in the present day). You don't have to get this all out in the prologue. It would be better to spend the time on their interactions and their actions so we can see the love between them, and witness the business he has built.

Do also watch out for doing too much reflecting at the end of chapters. There's a bit of repetition with Emily basically saying the same kinds of thing in different ways, often to end a chapter.

We get: '[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]' (Pg.14)

Then at the end of Chapter One: '[REDACTED]
[REDACTED],

Then at the end of 'Polly & Verity' we get '[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].'

And at the end of Chapter Two '[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].'

If a character sums up her mental state repeatedly at the end of a chapter (or elsewhere), it becomes a bit repetitious and doesn't engage the reader. Try to end more often on a piece of action or dialogue instead.

You favour short sentences. This works well for the fast-paced setting of your story but do make sure you are mixing sentence lengths up a bit to give your novel a pleasing rhythm.

Here's a tweet from a top UK agent that explains what I mean:

<https://twitter.com/JonnyGeller/status/1299742534776893442?s=20&t=fjj8hkcYqyGEZUWjm8xa7Q>

Overall, your prose is in very good shape – the above are just elements for you to look at that will help improve your writing style even further.

WORLDBUILDING

You do a great job of creating a vivid story world that feels brimming with life. The characters, relationships and situations come across strongly. The complications and tensions of the [REDACTED] business are nicely conveyed – ‘[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]’ (Pg.4)

And the deliciousness of this setting makes this piece of writing a real treat. Your descriptions of [REDACTED] are deft, enticing but not overdone – ‘[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]’ (Pg.24) This is all wonderful stuff.

CHARACTERISATION

Emily is a likeable and sympathetic protagonist, and her passion for [REDACTED] and her ambition for the [REDACTED] business make for great motivations and desires for her.

Her attention to detail comes across nicely – ‘[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]’

(Pg.2)

And when she explains what it means to her to work in a [REDACTED], it feels emotionally authentic – ‘[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]’ (Pg.9)

In the scene at the [REDACTED], you have such a fluid way of expressing Emily’s talent for understanding [REDACTED] – ‘[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]’ (Pg.25) I loved her passion for real

This is a clever way of showing that she's interested in what is real, and that at heart she is a grounded and authentic person, which nicely foreshadows her journey as she is torn between 'glory' or 'love.'

" (Pg.19)

██████████' (Pg.2) I'd suggest going back through this and seeing how you might give her a

giving us more of her unfulfilling [REDACTED] life in the opening Chapter.)

Other characters

[REDACTED] (Pg.17)

— [REDACTED]

" (Pg.19) He also beautifully

represents the 'glory' side of what Emily seeks, and what she must eventually reject in favour of something more authentic and real.

The comfortable, wholesome feeling that you create when you introduce Damian, in that equally comfortable and wholesome setting of the [REDACTED] is a wonderful contrast. The reader will find him a great love interest to root for – "[REDACTED]" (Pg.29) And I loved how you introduced him into the story in a way that felt natural. With all of these, plus her quirky, creative friends Polly and Verity, I think you have an engaging and loveable cast of characters here.

PLOTTING & PACING/TENSION

It's a great idea to have Natali fire everyone, clearing the decks and allowing Emily to have a chance at becoming a star [REDACTED]. That said, I do think we need to spend a bit of time with her in her previous role – perhaps just one shift, or the tail end of one, where Natali is getting increasingly furious.

It's important to see this because, when you are going to change a protagonist's life, we need to understand what they had (or lacked) before the inciting incident so that we can appreciate the contrast. By giving us a scene with her as a [REDACTED], perhaps touching on how no-one knows her name, how she's unseen, perhaps her [REDACTED] ideas are rejected or she doesn't even get a chance to suggest them – we can see what she might fall back to if she doesn't succeed in her big chance. This will add more jeopardy to her journey and allow the reader to invest more.

There are some good general stakes in terms of Natali succeeding – "[REDACTED]" (Pg.20)

I do think for the reader to be fully rooting for Emily, we need to get a greater sense of what the personal stakes are. Some of this might be achieved by, as mentioned above, letting us see her in her normal life before she gets this promotion. But can we also see what it is that's at stake?

We know she loves being a pastry chef, so her desire is clear. But a concrete goal for the reader to fix on is always better than a vague goal like 'succeed.'

Might it be that one of the events is flagged up in this early section? In the synopsis you say – 'Natali tells Emily that the company is being featured at [REDACTED]'. Perhaps this could be the 'test' that Emily has to pass and you can flag that up earlier so the reader has something to fix her 'success' on? This would also add a ticking clock which would tighten the tension – Emily has until X to succeed, or she'll be sacked like the rest of them.

