Fontainebleau - Editors Report - Developmental Editing - BubbleCow

Editor: Gary Smailes

Completed: Add the date completion

## Understanding Your Feedback

Before I launch into more detailed feedback, I thought I’d run through 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. The second is this file, which contains the thoughts of your editor.

These are Word documents and contain 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.

If you are having problems opening your files, you can download this excellent word processing software for free - [LibreOffice](https://www.libreoffice.org/).

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

We see the role of the edited manuscript to be that it offers specific, actionable feedback on a sentence/paragraph level 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

If you are comfortable with comments and tracked changes, then you can jump ahead to the next section (‘Edited Manuscript’).

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

Comments are the little ‘speech’ bubbles that appear on the side of your manuscript. These allow your editor to add their thoughts and, in the process, allow you to ‘see’ the editing process.

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

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

### Edited Manuscript

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

The manuscript contains both 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 instead just made the change. Where this is the case, I have written out 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 in 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 Details

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 serves as a future reference. It will also help you enforce a level of consistency on your book.

#### Strengths and Weaknesses

You’ll also 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’ll explain what the problem is, how it is manifested in your book, and why it is a problem. I’ll also suggest at least one possible solution.

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

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 judgement or project my own preferences. In fact, my role is to help nudge your writing style towards 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 cool-off period you have any questions or comments, please don’t hesitate to email me at [gary@bubblecow.com](mailto:gary@bubblecow.com).

## Notes on the Edited Manuscript

Below is a list of general comments about your manuscript.

Please note, many of these changes have been made to help in the eBook conversion process. This process often involves the use of 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

British 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.

## Strengths and Weaknesses

I really enjoyed this version of your book. Here's what found particularly interesting:

**Successful Non-Fiction Transition**: The most notable achievement of this book is its seamless transition from a fictional narrative to a non-fiction format. You have managed to maintain the allure of storytelling while providing valuable insights and information about the setting and culture of Spain. This blending of genres is executed flawlessly and sets the book apart in the non-fiction genre.

**Dual Characterization**: A unique aspect of this book is the presence of two distinct characters - the protagonist and the hotel. These entities are brought to life in such a way that they become central figures in the narrative. The reader forms a deep connection with both, and their development throughout the book is masterfully executed.

**Confident and Engaging Writing Voice**: Your writing voice exudes confidence and captivates the reader from the very beginning. This engaging style not only keeps the reader engrossed but also enhances the overall reading experience. It is evident that you are well-versed in their subject matter, which adds to the book's credibility.

**Clever Mix of Storytelling and Nostalgia**: One of the book's standout qualities is its ability to evoke a sense of nostalgia while telling a compelling story. The inclusion of nostalgia adds depth to the narrative, allowing readers to connect with the experiences and emotions of the characters.

**Cultural Integration**: The book successfully weaves the rich culture of the Spanish setting into the story. It doesn't merely serve as a backdrop but becomes an integral part of the narrative. This cultural immersion enriches the reading experience, making readers feel as if they are exploring Spain alongside the characters.

**Fully Formed Three-Dimensional Characters**: The characters in the book are not mere placeholders but fully formed and three-dimensional. Their complexity and relatability make them come alive on the pages. Readers will find themselves emotionally invested in their journeys.

This said, there were still a few elements that need addressing:

**Main Character's Emotional Arc**: While the main character is well-developed and three-dimensional, there is room for improvement in terms of the emotional arc. It would greatly benefit the narrative if the character's goals were clearly defined from the outset. This will provide readers with a stronger sense of purpose and direction for the protagonist, allowing them to better connect with and root for the character throughout their journey.

**Financial Problems of the Hotel**: The financial problems of the hotel, being one of the central elements in the narrative, require more attention and exploration. To enhance the book, consider delving deeper into the specifics of these financial challenges. This could involve providing more context, details, and perhaps even historical background related to the hotel's financial struggles. This added depth will not only make the story more engaging but also enable readers to better understand the significance of these challenges to the overall narrative.

### Main Character's Emotional Arc

The main character in the book is undoubtedly a well-crafted individual, and his physical journey throughout the narrative is clear and compelling. However, to truly enrich his emotional arc and make it resonate with readers, a few essential elements need to be addressed.

In the opening chapters, it is crucial to establish why the protagonist is unhappy in the UK. Readers need to delve into the depths of his dissatisfaction, understanding the root causes that drive him to seek a life-changing adventure in Spain. Is it the monotony of his daily routine, unfulfilling work, or a sense of longing for something more? These initial chapters should paint a vivid picture of his discontentment, setting the stage for his transformation.

