



JERICHO WRITERS

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EXAMPLE MANUSCRIPT ASSESSMENT

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. We advise you to read the report carefully and then put it aside for a few days. After that time you may have questions so do remember that you have the opportunity to have a follow-up conversation (by email or phone) with your editor in order to understand better any comments made. This is all part of the service.

INTRO:

Thank you for sending your novel to Jericho Writers for review. I found BOOK TITLE to be an entertaining and insightful look into the world of THE THEME OF THE NOVEL. Even though we've come a long way since the time period of your story, there is so much about it that resonates today, and I think Jack's struggles to assert himself in a place where he has been stripped of control will be a powerful journey that many readers will be delighted to take. However, there are many ways (which I've outlined in this report) in which Jack's struggles are currently being subverted in the novel, and that has the effect of dulling their potential impact. I'd love to see you rework the story to maximize Jack's journey in particular, instead of focusing so much on the interior lives of the people he meets, and this report offers suggestions on how to do so.

COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL & MARKETABILITY:

Jericho Writers, 4 Acer Walk, Oxford, OX2 6EX, United Kingdom
T. UK: +44 (0)345 459 9560 US: +1 (646) 974 9060 e. info@jerichowriters.com

The book's look into [REDACTED] make this novel relevant to a lot of discussions happening in our world today. Fortunately, there's been a thrust in recent years toward [REDACTED], and because of that, I do think there's commercial potential for this book. Since Jack's journey could illuminate the need for continued forward progress in that regard, the book could be marketed as one that speaks to the current discourse happening around [REDACTED]. To get to that point, though, you'll first need to pull Jack's own issues and struggles into much greater focus (more on that in a bit). Also, since this is a novel meant for adults, you'll need to get your word count up. The current length of your project is more in line with the young adult genre, and a better target would be about 80,000 words. Not to worry, though: if you implement the suggestions I've outlined in this report, you will have no problem expanding your word count.

CONTENT:

You do an effective job throughout the novel of showing us the culture of [REDACTED], and in fact, you establish this culture very early on in the final line of the first chapter. When Jack is choked by Gillian and then has "[REDACTED]," it's a great move to have Mrs Miller's only response be "[REDACTED]" The note I wrote to myself in your manuscript at this point was "[REDACTED]!" which means you've done a good job of giving the reader a visceral response to both the brutality of the place and the lack of regard for [REDACTED]. This shows us right from the beginning that [REDACTED] is not going to have an easy or even very rehabilitative time. I do think, though, that sometimes these moments get in the way of telling the greater story of [REDACTED] journey. There's a lot of emphasis placed on [REDACTED], and while this is very important to explore, I've suggested in this report ways that you could use that element of the story in a more meaningful way.

You also offer fantastic, beautifully written insights into the effects of [REDACTED]. For example, I loved the bit about time on p. 76 that begins with "[REDACTED]" and goes to the end of that paragraph. I only wish that there had been more moments like this throughout the novel, since we often feel so removed from [REDACTED] perspective and emotional experience (which I'll explain further in this report).

I also really liked how you show [REDACTED], whether that's through the [REDACTED] or the fact that [REDACTED]. This was particularly well achieved through [REDACTED] character. On p. 10, he says, "[REDACTED]". [REDACTED] I feel like I've heard some version of these words several times throughout my life. Often, people think that depression can be

Jericho Writers, 4 Acer Walk, Oxford, OX2 6EX, United Kingdom

T. UK: +44 (0)345 459 9560

US: +1 (646) 974 9060

e. info@jerichowriters.com

cured by “looking on the bright side!” or anxiety can be quelled by saying “don’t worry about it!” [REDACTED] definitely seems to represent that viewpoint in this book, and that’s made all the more disturbing by the fact that he is [REDACTED]

All of these things put together—the culture of [REDACTED], the insights into the trauma created by that culture, the representation of those who [REDACTED]—make for an effective exploration of both the experience [REDACTED]. My comments and suggestions in the rest of this report are meant to help you harness that efficacy you’ve already achieved in order to amplify the novel’s overall power and impact.