And then, once that is secured, what is the concrete thing that Emily is scared of? What is the reader supposed to be worrying about? What are the personal stakes? Might there be a sense that if she fails, it might tarnish her reputation before she's even really begun? Might she fear letting her dad down? After all, if she loses the job she's just back to where she was and this doesn't seem so bad – unless you can establish in the opening that it *is* bad. Whatever it is, the reader needs a concrete idea of what losing this job might entail so that we can hope for and worry about the protagonist.

Similarly, as the story progresses, we need to have a clear idea of what her losing herself in this job will do to her as a person – though presumably this is covered by the Damian romance storyline.

SYNOPSIS

There are some great moments in your synopsis. I love [REDACTED]. 'This is such a great symbol for how, if she goes down this route of pursuing glory at all costs, she risks losing her heart. When we come to, [REDACTED]. [REDACTED].' I like how you planted this earlier when Verity goes to mention it but changes her mind.

Is there something here about fear of ending up like her dad? He's such an important figure in the prologue but we don't get a mention of him in the pages or the synopsis. What is her father's role in the story – is he her cautionary tale? Is it that he was all heart, and he didn't succeed, so she thinks she needs to be more cynical? It feels likely that he plays a role in the novel so a mention of him to explain that's motivating her/scaring her would be useful. Also, you mention a Savannah – it feels like we should have met her, or she would have been mentioned in the early section if she's Emily's mentor.

It is interesting that Emily dares to add her own twists and this is how she succeeds: [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]. However, do make sure this make sense in terms of the trajectory. It feels like there should be a period where she believes she has to follow Ben to succeed. If she's already being true to herself so early in the story, does this leave her character arc far to go?

As mentioned, we do need to understand why she is making the romantic choices she does, and that's not coming across in the synopsis. Why does she not pursue things with Damian? Is he cooling on her because his mum is ill, so she doesn't know he's interested? Or is it that he's available and keen but she chooses Ben – and if so, why? The trajectory of this love story isn't quite coming into focus in the synopsis.

I absolutely love this – [REDACTED]
[REDACTED].'
This is such a great way to show these two as opposites – one who is calculating and cold and the other who is warm and human and full hearted.

PRESENTATION

Your chapter length and presentation are in good shape.

A couple of grammatical points –

Do make sure you are using the correct spelling of 'its' versus 'it's'.

Pg.1- [REDACTED] (Should be its)

Pg.12 - [REDACTED] (Should be **You're.**)

SPECIFIC EDITORIAL POINTS

Pg. 3 – Watch out for repetition within a paragraph:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Pg. 4 – 'He had his pulse on the [REDACTED].'

I think this should be 'his finger on the pulse'?

TOWARDS PUBLICATION

In your submission you say you are not yet sure which route to publication you will pursue. I do think you have something exciting here and, as long as the rest of the novel maintains this momentum and delivers a strong plot and emotional trajectory, I could see you attracting agent/publisher interest with this novel. Similarly, if you chose to go the self-publishing route, your writing is of an accomplished enough standard that I think you could make this route work for you and find readers.

Some attention to the above point will get you to the stage where your work is ready to be put out into the world, whichever route you choose.

FURTHER READING

To make sure you're hitting all the necessary story beats, and to get tips of shining up your MS further, I'd suggest getting hold of Alexandra Sokoloff's book *Stealing Hollywood*. This is a clear and simple guide to the three-act structure and can help you ensure that there's enough happening in each part of your novel to deliver a satisfying story, and that you are creating the strongest and most impactful character arcs.

I'd also suggest checking out similar romances to yours to see how they are constructed, to work out where your book would be positioned in the market, and potentially to use as comps if you decide to pursue the traditional publishing route. Look for books that are set in the food world, or where the romance is between people in the same industry, as well as novels that feel similar in tone and style. A good place to start is the US Amazon Romance chart:

<https://www.amazon.com/Best-Sellers-Romance/zgbs/books/23>

CONCLUSION AND KEY POINTS ROUND UP

You are a talented writer and I think you have a colourful and distinctive novel on your hands here. A little more work to ensure that your writing is in its best possible shape, making sure that the motivations of your protagonist are clearly drawn, particularly when it comes to the romance, will help your novel shine.

You have clearly put a huge amount of love, dedication and hard work into this novel and completing it is already a milestone moment. So many people say they want to write a novel. So few people actually do! So, take a moment to congratulate yourself on all your hard work so far. You have an exciting piece of work on your hands here and any further work will reap dividends.

I wish you well going forwards.

I can be contacted on EMAIL if you have any questions about this report.