To strengthen his emotional arc, it is imperative to illustrate what he believes happiness looks like. This can be achieved through both conversations with other characters and his internal dialogue. Readers should gain insight into his aspirations, and one pivotal image could be his desire to own a house bathed in the warm Spanish sun. This visual representation becomes a symbol of his dreams and what he believes will bring him happiness.

Furthermore, the narrative should clearly establish the steps he envisions to reach this goal. These steps, predominantly financial in nature, might include savings targets, investment plans, or a vision of his career path. Additionally, the idea of a family could be intertwined with his vision of happiness, amplifying the emotional stakes. This provides readers with a roadmap of his ambitions and sets the tone for the journey ahead.

Once the reader is crystal clear about what happiness looks like for the protagonist, the story can organically unfold. The reader becomes emotionally invested in his pursuit of this vision, creating a strong bond with the character.

In the final chapters, as the protagonist nears the realization of his dream, it's essential to introduce moments of intense doubt and seemingly insurmountable obstacles. The first of these challenges could be his return to the UK, where the familiarity of his old life threatens to pull him back. This creates a moment of internal conflict that tests his commitment to his newfound path.

The second significant obstacle should be closely linked to the failing hotel and financial issues. This can be a culmination of the struggles he faces along his journey. As the dream teeters on the edge of collapse, readers will share in his desperation, making the ultimate achievement of his goal all the more satisfying.

By addressing these aspects of the main character's emotional arc, the narrative will resonate more deeply with readers, creating a compelling and emotionally charged journey of transformation and fulfillment.

### Financial Problems for the Hotel

The financial plight of the hotel is a pivotal element in the narrative, and its portrayal must be carefully orchestrated to create a sense of constant tension and suspense throughout the book. From the very start, it should be abundantly clear that the hotel is teetering on the brink of financial disaster. Readers must grasp the precariousness of the situation, understanding that the hotel's survival is hanging by a thread. This sense of impending doom should permeate the early chapters, setting a somber tone and highlighting the urgency of the situation.

Each passing season should only amplify the struggle. As the story unfolds, it should appear that the hotel is barely scraping through, with each financial victory overshadowed by the looming uncertainty of the approaching winter. This cycle of hope followed by despair serves to intensify the reader's apprehension, keeping them engaged and invested in the hotel's fate.

While the father may initially keep the full extent of the financial struggle a secret, the underlying tension should remain palpable. Subtle hints and glimpses of financial difficulties should be sprinkled throughout the first half of the book, leaving readers with a nagging sense that something is amiss.

In the middle of the story, the full nature of the problem comes to light, casting a dark shadow over the hotel's prospects. Moments of crisis and despair should abound, making it seem as though everything is on the verge of collapse. These tumultuous periods keep the reader on edge, wondering if the hotel can ever overcome these seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

The latter part of the book, particularly from the protagonist's retirement onwards, should focus on the steps he takes to improve the hotel's finances. Incremental progress should be evident, with each passing month bringing about positive changes. Readers should witness a gradual upturn in the hotel's fortunes, and with each chapter, the tension should heighten as the financial situation improves. This steady buildup of momentum leads to the final chapters, where the hotel experiences a significant turnaround, flourishing and thriving.

This carefully orchestrated narrative of financial struggle, tension, and ultimate triumph serves as a powerful driving force, compelling readers to eagerly turn the pages, eager to see if the hotel can indeed emerge from the brink of collapse to achieve financial success.

### Moments the Pacing is Off

Pacing is a crucial element in storytelling, determining the speed at which the narrative unfolds and the reader's engagement. In this non-fiction book set in Spain, there are two instances where the pacing feels rushed, leaving readers wanting for more depth and clarity.

The first of these moments occurs in Chapter 32. Here, there is a sudden mention of a debt being repaid, seemingly out of nowhere. This development lacks adequate explanation and leaves readers wondering how such a significant financial shift has occurred. To rectify this, the narrative needs to provide a clearer depiction of the steps taken to address this debt, the changes that have transpired to make repayment possible, and the impact of this action on the overall financial situation. By delving into these details, the reader gains a deeper understanding of the character's financial journey and the significance of this pivotal moment.

The second pacing issue arises in Chapter 40 when the main character returns to the UK. This section feels rushed, and the narrative lacks the emotional depth required for a significant turning point. To rectify this, it is essential to add more detail to this portion of the story. The reader should be able to feel the weight of the character's failure and the crushing sense of distance from his dream of living in the sun. The character's internal turmoil, regrets, and sense of desolation should be vividly portrayed, allowing readers to empathize with his struggle and disappointment. By slowing down the pacing and exploring the character's emotional journey in more depth, this pivotal moment becomes more impactful and emotionally resonant.