STRUCTURE

The main structural issue with your novel is that, instead of keeping us in [REDACTED] perspective the entire time, there are many competing points of view. For the first six chapters, [REDACTED] is our narrator, and we get used to him as such, but in the seventh chapter, we find ourselves suddenly in the perspective of someone named John—a character who, up until now, we haven’t even heard of. As a reader, this was incredibly jarring, and as you know, this happens multiple times throughout the book, with the perspective jolting into other minor characters’ viewpoints and voices. What this does is make [REDACTED] feel like a secondary character in his own story. Although most, if not all, of these chapters told from other characters’ perspectives do involve [REDACTED] in some way—with the new character ultimately intersecting with [REDACTED]—they keep us removed from any understanding of [REDACTED] internal or even external struggle. I realize that many of those chapters are working to show us [REDACTED], but there are still ways to accomplish this while remaining in our protagonist’s perspective.

For example, in Chapter 7 (the John chapter), the entire scene would take on much more power if we were shown it from [REDACTED] point of view. He could be shocked to see John, this pivotal person from his past, in [REDACTED], and he can ask John how he came to be there. Throughout their interaction, [REDACTED] can pepper in his memories of John and how important John was in encouraging him to find a path in life. Because we then know, from [REDACTED] memories and past experiences, that John is definitely *not* [REDACTED], it will come as even more of a shock to us (and [REDACTED]) that John has been mistaken [REDACTED]. That shows the reader and [REDACTED] the incompetence and reckless authority of Berry Close, and it also might help to show [REDACTED] that, if John doesn’t really deserve to be there, then maybe he doesn’t either. This could then be a pivotal moment in his own journey in [REDACTED]

For each chapter you’ve written from the perspective of someone who is *not* [REDACTED], I would encourage you to ask yourself the following question: What am I trying to

Jericho Writers, 4 Acer Walk, Oxford, OX2 6EX, United Kingdom

T. UK: +44 (0)345 459 9560

US: +1 (646) 974 9060

e. info@jerichowriters.com

convey with this chapter and this person's story, and how can I instead use this character as a way to reveal some necessary truth to [REDACTED] as he navigates life in the [REDACTED]? Then, tell the experience from [REDACTED] point of view. Let us see him meet these people and let us see him grapple with the truths they bring to light for him.

A smaller but still important structural issue in your novel is the need for stronger transitions. For example, on p. 12, you write, "[REDACTED]" but this comes right after a section of dialogue that has nothing to do with a trip of any kind (and, in fact, was about a very traumatic thing that Richard experienced), so the reader is left wondering where this sudden trip has come from. This happens many times throughout the book, where there is an abrupt switch from character portraits or memories back into another distinct moment at Berry Close. Sometimes, it might be helpful to use a section break, which will signal to the reader that we are now entering a different moment in the story. Other times, you will need to work on filling in the gap between those different moments. For example, on p. 97, you have this beautiful and insightful section that begins, "[REDACTED]" In this passage, [REDACTED] elucidates some very important truths, but all of that is immediately undercut by the jarring end of that paragraph: "[REDACTED]." The fact of [REDACTED] going home in this part is actually very important, as he's been "missing" for a couple of weeks, so by writing it off as just "[REDACTED]," we're missing a vital part of his internal journey. What is it about the revelations and thoughts he's just had about people, friendships, etc. that causes him to feel that he needs to go home? These things—mainly, [REDACTED] thought process and reactions to his epiphanies—need to be fleshed out more.

In a similar vein, sometimes your chapter endings fall a little flat. For example, Chapter 3 concludes with the following passage: "[REDACTED]" While it's humorous that [REDACTED] is sort of obviously smoking while all this commotion is going on, it puts so much emphasis on Richard, and his pipe smoking, in that moment that it makes it seem like that's somehow going to be a pivotal part of the story. It made me think: Is Richard plotting something? Does Richard understand more than he lets on? Is Richard secretly working for [REDACTED]? However, none of these come to pass, so it ends up being sort of an arbitrary place to end the chapter, instead of one that spurs the reader forward with questions that will ultimately be answered. My personal advice on chapter endings is to make them sing; make them resonate with what has occurred in the chapter and make them force the reader to turn the page because they're desperate to learn more.

