

Spaceballs - Editors Report - Developmental Editing - BubbleCow

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Understanding Your Feedback

Before I launch into more detailed feedback, I thought I'd review how the edit has been structured.

You will have downloaded two files:

1. The edited manuscript.
2. The editor's report.

The first is your original manuscript but now contains detailed editorial notes. This is a Word document and contains both comments and tracked changes. If you don't use Word, don't worry; most modern word processing packages have the ability to 'read' Word manuscripts. Alternatively, you can download this excellent word processing software for free - [LibreOffice](#). If you are having problems seeing your feedback, just let us know.

Before you dive into the edit, I think it will help if you understand the ethos behind BubbleCow's approach to providing feedback.

The approach is to provide clear and truthful feedback. If we see a problem, this will not only be highlighted. But at least one potential solution is provided. There are two types of feedback, those based on clear editorial best practices (e.g., showing, not telling) and those based on the editor's opinion. When a suggestion is based on opinion, it will be indicated. We see the edited manuscript's role in offering specific, actionable feedback on sentence/paragraph problems. You should be able to apply the suggestions made on a line-by-line basis without any real wider knowledge.

The role of the editor's report is to provide a wider overview of the editing process. This means that if we have made changes to the manuscript that require a deeper rationale, these have been outlined and explained in the report.

One way to consider the two documents is to see the report as the wider instructions and the manuscript as the practical application. You should be able to start each editing session by reading the editor's report before diving into the specific section of the manuscript.

Using Tracked Changes

Tracked changes are like magic. Once they are turned on, they record everything that happens to your manuscript. You then can go in and 'accept' or 'reject' the changes as you see fit.

The way the tracked changes appear on your machine will vary depending on your machine and software setup. Typically, they will show the original text removed in red and the new text replacing it in black. However, depending on your settings, this will sometimes be the case. For example, in manuscripts requiring a large number of alterations, it is common for an editor to 'turn off' the original text and only show the changes.

If you are having problems seeing the tracked changes, the first place to look is your settings; the two important elements are: 'simple markup' and 'all markup'. If using Word, I suggest you look in the 'review' section of the ribbon at the top of your manuscript and ensure that you have set the markup to 'all markup'. This way, you can see all the possible changes.

The video below will give you a more in-depth view of tracked changes and comments:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUf-lxzXyVk>

Edited Manuscript

When you first open the edited manuscript, you may feel overwhelmed by the number of alterations. This is normal.

The manuscript contains my tracked changes and comments explaining the rationale behind these changes. In some cases, I've re-written passages or removed whole sections, but where I've done so, I've sought to explain my thinking using comments. Where possible, I have also highlighted sections I feel work well.

The real power of tracked changes is that if you disagree with the comment or change, you can just 'reject' what I've said and carry on.

Whenever I've identified a persistent problem, I've stopped explaining any future changes within the comments and have just made the change instead. Where this is the case, I have written an explanation for my rationale behind the changes in the editor's report. You'll need to read the comments I've left and review the changes, accepting or rejecting them as you see fit.

Editor's Report

The editor's report should be read first and is designed to ease you into the editing process by providing an overview and explanation. The aim is for you to use the feedback in both the manuscript and this report as a means of formulating a plan to elevate your manuscript to the next level.

I've split the report into several sections...

Typographical and Stylistic Summary

You'll find a summary of your book's typographical and stylistic details, which lists things such as what form of English your book is written in, how you're writing out times, whether you're using the Oxford comma or not, etc. This section is useful as it collates information and is a future reference. It will also help you enforce a level of consistency in your book.

Strengths and Weaknesses

You'll find pointers that will give you an overview of what I think are the manuscript's key strengths and weaknesses. If they're turning up here, they are some of the manuscript's biggest and most persistent problems and will need addressing before any others. I explain the problem, how it is manifested in your book, and why it is a problem. I'll also suggest at least one possible solution.