By addressing these pacing issues in Chapter 32 and Chapter 40, the narrative gains greater depth and clarity, allowing readers to fully immerse themselves in the character's financial and emotional journey, and enhancing their overall engagement with the story.

## Introduction?

Introducing a non-fiction book, especially one as rich and captivating as the tale of a man who embarked on a life-changing journey to Spain in the 1970s to purchase a hotel, can greatly enhance the reader's engagement and understanding of the narrative. This introduction serves as the gateway into a world of dreams, challenges, and triumphs that lie ahead.

The story of this man's transformation and the acquisition of the hotel is one that captivates readers with its vivid portrayal of life in Spain during the 1970s. As the reader embarks on this journey, it is only fitting to provide a brief glimpse into the author's background and motivation behind penning this remarkable tale.

The introduction can offer a glimpse into the author's own life before this pivotal decision, providing insight into what led him to leave his previous life and embark on this adventure. This context helps readers connect with the author on a personal level and understand the motivations behind the narrative. Additionally, an introduction can set the stage for the reader by offering a glimpse into the cultural, social, and historical backdrop of Spain during the 1970s. It can provide a brief overview of the political climate, the social dynamics, and the economic conditions, which will help readers contextualize the events and challenges that unfold in the book.

Moreover, it is an opportunity to create a sense of anticipation, drawing readers in with the promise of a captivating story of transformation, personal growth, and the pursuit of happiness in a foreign land.

### What happened to David Wilkes?

David Wilkes, a character who once held a prominent role in the initial version of the book, has seen his presence diminish in the current narrative. However, recognizing his potential to enrich the story, it is worth revisiting and redeveloping his character to breathe new life into the tale.

In the initial version, David Wilkes was a strong and impactful figure, leaving a lasting impression on readers. To harness this potential further, consider reintroducing him into the narrative with more substantial interactions. His role can be expanded, allowing readers to become more deeply acquainted with his character and his dynamic with the main character. One way to achieve this is to emphasize the significance of David Wilkes' book within the context of the story. His work could be portrayed as a catalyst or a source of inspiration for the main character, contributing in some way to the eventual success of the hotel. This connection adds depth to David Wilkes' character and underscores the role he plays in the protagonist's journey.

## Chapter Feedback

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

### Chapter 1

* I have made some alteration to the opening section of this chapter. I have tightened the information and tried to pull the reader into the story.
* I wanted you to say something about just how important a collection of records was to the DJ business at the time. Only by having a good collection where you able to ensure that you could do a good job. This is not, of course, the case now where DJs can just plug in Spotify.

### Chapter 2

* I have moved the star of this chapter to the end of the previous chapter. I think it reads better.
* I wanted you to mention something about the growing trend towards package holidays. Buying the hotel might have seems crazy in the short term, but it was certainly benefiting on a growing trend. The next ten, or so, years would see holidays in Spain becoming common for the aspirational working class of Maggie's Britain.

### Chapter 3

* I liked this chapter. The section at the end of the chapter works better in narrative non-fiction than it would have in fiction. It is now the narrator simply telling the reader the history of the town, this is much more inline with the reader's expectations.

### Chapter 4

* This is the first time we see the hotel. The thing is that the hotel is almost like a character in the book and, therefore, needs sufficient description. I wanted you to try and layer in as much description as possible in this chapter. This will establish the hotel and give you an image to build on in the future chapters.
* The interactions between the brothers is much clearer now. In the first version, it was never clear that they have previously fallen out.

### Chapter 5

* This chapter opens in the bar, this is a chance to establish what the bar looks like and layer in more description.

### Chapter 6

* The opening of this chapter is the perfect example of where you can build more of a picture of the hotel. In this case, you can create an image of the dining room. These's also a little bit later where you can layer in more description.

### Chapter 7 and 8

* Good chapters with solid storytelling, nothing new to add.

### Chapter 9

* I think this chapter works really well. You have managed to capture a very particular type of person from the British working class of that time.

### Chapter 10

* I wanted you to make more of the initial interaction between the Wings guy and the chef. You should describe how they are acting without any explanation. You need to let the reader work it out and slowly twig that there's a growing relationship.

### Chapter 11

* At the start of this chapter you talk about becoming more efficient. This is good, however, I wanted you to show the reader rather than tell them. Describe the new layout and, perhaps, new equipment, show the reader how they were becoming more professional.

### Chapter 12

* The hotel is a character in your book. It needs to be ever present. The start of this chapter is a good example of where you need to add more detail to the location of the hotel. This will allow the reader to picture the scene more clearly and really cement the image of the hotel in their mind's eye.

### Chapter 13 & 14

* Good chapters, nothing to add.