In revising this novel, be sure to watch out for your tenses. You tend to slip back and forth between past and present when narrating the main storyline (so I'm not talking about a tense switch when you narrate memories, as the tense switch there is to be expected). For example, take a look at the first chapter. The opening scenes are in present tense, but then on p. 2, it suddenly switches to past tense between these two sentences: "[redacted]". The narration then carries on in past tense until p. 5 when it goes back to present tense with "[redacted]". A few lines later, it then switches back to past with "[redacted]". As you rework your novel, make sure to decide which tense you want to use for narrating the main storyline and then be sure that you keep that tense consistent.

VOICE & STYLE

This is a section where I get to give you a lot of praise because, overall, I really enjoyed the voice of your novel. Right from the very first lines, I was intrigued. "[redacted] is a strong way to open. I love the sound echo with closely/clues, and you did a good job of extending these sound devices throughout the opening (" [redacted], " [redacted]"), which helps to pull the reader in and keep them moving through the prose. The following passage from the first page does an excellent job of describing the battle with [redacted]—that disconnect between [redacted]: "[redacted]". I particularly like how you used "[redacted]" instead of "[redacted]" to emphasize that [redacted] is experiencing a disconnect from his own body.

In fact, there were so many great lines throughout the book—some that were richly crafted, others that were powerful because of their simplicity. As an example of the latter, I love on p. 11 when you write, [redacted]. The rhythm created by the repetition of "[redacted]" works great here, and as I said, the quiet simplicity is lovely. An example of a more elaborately crafted passage that I really loved is on p. 22: "[redacted]". The imagery here is quite strong, and in fact, you do an excellent job of crafting your imagery throughout the novel.

You use a good deal of personification in this book, which I found to be very effective. On p. 1, you describe the pen as "[redacted]," which in this exam scene, gives the effect of making the pen seem as though it has more agency than [redacted], even

Jericho Writers, 4 Acer Walk, Oxford, OX2 6EX, United Kingdom

T. UK: +44 (0)345 459 9560

US: +1 (646) 974 9060

e. info@jerichowriters.com

in its stillness. On p. 64, you have a great description of memory: "[REDACTED]

[REDACTED].” And similarly, on p. 65, you have a wonderful section personifying death. The instances of personification throughout the novel work well with [REDACTED] overall journey, as he is likely trying to figure out how he relates to the world—human and non-human alike.

You also have a strength for scene setting, such as the imagery and details you use when we’re first introduced to what life at Berry Close is like, and then, later, when [REDACTED] is described. You create vivid scenery for these characters, which sets up a strong backdrop for the story you’re telling. I also love when you describe the way the place makes things *feel*, such as your description of [REDACTED] on p. 76.

Finally (for this section, at least), I really enjoyed your use of humour in the novel. For example, I laughed out loud at “[REDACTED]” on p. 4 (which is made absurd and therefore effectively comical given the context in which that line appears), and I absolutely adored the introduction to Richard and [REDACTED] on p. 11, particularly: “[REDACTED]

.”

CHARACTERISATION & DIALOGUE

One of your biggest strengths in this manuscript is your excellent characterization of secondary characters. For example, on p. 3, you immediately provide us with a strong understanding of the type of people [REDACTED] mother and father are. For the father, “[REDACTED]” tells us so much about him in a succinct way. For the mother, this passage is especially illuminating: “[REDACTED]

[REDACTED].” On p. 4, you use physical details for the [REDACTED] that bring his personality to life: “[REDACTED]

[REDACTED].” And on pages 11 and 12, you skilfully use Richard’s quirk of [REDACTED] to sneak in the trauma this character has endured. These are just a few examples of the very keen ability you have to make these characters come to life, with distinct personality traits, gestures, and habits.