Chapter Feedback

This section contains feedback specific to each chapter. The depth and detail of this feedback will vary depending on the issues encountered. This feedback is designed to be actionable but should also be read in conjugated with more general feedback and embedded notes in your manuscript.

Please note: I've approached your book from the point of view of a new reader. This means that I may comment early on but then change my mind. This should give you a good indication of how a reader will be responding to the story and any confusion they may have. It should also help you to see my thinking process. Feedback has indicated that this can be very helpful for some authors.

Summary

Please remember that all the comments and changes come from a place of support, not criticism. I want to make the book the best it can be, as you do. I'm not here to cast judgment or project my own preferences. My role is to help nudge your writing style toward a place that will create the best possible reading experience.

Our goal is to produce better books and better writers.

Finally, once you delve into the feedback, I'd suggest you read the notes and then take a day or two to absorb what I've suggested. If you disagree with any changes, that's fine, but please do take a little time to think them over before getting back to me. If, after this 'cooling-off period'

you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to email me at gary@bubblecow.com.

Notes on the Edited Manuscript

Below is a list of general comments about your manuscript.

Please note that many of these changes have been made to help in the eBook conversion process. This process often involves using the original manuscript's formatting to help 'set' the formatting of the eBook. However, this can be problematic. I have, therefore, made some changes to help negate any potential future issues.

- I've run a basic spelling and grammar check. I've carefully made the alterations I felt were needed. This is not a proofread but will add some level of consistency to your book.
- I have replaced double spaces with single spaces. This was to eliminate any unwanted 'white space', which is often removed during the eBook conversion process.
- I've set the line spacing to 1.5 lines. This helps with readability.
- I've added page breaks at the end of chapters. This will help with digital conversion.
- Ellipses have been formatted as ... (dot dot dot), not . . . (dot space dot space dot space).

Stylistic and Typographical Summary

Below is a list of changes that have been made to help with readability and add consistency.

Language

American English

Numeric Notation

Spell out whole numbers up to (and including) one hundred (e.g., zero, one, ten, ninety-six, 104). Spell out numbers that begin a sentence unless it begins with a year (e.g., "Twelve drummers," "The ten lords a-leaping," "2011's quota for off-season holiday references has been filled.").

Spell out ordinal numbers up to (and including) "hundredth" (e.g., second, sixty-first, 333rd, 1,024th).

If you're juggling a bunch of numbers within the same paragraph or series of paragraphs, be flexible with the number style if doing so will improve clarity and comprehension. For example, use one number style for items in one category and another style for another category: "I read four books with more than 400 pages, sixty books with more than 100 pages, and a hundred articles with less than 4 pages."

Speech Marks

Double for direct, single for reported.

Oxford Comma

No

Narrative Perspective

First-person.

Strengths and Weaknesses

This section contains specific feedback about elements of your book that are immediately actionable. I have strived not only to explain any problems I have encountered but also to provide at least one solution you can apply to your book.

In summary, the main issue is a lack of more intense tension with the main character. I feel that by layering in this tension, you will create a much more compelling narrative. I also feel that you need to pay a little more attention to how you use description to control pace and build your world. I would have liked you to vary the way you are starting several chapters, and I have made some detailed suggestions below. Finally, I would like you to consider the way in which you are using physical breaks and try to find ways that these can be reduced.

Needs More Tension

Your story has a natural narrative arc, that being the progression to the play offs. In addition to this, you have several sub-plots that also add tension. This is good and does a lot of the heavy lifting in regard to the narrative structure. However, I feel that you are missing one key element.

I want you to establish at the start of the story that it was **ESSENTIAL** for the main character to win the play offs. I wanted you to create a situation at the start of the story where the main character was in dire straits. The offer to manage the team is a way out of this problem. I wasn't that bothered what the problem was, but it needs to be clearly established. You need to ensure that the reader is fully aware of:

- The problem.
- The steps required to overcome the problem.
- The consequences of failing to overcome the problem.

In an ideal world the consequences of failure would be death. This means that every game becomes of matter of life or death for the main character. The reader will be constantly aware

that if the main character fails he dies.