### Chapter 15

* This is the first chapter that you hint at money being a potential issue for the hotel. This is something that was developed in the novel but it not present in this version. See my editor's note above.

### Chapter 16

* This is a the first chapter where you fit the finances head on. However, as you will see from my editor's note, I think that you should make it clearer to the reader that money is an issue. I don't think that you need to say outright that finances are a problems in earlier chapters, but I do feel that you need to mention two or three times that the hotel is struggling to break even. This will create a low level tension and then allow this chapter to have a greater impact.

### Chapter 17

* Good chapter. I think it might have been good to have the dad say something like - 'if business fails to pick up soon we will all be heading back to England.'

### Chapter 18

* I have noticed that you often use 'said' when asking questions in dialogue. This should be 'asked'. I have changed this when i find it but keep an eye out in later rereads.

### Chapter 19

* Good chapter, nothing to add.

### Chapter 20

* There's a moment in this chapter where you move between scenes but don't add any new location or character description. You don't need much but you do need some to allow the reader to adjust.

### Chapter 21 and 22

* Good chapters with nothing to add.

### Chapter 23

* This is good but remember any non-English speech should be in italics. I have altered this in this chapter. This is something to keep in mind for rereads etc.

### Chapter 24

* I wanted you to open the chapter with a better description of the writer. He has only been in one scene and I wanted you to remind the reader about the character and his appearance.

### Chapter 25

* Good chapter. There's a few places where you need to put the Spanish words into italics.

### Chapter 26

* You need to add a better character description of Lucia, she's an important character.
* Ensure that you are putting Spanish in italics.

### Chapter 27

* This is the one of the few chances you get to describe the village, add a more detailed description.

### Chapter 28

* Good chapter. I always like when you saw insights into the local culture and habits. I think these things are fascinating to the reader, especially an English reader.

## Chapter 29

* I loved the insight into a Spanish celebration but the crash back to reality with the sale of the Rolls at the end of the chapter works really well.

### Chapter 30

* Good chapter.

### Chapter 31

* Be careful with the capatilsation of Dad.

### Chapter 32

* In the previous chapters, you are talking about money being a problem, but, suddenly, in this chapter the debt is repaid. What changed?

### Chapter 33

* Good chapter.

### Chapter 34

* I think that you are ok in most of this chapter with minimal description. However, when he goes to the bathroom to fix a problem you need to layer in better description to allow the reader to picture the scene.
* I wanted you to make more of the drain situation. My brother often tells me stories of the way the Spanish drainage system fails. I think its common place for the system to be badly designed. he also jokes that the first rain of the year brings loads of jobs as the drains laid during the summer start to fail.

### Chapter 35

* Good chapter.

### Chapter 36

* This chapter is good and I think it is natural that he is thinking about going back to the UK. However, I don't think you have managed to lay out what the main character is looking for in life and what he thinks happiness looks like. If the reader knows, then these types of choices make mire sense. I have wrote more about this above.

### Chapter 37

* Good chapter.

### Chapter 38

* In the driving test section provide a better description of the location. This is a chance for the reader to be able to picture Malaga and the surrounding area.

### Chapter 39

* At the start of this chapter you talk about the lack of guests. I wanted to know why the drop off and what the main character felt would be needed to be done to fix the problem. I wanted the reader to have some idea of potential solutions.

## Chapter 40

* This is a good chapter but I want more about the struggles are returning to the UK. I think the problem is that the model for happiness is not defined. I feel in the opening chapters, you need to clearly set out what the main character feels happiness 'looks like', and why returning to the UK is such a difference.
* This chapter feels a little rushed, I have made a note above.

### Chapter 41

* Good chapter.

### Chapter 42

* I like that this chapter really leans into the nostalgia of the holidays in Spain. personal

### Chapter 43

* I loved the welcome meeting in this chapter. I think your examination of the nostalgia aspect of the story is very effective.

### Chapter 44

* I loved the flamenco scene, I can picture this from my childhood trips to Spain.

### Chapter 45

* Good chapter.

### Chapter 46

* As with the other chapters, I think this delve into the culture and rituals is very engaging for the reader.

### Chapter 47

* This is another good chapter with strong links to the culture. These strike a really nice balance between building a picture of the village and the story of the hotel.

### Chapter 48

* This seems to be the climax of the book. The fact they have their own place in Spain. This needs two things. The first is a better description of the reader can picture the scene. The second is more set up, see my bigger editor's note.

### Chapter 49

* Good chapter, the transition away from the hotel make logical sense and the book feels as though its drawing to a natural conclusion.

### Chapter 50

* Good chapter.

### Chapter 51

* Love this chapter. I like the way you have finally resolved the issue of sustainable business. It seems like the arc for the hotel.

### Epilogue

* Good ending.