It therefore came as a surprise to me that you were not as successful in characterizing your protagonist, [REDACTED]. I’ll speak more about this in the “Plotting & Pacing/Tension”

Jericho Writers, 4 Acer Walk, Oxford, OX2 6EX, United Kingdom

T. UK: +44 (0)345 459 9560

US: +1 (646) 974 9060

e. info@jerichowriters.com

section below, but for now, I'll say that by the end of the novel, I feel like I still hardly even know [REDACTED], and that he has been rendered much less vividly than the minor characters he comes into contact with. I don't know what he wants, or what motivates him. He mentions that he has a difficult time using his "[REDACTED]," but I am left wondering if he even wants to. He often narrates things he does or things that happen to him without reflecting on those experiences or actions in a way that could help us understand his interior landscape, and/or how those events are impacting him personally. For example, on p. 10, you write, "[REDACTED] and I'm not at all clear what's motivating that behaviour. Is he messing with them on purpose? Is he trying to make their life more difficult because he resents being there? Is he being a bit tongue-in-cheek as a narrator because he sees, by looking at these events from the past, that everything he was doing at the asylum was only making more work for people? There were so many times in this novel where I did not know what [REDACTED] reaction was, and this made it very difficult for me to feel like I knew or understood him at all.

In terms of your dialogue, I'd like to encourage you to use dialogue tags—"I said," "Richard exclaimed"—more often. For the most part, you tend to just write lines of dialogue with no tags, so they appear almost like lines in a script. You don't need a dialogue tag for every single line of dialogue (that would become overwhelming and monotonous), but when you haven't indicated who is speaking for a little bit, it helps to orient readers again by throwing in an "I said," or something like that. Then they can easily keep track once again of who is saying what.

There are also times in this novel where you mishandle the format dialogue is supposed to follow. When you have one or more characters speaking with each other, you should begin a new paragraph every time the person speaking changes, much the way you do on p. 7. On p. 8, however, and in other places, you neglected to adhere to that rule. Make sure you watch out for this when you revise.

Another thing I noticed about your dialogue was that you tend to have characters saying these long, elaborate monologues in which they recount experiences they've had. After a while, those monologues start to pull us away from the true story at hand ([REDACTED]'s story) because they take up so much space recounting a different story altogether. In a lot of cases, it would be a good idea to have a little more back and forth—more of a conversation—between the character telling the story and the character (often [REDACTED]) hearing the story. That keeps [REDACTED] present within that story, and it feels less like an "information dump." Another way to handle it might be to have [REDACTED] paraphrase the story for us. Something like: "He told me about the time he went to X. He described how the trees swayed like X, how the food tasted like X." And

so on. Again, that keeps [REDACTED] at the forefront of the reader's experience, even as he's telling us about someone else's life.

Similarly, on p. 25, [REDACTED] presents a long monologue to Mrs Miller about his experience with Mo, which has led to him being [REDACTED]. Having it as a monologue, though, limits [REDACTED] ability to go deep into the memories for the reader's sake—adding sensory details, or tiny scraps of the experience that illuminate the greater whole. Try to explore that experience with [REDACTED] narration, rather than a long monologue he delivers to Mrs Miller. Then, after you've sufficiently explored it through his memories, you can simply say something like: "I recounted all this to Mrs Miller."

One feature of your novel is characters who offer their life stories to other characters—again, through long monologues. These can be cut down considerably, or, in some cases, removed altogether. For example, one character begins telling Mr Smith his entire life story on p. 9, even though it seems like he and Mr Smith already know each other a bit. It doesn't seem realistic, then, that he'd go into such detail about his personal journey, since, presumably Mr Smith might already know some of these details. Also, if the life story doesn't serve [REDACTED] story—if it doesn't make him reflect on something, or realize an important truth about his own experience, if it doesn't resonate with him and therefore the reader in some way—it's a sign that it could be cut. The other characters in the story should always be—whether [REDACTED] knows it or not—pushing [REDACTED] along in his personal journey.

PLOTTING & PACING/TENSION

The bit I have to tell you now might be a little hard to swallow, but I promise that if you absorb what I'm saying here and work to address it, your novel will be much stronger as a result.