If you are able to do this, then you can create an additional layer of tension, which will hook and engage the reader.

This brings us to Chapter 10. In this chapter the main character is presented with a contract. I wanted two things to happen:

1. The contract to contain a clause that messes with the main character and ups the stakes for failure. The clause should remove any hope of succeeding unless they win the playoffs.
2. The main character is forced to sign the contract. This will add yet another layer of tension to the story.

Having established this personal tension for the main character, you then need to take steps to remind the reader of the situation as the story progresses. Two or three times you need to create scenes or conversations where the reader is shown, yet again, the problem and the consequences of failure.

Importance of Description

We have discussed the importance of description several times so I will focus my comments on the areas that are critical for this book.

Description for Pacing

You know that it is essential to include description for each new location and character. You also know that each new scene should have a location description to allow the reader to picture the scene. I want to add to this the use of description for pacing.

There were several times in this book where you allowed the pace to move too quickly. This is common with sports scenes. I would urge you to include more detailed description for the places where the pace is too fast. You will find that by including the occasional prolonged section of description you will be able to control the pace. You will also be able to add a sort of 'light and dark' to the descriptive journey. This is important when describing sports events, where you can allow the pace to quicken at key moments and slow (more description) when less important.

Description for World Building

When building a world description becomes a critical tool, it allows you to not only painted a scene but also focus on the differences. You can use character and location description to extend and enhance your world building.

For example...

Chapter 2 is made up of a number of sections, each with the main character looking for a new player. I wanted you to do something a little different. I wanted each of these sections to be a new chapter.

However, you need to...

- Improve the world building in each chapter so the reader is getting more of a feel for the world as they read. Include more description of the character, the location and the details of the locations. Take a moment on drill down on the small details that tell a story about the world. For example, imagine you are looking at a train and each seat contains a port to allow a traveler to recharge their gadgets. This small detail tells a story about the wider world.
- In the Luci chapter, I want you to do it differently. Rather than passing the backstory of the wedding and affair via narration, pass it via speech. I would have her attack the main character and then start to reveal that they are married via the interaction between the two people. If you are struggling to fill in the blanks, you can have a third character witness the events and ask questions that allow you to further fill in the information. This way the scene becomes much more engaging. The reader is discovering the backstory as it is slowly revealed.

Chapter Starts

At the start of chapters you often have the main character summarizing what has happened. Sometimes this works well, especially if you are just moving the plot forward a small amount, but this is not always the case.

I noticed that on at least one occasion, you were passing too much information via the narrative summary. In these cases I wanted you to find a way to pass the same information via dialogue. I had a few ideas:

- Talking to a reported. This would work well post-game where the main character is reporting events. This also means that you can discuss things that happened in the game without having to detail them in the action.
- Talking to a team mate. This would allow the main character to pass and explain information.
- Talking to a confidant (e.g. Laura). This would allow the main character to discuss events and items that he might not share with other characters.

Using a mixture of narrative summary and dialogue would not only allow the reader to experience the backstory in refreshing ways, but it would also mean that the chapters don't feel repetitive.

Physical Breaks

This is a fairly simple comment. I noticed that you have an over reliance on physical breaks within chapters. As a rule, you should try to use as few breaks as possible. I have tried to remove breaks where it makes sense and you should also do the same.

One tip I would offer is to consider why you are using a break, they should be restricted to the following:

- Moving ahead in time.
- Moving scene.

If the jump ahead or the shift in scene is not too great, they consider lining the two sections with a 'traveling' paragraph and removing the break.

In addition, when you are thinking of a break, ask yourself if you actually need to start a new chapter. This is an established structural format and something that would be more consistent.

Chapter Feedback

This section contains specific feedback about your chapters. This feedback is in addition to the Specific Feedback.

Chapter 1

Woken from hibernation. Speaks to Paul Chippers and asked to form a team.

