

**To:** Ms. Rosemary Stimola, Stimola Literary Studio, 308 Livingston Court, Edgewater NJ 07020  
**From:** Trista Acker  
**Date:** March 2, 2025  
**Subject:** Susan Collins, Developmental edit

Dear Ms. Stimola,

## Introduction

This editorial will be going over the personal design changes that I would recommend to improve the Susan Collins website, particularly the computer version. These changes were made in thought of improving the user experience, accessibility and will, inherently, give more website traction whilst encouraging more users to stay on the website. I will be going over the topics in order of broadest changes overall and then gradually get into smaller critiques.

## Format

One of the main design changes I saw was the columns and rows of text on the pages not being aligned with one another. In order for the website to flow cohesively with the photos, we need to have columns and rows that align. This then allows readers to:

- Comfortably scan the website
- Read without the need to pause and,
- Explore the rest of the website efficiently

A good example of this is displayed in Lee Goldberg's website where he aligned his photos with his text bodies. This will then encourage users to stay on the page for longer.

## Centering

Another design critique I believe would improve the website would be to get rid of the centering and to condense the longer paragraphs into a more user friendly experience. Centering sentences makes scanning more difficult for readers to effectively look over the website because users, especially avid readers, are so used to reading from left to right.

## Condensing

Condensing the paragraphs also allows readers to scan the website without being too overwhelmed. Users are most likely not going to read larger chunks of information, therefore, keeping paragraphs shorter will allow users to scan the pages to find what they are looking for more effectively. A good example is shown throughout Meg Cabot's website where she shows off her books by having designated paragraph chunks.

## **Visuals**

I always urge the use of color in every website, however, I believe the choices of color used throughout the website could be improved. When discussing color pallets, it is important to not have colors that distract the audience from focusing on the content. The orange can slightly divert the audience because of its vibrance.

Then, with the addition of the light grey text, this makes it more difficult for users to read the information, due to the low contrast. Neil Gaiman shows off the high contrast aspect well with his website having a dark brown with the white background.

## **Accessibility**

Changing your colors to something that contrasts more will not only help out your users, but will also improve your accessibility to people who can't read as well. Other ways you can improve accessibility include:

- Text to voice options
- High contrast modes
- Multi Language categories and,
- Options for text resizing

## **Functionality**

Lastly, the changes I would make to the Susan Collins website would be to include links to buy the books presented on the website. There are many review pages for the books but, if a user would like to purchase one of them, there aren't any links to take consumers to a place to purchase them. Allowing users quick access to purchasing the books will improve traction by allowing the website to be a backlink to the actual purchasing website for the books.

## **Conclusion**

Making these formal changes to the Susan Collins website improves the functionality of the site as a whole and will increase the likelihood of users spending more time on the website in general. These changes will also help users with accessibility issues by increasing the contrast and readability. These differences will help users with any content questions and will push them to get involved as well.

I am looking forward to hearing your feedback,

Trista Acker