In many ways, your novel lacks an actual story. In her excellent craft book, *Story Genius*, Lisa Cron defines story as "how the things that happen in the plot *affect* the protagonist, and how he or she changes as a result." I mentioned earlier that I feel like I hardly know [REDACTED], and that I often have no idea what motivates him or how he's feeling about the things that happen to him. This is because you've crafted the novel in a way that keeps us removed and distanced from [REDACTED] experiences. We're often told about them through other people's experiences, without [REDACTED] showing us what really happened. For example, on p. 9, Jack overhears a conversation between Mr Smith and Mrs Thomas in which they discuss Jack's "[REDACTED]." We never get [REDACTED] reaction to this, though. Is he angry? Hurt? Does he feel crippled by the injustice of [REDACTED]? We also don't get [REDACTED] insight into what these experiences with [REDACTED] were actually like. It would therefore be more effective to know, at least a little bit, about some of these experiences from [REDACTED] perspective, and *then* see how the [REDACTED] are referring to them, so that

we see the tension between these two points of view—basically the point of view of [REDACTED] versus that of [REDACTED].

Lisa Cron also says, “Anything that doesn’t impact the protagonist’s internal struggle, regardless of how beautifully written or ‘objectively’ dramatic it is, will stop the story cold, breaking the spell that captivated readers, and unceremoniously catapulting them back into their own lives.” Since we rarely ever get [REDACTED]’s internal reaction to things that happen—or see how they then affect him in his journey—your story doesn’t have a chance to gain traction and forward movement. It feels like a lot of stopping and starting (especially when combined with the abrupt switches into minor characters’ perspectives), which affects the overall pace of the novel.

The sense of distance from [REDACTED] as a character is also a result of the fact that [REDACTED] often shows us other people’s emotions and reactions to events without showing us his own. For example, on p. 17, he describes Richard crying in reaction to [REDACTED], but he himself does not allow us to feel how he is responding to this harsh [REDACTED]. If his lack of reaction in parts like that is for a reason (something [REDACTED], perhaps), then that should be hinted at in the prose with something like: “I knew I should probably be crying myself, [REDACTED], but I couldn’t bring myself to care. Instead, I [REDACTED].” Similarly, on p. 19, [REDACTED] says, “[REDACTED],” but we’ve been kept at such a distance from [REDACTED] that we don’t know enough about him yet to understand why he’s withholding his emotions.

Another effect of that distance from [REDACTED] is that we don’t even know he’s [REDACTED] until Chapter 7. This seems like something that would be at the forefront of his character, his identity, his sense of self, but he hardly ever speaks to us about his carving. I’d love for him to let us in to that part of his life much earlier in—and throughout—the novel. In fact, his relationship with carving could also be used as a way for readers to measure his growth. Perhaps he doesn’t even have the urge to carving when he arrives at the asylum, because of all the trauma he’s experiencing there, but then, as the novel progresses and he begins to grow and heal, he slowly comes around to that part of himself again. We need to know how he feels when he carves—is it an escape for him, out of the [REDACTED] he finds himself in, or is it something that helps him [REDACTED]? We also need to know how he feels about the [REDACTED] he gives in the novel. Once again, these things are just sort of thrust upon him, without him showing us how he’s feeling about them. I really had no idea if he was excited about the carving, or dreading them, or viewing them as a personal success. It seems that *others* view them as a success for [REDACTED], but again, we don’t get enough insight into how *he* feels about them.

There's also not enough in the novel about how [REDACTED] feels about being told he has "[REDACTED]". I honestly don't know if he is at war with himself over his [REDACTED]. It doesn't *seem* like it, which makes me wonder why he doesn't react more to being told he has "[REDACTED]". This is a missed opportunity for further tension in the novel, between what people are telling him externally and what he's experiencing internally.

In this vein, I like the idea of having [REDACTED] interact with Mo again at the very end of the novel. However, that moment doesn't yet have the impact it should because we haven't been given enough memories into or insight about [REDACTED] feelings for Mo. The one part in the book where we do get that, on p. 19, feels rather rushed and insufficiently explored. Again, this is a case where the reader's sense of distance from [REDACTED] hampers the potential power of the story, and therefore, it would strengthen the ending considerably if you wove [REDACTED] relationship with and memories of Mo throughout the novel.