- There are a couple of things that you need to add to this section. The first is leaving the main character with no choice but to except the job. The reader must be clear what this is. It might be something like he is being shipped off to war or a prison colony and this offer provides a way out. It might also be that it gives him a chance to fulfill a dream and return to the sport. In addition to this, it must be clear what bad thing he faces if he fails. So, for example, let's say that he is being shipped to a prison planet and is offered the job. He takes it since it is a no-brainer. However, it might be the case that if he fails to win the cup, he will be sent back. If he wins, he gets his freedom. The reader must be aware of the goal, the price of success but also the consequence of failure.
- I move the start of Chapter 2 to the end of Chapter 1.

Chapter 2

Meet Crazy Eddie. Meet Luci.

- In this chapter, I wanted you to start with an interaction with Chippers. I wanted him to turn up at the prison and then refuse to let him see the prisoner. The main character then contacts Chippers and he works his magic. Suddenly they are very accommodating and more than happy to let him talk to Eddie.
- I have made more of a note about this above, but I wanted each of these sections to be a new chapter with more detailed world building.
- I would remove the backstory about the marriage and, instead, keep it hidden from the reader until you can introduce it via conversation. This will be more engaging for the reader.
- Luci needs more of a reason to agree. the money is good but there needs to be an emotional element. Perhaps she wants him to agree to divorce that is not in his favour, and, maybe, agree never to see her again or some such thing. You need there to be a much stronger motivation. If it is just the money, then she needs a reason in addition. Perhaps she is in debt and this will solve her problem.

Chapter 3

Finds Kissy Kissy.

- In this chapter you start at the gate and then add in details on how the main character got there. I think it would be better to just start with him talking to Chippers, securing the pass and then arranging the travel. I think this approach would have been far more effective. It would have allowed world building and let you control the pace more effectively.
- I was not sure why Kissy agreed to join the team. I wanted the scene to work a little differently. I wanted the main character to work out what was motivating Kissy and then offer that in return for her to join. It might have simply been money. This might have been Kissy's motivation; perhaps it is just another business transaction for her.
- I moved the end of this chapter to the start of the next.

Chapter 4

Gets shot. Hospital. Bucky getting married. Mall.

- In this chapter, I would try to avoid the jump forward in time. Instead, I would have him pass out after being shot and then wake up after treatment. You can add world building for the hospital and then have him meet Bucky.

Chapter 5

Visits Kornerstone looking for players. Fight.

- Good chapter but there are a few places where you need to add in a little more description to help control the pace.

Chapter 6

Gets death threat. Makes a deal. Spaceship appears.

- As with the previous chapter your writing would benefit from more location description to help with world building. You don't need a lot but enough to add flavour would really help.

Chapter 7

Try outs. Captain Bartholomew. using mines. Laura. Deadly sex robot. Try to kill the coach.

- The arena is OK but it needs more description. You are building a brand new world for the reader and that means more focus on the elements that are now and different. If you are able to provide more description, they will be able to picture the scene in their mind's eye.
- This chapter has several breaks. This is not 'wrong' but it would be better to reduce the number if possible. The best way to do this is to make each section longer and try to combine the sections. An alternative would be to split the sections into their own chapters. The risk you run by doing this is that you produce a lot of small chapters, which leaves the book feeling disjointed.

Chapter 8

Worries about the crates. Dexter. Kicking the ball.

- I am trying to reduce the number of breaks. I feel they are excessive and not really needed. I think it is better to have once consistent chapter where possible.
- There is a moment in this chapter where it is possible to describe the spaceball court without seemingly being forced. I have indicated the section and suggest you expand the description.
- I wondered if you could add is a small sub-plot where they try to keep the horny teenager away from the sex robot. Perhaps he obsessed with her breasts. You would have to not make it overtly sexual but you could make it more playful.

Chapter 9

Room. Jint, then Laura shows up.

- This is a good chapter, the dialogue is excellent and it really pulls the reader through the story.

Chapter 10

Maurice. Contract.

- I wanted there to be something in the contract that would create more tension, see my notes above. I would have him sign the contract to ramp up the tension.