Overall, there are a lot of missed opportunities for tension in your novel. Often, something really traumatic happens at [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]), but those experiences feel completely glossed over because we don't see [REDACTED] reaction to them. Therefore, we don't see that [REDACTED] is really at war with his situation (in fact, there were so many times where I honestly wasn't sure if he minded being [REDACTED]!). These traumatic moments should all be used to impact [REDACTED] in some way. Perhaps they are all things that build toward showing [REDACTED] how terrible his situation is and therefore end up pushing him toward wanting to take control of his life and get out. Again, that's how you turn just a series of events into an actual *story*—by showing us how those events propel, derail, shock, inspire, etc. your protagonist and force him to take action.

Another example of a missed opportunity for tension comes from the fact that Chapter 11, in which [REDACTED] reunites with his estranged father, is told from his dad's point of view. Their reunion would be so much more impactful if [REDACTED] told us about it himself because it would answer these questions that we're left with in the chapter's current form: How does seeing his dad—and seeing the *change* in his dad—push [REDACTED] forward or impact [REDACTED] life in [REDACTED]? What does it make him realize, and how does it help him to grow? Does [REDACTED] still hold anger toward his dad, even though he's seemingly changed, and if so, what does that teach him about people, about hurtful and abusive behaviour? As I've mentioned previously, the other characters should always be used as spring boards for realization for [REDACTED]. In Chapter 12, for example, which is from a man named Brian's perspective, Brian talks about his experience in ways that seem like they'd resonate with [REDACTED]'s. If we saw the scene from [REDACTED]'s point of view, we'd then be able to see how [REDACTED] learns from this conversation, how his relationship with Brian changes him. Perhaps this is even the point where [REDACTED] sees that *his* "[REDACTED]

Jericho Writers, 4 Acer Walk, Oxford, OX2 6EX, United Kingdom

T. UK: +44 (0)345 459 9560

US: +1 (646) 974 9060

e. info@jerichowriters.com

██████████ We need to see ██████████ come to these realizations—for the sake of his character development, the novel’s tension, and its sense of movement.

This brings me to my next point: often, the only times we *are* given insight into ██████████’s thoughts and feelings is through long monologues he delivers to other characters. In those cases, his ideas come out feeling polished and fully formed, presented almost as more of a prepared speech than an impromptu part of a conversation. For example, the one on pages 45-46 is very well written—the language is evocative and effective, and it does a great job of inviting us into ██████████’s perspective, showing us how this experience has taken such a toll on him both mentally and physically—but those ideas should be spread throughout the novel so we can see the rising tension in ██████████’s experience. Until he presented this monologue, I did not even have an inkling that he felt this way. Right now, these monologues feel much too tidy. Let us see more of the messiness of him coming to these realization—and that messiness comes from showing us how he’s reacting to experiences along the way, *as* they’re happening.

There are so many big plot points in the story that end up falling flat, that never become more powerful or resonant simply because we are missing ██████████’s reaction to them. There’s Alan dying, ██████████, ██████████, the moment ██████████ gets out of Berry Close ██████████ to go live with Valery. These are hugely important experiences in his journey, but they’re more or less just mentioned as happening instead of being used to show us how ██████████ reacts, how they’re furthering or stagnating his journey. This gives the impression that ██████████ doesn’t care about these experiences at all. And if our protagonist doesn’t care, why should the reader? Why should they remain invested or how can they even feel connected to ██████████ as a character?

That, in the end, is the central issue of all the points I’ve made in this section: when we’re kept at such a distance from ██████████, when we’re not allowed to feel the tension between his external circumstances and his internal journey, when major plot points are glossed over without illuminating how they affect ██████████, when the pace is brought to an abrupt halt because of a switch to narrators who *aren’t* our protagonist, it makes it very difficult for us to connect with ██████████ and to therefore become invested in his journey. And a lack of investment on the reader’s part might very well lead to them putting the novel down before it’s finished.

SPECIFIC EDITORIAL POINTS:

As you can see, I’ve already been pointing to specific pages and chapters throughout my report, but I’ll be using this space to share other questions, comments, and

suggestions I had as I was reading, as well as highlight other places where points I've mentioned above could be addressed.

Chapter 1

- Can we get a sense of [redacted]'s age somewhere in this chapter?
- Love this line: [redacted]
- p. 2: [redacted]
[redacted] Why has [redacted] been deemed beyond hope at this point? We don't really know.
- p. 3: [redacted]
- p. 4: "[redacted] I love this line because it feels so accurate to [redacted]"

Chapter 2

- p. 7: "A malevolent osmosis crept in on me." This is a transition issue. In this paragraph, you had just been talking about the mother before Jack was even born, so this sudden switch to something about him is quite a leap. Also, when did it creep in on him? How old was he when he felt he should be called Jack instead of William?

Chapter 3

- p. 10: "[redacted] I love how you use Brian here as a way to shed light on something that many people probably don't know about."

Chapter 4

- [redacted]

[REDACTED]

Chapter 5

- As I started this chapter and saw that it began with “One day,” I immediately wondered what had happened to the [REDACTED] that you’d been referencing in the previous chapter. Why was there such lead up to the [REDACTED] in Chapter 3—and then discussion of why [REDACTED] couldn’t go in Chapter 4—but then nothing actually happened on the [REDACTED] and we never saw it?

- p. 18: Explore the fight more, as it currently feels very rushed. Is [REDACTED] throwing any punches? Is he participating in the violence? [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Is he revelling in this violence? Does he feel spite toward Brian? Rage? Or is he just getting swept up and going along with things? [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

- p. 19: “

[REDACTED] This is the first indication I really got that [REDACTED] didn’t want to be at the [REDACTED]. You need to establish this feeling earlier, since he’s already been there for about 18 pages.

- p. 19: “

[REDACTED]”

There hasn’t been enough of this sense of [REDACTED] past or interior life so far. We need more of this.

- [REDACTED]

Chapter 6

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Chapter 7

- [REDACTED]

Chapter 8

- p. 36: "[REDACTED]." I haven't been getting that sense at all, so I don't know if [REDACTED] is being sarcastic or genuine here.

- p. 36: "[REDACTED]!" This is the only sense of pride I've seen from [REDACTED] so far about his [REDACTED]. This would have more impact if we'd previously learned how he felt about the upcoming [REDACTED]. Was he so nervous, [REDACTED]?

- p. 37: The paragraph that starts [REDACTED] feels very out of place in this chapter, and out of tone with what's currently happening.

- [REDACTED]
- p. 38: Narratively speaking, it's a very good choice to have this huge setback happen for [REDACTED] right after his apparent success. But the last sentence of this chapter—" [REDACTED] "—gives me pause. Is that really true?

[REDACTED]

Chapter 11

- [REDACTED]

Chapter 12

- [REDACTED]

Chapter 13

- [REDACTED]

Chapter 14

- [REDACTED]

This is good tension! We need to see it develop more throughout the narrative, not just be thrown it fully formed already. This is what I mean about the monologues taking away from the power of [REDACTED]'s journey instead of illuminating it.

Chapter 15

- p. 66: "[REDACTED]?" This is the first genuine emotion we've seen from [REDACTED]. Of course, I want to see more emotion throughout, but this is another reason why things need to be from [REDACTED] point of view. He's finally showing emotion, but we don't get insight into what that feels like for him, because it's being narrated by someone else.

- p. 67: [REDACTED]

- The end of this chapter brings a horrible revelation! It's great that [REDACTED] but it's tragic because [REDACTED]. What is [REDACTED] reaction? Since he does end up trying to fi [REDACTED], we should see something here about how distraught he is over the fact that [REDACTED]. That sets us up for [REDACTED] motivation later when he goes to [REDACTED].

Chapter 16

- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

[Redacted text block]

Chapter 17

[Redacted text block]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Chapter 19

- p. 88: "[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] " By not letting us see this as it was happening (and only having us learn about it after the fact), this experience rings hollow and doesn't have the impact that it otherwise would.
- p. 88: "[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] ?" I do like this reaction from [REDACTED]—that it's anger, not relief that he feels. That's really interesting. But it could be explored much more if it wasn't only mentioned in dialogue.
- p. 89: "[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]." This should be explored so much more. He's finally getting out! What is he feeling as he leaves? Did he say goodbye to his friends?
- p. 89: There's a mention of Hillary reminding [REDACTED] about the importance of boundaries. What are these boundaries for him?