Chapter 11

Team talk. New suit. Dexter. Memory.

- Good chapter. There are a few places where adding in extra location description will help to control the pace, allow the reader to connect and also help with world-building.

Chapter 12

Spaceball field. Puts on suit. Game.

- Describing sports events is notoriously difficult. Therefore, you need to start describing the field and contestants as soon and in as much detail as possible. From the first moment you need to be establishing the location and then adjusting on a regular basis. This way, the reader can keep up with the changing scene.
- This chapter has a lot of breaks, I have tried to reduce these as much as possible. It would be better if you were able to reduce as many of the breaks as you can, since this helps the chapter to flow.

Chapter 13

Kissy upset after nearly being killed. Bucky's apartment trashed. Knocked out. Blown up.

- The opening section to this chapter is telling, not showing. The problem is that the narrator is passing the story, it would be better to have this in conversation. I had the idea that they were being interviewed and this would then allow you to pass all this information in dialogue.
- I wondered if you could make more of the robot serial killer. Perhaps have him asking around and being mentioned in some way. It seems a shame that the attempted murder happens 'off page', but I don't see how you can get around this in first person. This said, it might have been more impactful if the reader 'meets' the potential killer in the chapters prior.

Chapter 14

Game with Bulldogs. Talk to Kissy.

- The opening pace is too fast. I don't think you should be describing the game, but I do think that you need to slow the pace and allow the reader to adjust. My advice is that you expand the description of the two teams on the field when the scene is first introduced. This will allow the reader to paint a picture and you to control the pace.
- As with the other chapters, I have tried to reduce the number of breaks where possible. It is better to have fewer breaks since it improves readability.

Chapter 15

Peter Henshaw. Stolen suits. Sends agent on ship. Kiss.

- This chapter works well, the dialogue is driving it forward. I have made a few alterations and there are a couple of places that would benefit from more description.

Chapter 16

Post-sex. Backstory of Universe.

- I removed the start of this chapter and moved it to the end of the previous chapter. I think this reads better. It moves the big jump in time to start of the chapter.

Chapter 17

Game with Milkmaids. Jint worries about son. Talk to Crazy Eddie. Janine.

- There is a note at the start of the chapter that you need to add more information.
- There is a lot of information passed in the opening part of this chapter. The main character is telling the reader about what has happened and the team they are about to play. It would have been better if this could have been passed in conversation. perhaps he's briefing his second in command about the team or some similar conversation. This way, the reader is passed the information via conversation not narrative summary.

Chapter 18

The Bookie. Talk to Laura.

- Good chapter. I have indicated a few places you need more description, but nothing significant.

Chapter 19

Man with backpack.

- Good chapter, stranger but good :)

Chapter 20

Looking for Dexter Cribbens. The Scorpion Lady.

- Good chapter.

Chapter 21

Check messages. Kiera.

- Good chapter. However, I do feel that chapters 20 and 21 could be combined. This is not essential but it feels these are both the same storyline.

Chapter 22

Stronghold attack.

- There are a few places in this chapter where you are moving conversation into the narrative summary. This breaks immersion. I have indicated where these sections should be written out in full.

Chapter 23

Meeting and fight. Dexter and Mabel captured. Flash bang, try to rescue Mabel.

- The opening to this chapter is too much telling. You just tell the reader what is happening. You need to rewrite the opening section so you are describing the event in more detail; showing rather than telling.

Chapter 24

Back to ship.

- There are sections of this chapter that need work.

Chapter 25

Dexter back on team. Might be barred.

- I like the this chapter and the added tension of being barred. However, this gains more impact if the main character has a pressing need to win the play offs. See my note above.

Chapter 26

Play offs. Listen to Bee chatter. Kissy onto ship. Hive cluster arrives.

- The pace to this chapter is too fast. You are jumping right into the action. My advice is that you build the tension with more description of the location and action. Describe the teams and the pomp of the build up. Really lean into the spectacle of the event.
- There are a number of placeholder sections in this chapter that need fixing.