Chapter 20

- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- p. 91: "[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]." This is so important! Explore this more.

- p. 92: [REDACTED] Doesn't this trigger his past trauma? He's experiencing a loss of control again and being locked up.

- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

Chapter 21

- p. 95: "[REDACTED]" Your prose appears to be devolving into sentence fragments when it comes to the narration.

Chapter 22

- I like that all the people from [REDACTED] life at [REDACTED] are congregating together at the end, and I'd like to see how [REDACTED] reacts to that. How does it feel? Is he finding connection? Contentment? A sense of family?

Chapter 23

- p. 101: "[REDACTED]" You're showing us all this emotion around [REDACTED], but what is *his* emotion?

- p. 102: "[REDACTED]" This is a VERY important paragraph, but again, it's rushed. What are some of those longings, betrayals, etc.? What are some of those insights? If you've been giving us these throughout the novel as you go along, you can quickly reference them here.

SUBMITTING TO AGENTS/PUBLISHERS

Because of the core issues in the novel, [REDACTED] is not yet ready for agents or publishers. However, once you revise it (which may take several more drafts, as revision

Jericho Writers, 4 Acer Walk, Oxford, OX2 6EX, United Kingdom

T. UK: +44 (0)345 459 9560

US: +1 (646) 974 9060

e. info@jerichowriters.com

is its own artform in a way) and feel it is at its strongest, I recommend submitting to agents who have represented at least one book that, in some way, deals with THE THEME OF THE NOVEL. That way, you can say in your cover letter, "Because you represented X, I think you will like my novel, which also explores XYZ."

CONCLUSION AND KEY POINTS ROUND UP

There is so much to enjoy in this novel—the humour, the insights, the strong characterization of people ■■■ meets, the attention to detail when setting a scene, the imagery, the exploration of THEME OF THE NOVEL—but here are the main points I hope you take away from this report:

- The entire novel needs to be in ■■■'s perspective in order for the reader to feel a connection to the experiences and plot points, and in order for those plot points to gain more power.
- ■■■ needs to *react* to his experiences, instead of just stating them, in order for readers to feel invested in his journey. If readers don't feel like they know ■■■, they will have no reason to care about him.
- There needs to be more tension in the novel overall, especially between ■■■'s external circumstances and his internal journey. Because ■■■ doesn't often react to his experiences, each experience or plot point falls flat, instead of becoming something that causes ■■■ to *do* or *feel* something. For each plot point/experience in your novel, try this old trick: SWBBS (which stands for Somebody Wanted Because But So). Taking ■■■ first reading as an example:

■■■

With SWBBS guiding you, you'd be able to take what are now just events in the story (■■■) and inject them with both motivation and a way to propel ■■■ further in his journey.

- Watch out for your tenses. Make sure the tense of the narration remains consistent throughout the novel. Decide whether ■■■ is telling it in past tense or present tense, and then stick to that.
- Make sure that each character exists to affect ■■■'s journey in some way. Each character should be a springboard for ■■■'s growth, potential epiphanies, healing, or even temporary setbacks.
- Instead of relying on long monologues to convey ■■■'s thoughts and feelings, make sure you're inserting those emotions and insights into the

narrative itself so that the reader sees them build and develop. (This goes back to letting us see ■■■ react to things as they happen.)

In this report, I've mentioned the book *Story Genius* by Lisa Cron. I think this book would be a tremendous resource for you, and it provides exercises and concrete examples that would help you find, shape, and harness the actual story of this novel.

Below, I've also compiled some links to Jericho Writers resources that should help you address some of the issues I've mentioned in this report.

- Deepening character: <https://jerichowriters.com/character-development/>
- Dialogue: <https://jerichowriters.com/writing-dialogue/>
- External and internal conflict: <https://jerichowriters.com/using-internal-and-external-conflict-in-genre-writing/>
- Plotting: <https://jerichowriters.com/how-to-plot/>

Overall, you have some great raw material in this novel, and the potential to make a strong impact with it. I wish you the best of luck in deepening the story and maximizing its power.