

SAMPLE: Personal Letter to Author

Hello [Author],

Thank you so much for this opportunity! I loved reading [Book Title] and had a wonderful time diving into your story. Let's get to it.

In this reader report, you'll find this personal letter followed by my answers to your questions/concerns that you shared when you submitted your order; then comes my feedback on elements of your novel, including concept/idea, plot, structure, characters, dialogue, overall strengths, and weaknesses. At the very end, I've included a list of specific resources that I've picked out just for you.

The Word Doc with track changes contains all my highlights, comments, and in-depth notes. You'll see that it's a bit of a mix between alpha reader feedback, developmental editing notes, and light-line editing here and there. For larger chunks that I felt could be cut to help shorten the story a bit, I used strikethrough, and for smaller parts like a few words, I deleted and left a comment. (Side note: I switched my Word to UK English too.)

I also pinpointed repeat words and general language that described body language, including facial expressions. Often in relatively newer drafts of novels, I'll come across a lot of nodding, grinning, shaking heads, lips stretched into smiles, lots of smiling, and other gestures. Don't worry. I've included in the resource list and in the Word Doc a link to an amazing list of emotions with lists of ways to describe facial expressions and body language that are so helpful to play with and spice up in your own way so you can show the emotion behind nodding and grinning in different ways. It's a ton of fun, and I loved using this resource when I worked with authors as a Developmental Editor in-training for DLG Publishing Partners.

You'll also see that I make notes on other elements of your novel, whether it's sentence structure, order of events, filter words, and even adverbs like quickly, slowly, and instantly. My goal is to analyze every part that stands out, why it does, and how we can approach it and develop ways that you can write more effectively, ultimately making your unique voice and style as a writer pop off the page.

As for your story. I love it. There were a few times when I didn't see things coming, like in the end when Noah revealed himself, I was totally surprised, and I loved it! I had a huge suspicion when Rose was introduced that this would lead to Lilith. And Lilith, she did not disappoint. If anything, I feel that Layla and Lilith were bound to end up together in that weird mind/body/soul meld, and at times, it really felt like their personalities complimented each other.

Overall, I'm impressed by your work and am biting at the bit to read more! Thank you again for your order and for letting me read your novel and please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions about my report or feedback or anything else in your delivery. Thank you!

Warmly,

Alina

SAMPLE: Author's Concerns & Questions

AUTHOR'S CONCERNS & QUESTIONS

Author: *My main concern is my protagonist. I want to make sure my readers like her as a character, even if they disagree with her actions. I find her a bit irritating sometimes, but that's just her personality. I want her to be a good character despite her many flaws.*

I'm also trying to make the book a bit shorter, so if you find anything that could be cut from the story, let me know.

Layla is a good character. She's complicated but good. I do agree with you that her actions are questionable, and I thought at times borderline narcissistic, but by the end of the novel, I truly feel that she is good, and her complexities are fascinating. What I thought was intriguing is that even though she's immortal. There are so many facets of her personality that can mature further (I'm guessing with a few more hundred years of life experience).

For instance, she says she's had many relationships in the past, and yet it seems like there's a pattern where she's unaware of what's really going on with them. Whatever was happening with Luana's father, for him to suddenly up and leave because he found someone better than her (better than an immortal?!) I can only guess there must've been stuff going on in their relationship for a while that Layla either ignored or was blind to because of her own obsession at the time.

Then it happens again with Michelle. All Michelle wants is to die at peace surrounded by her family, but Layla is so determined to turn her into an immortal that she ignores or refuses to accept Michelle's decision. She's selfish. But this isn't a bad thing. Layla reminds me of Anne Rice's Lestat character. Their complexity only grows, and they become a deeper, more relatable character in each book because I learn more about them either from their perspective or others. But like Lestat, Layla's action is questionable in a way where I can believe that an immortal with powers like hers, who wants to protect her family and keep her partner alive, would do anything to make that happen, even if it's crossing into bad guy territory.

For shortening the novel, I feel that there are opportunities to trim in almost every chapter, whether it's by deleting repeat words, cutting down on the number of questions or putting a few together, and eliminating some of the retelling/summarizing of what just happened (pages 46, 174, and 252). And there was information and phrases that I noticed were already said/used a few times that I felt could be cut as well (pages 34, 76, 91, 210, 230, 252, and 287).

I found it very hard to pinpoint entire chapters that could be cut because I think all of them are essential. And I feel that the action toward the end when Layla is rushing through the underground bunker could be expanded.

SAMPLE: Reader Report

READER REPORT

Concept/idea:

I 100% love the concept of this novel. The immortals are captivating, but even they don't compare to the gods. I love how they have different powers, and the detail of how they like to get tattoos to hide scars and get plastic surgery to change their appearance is unique and refreshing. It's a genius idea.

The ability to fly is awesome, and I enjoyed the details you included about the feathers and the white blood. I wish there were more details about the view of the land while Layla is flying, how the air feels on her wings, and how her body (maybe shoulders/arms/back) aches from flying.

I also think it's refreshing that the immortals eat food and hurt and bleed like humans. In a way, they reminded me of the X-Men mutants, and I love this.

At the top of my list is that Layla has loved many people during her lifetime. I love this so much. I wish more main characters (immortal or not) had husbands, wives, and partners in their past because to me, that's realistic.

Plot:

I was hooked from the beginning. I really felt like you dropped me into a perfect moment of the story where everything started picking up. I love how you have a gradual build-up to these very intense action-packed scenes that just blast the plot forward while at the same time progressing the character development.

I really appreciated the time that Layla spent in Noah's compound/bunker, working in the kitchen, and preparing for missions. This felt like a great breather, a space to kind of sit back and take in everything that had happened and then prepare for the next lunge.

I honestly didn't think that Michelle was going to die. I thought she wanted to, and when she fought with Layla, it was heartbreaking. I also feel emotionally invested in Tamara because she was left caring for her dying mother. And when Layla noticed how much Tamara had changed toward the end, it was so sad. I love it.

Structure:

It has a solid structure. Usually, I find a lot of holes or unexplained scenes or sometimes conversations that aren't necessary. But I feel you may have created an outline before drafting this. I like that.

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I feel that every chapter is essential and the climaxes you have at key points are pivotal to the progression of the story. I can begin to imagine how you've set this novel up to support the series.

Characters:

I'm very interested in Luana and Tamara. I was a little sad when Luana was kidnapped because I was ready to read some amazing scenes of her talking with her mother and sharing their experiences over the years. I thought this was really fascinating but ultimately understood it's essential to have Luana disappear in the beginning and be a driving force along with Michelle to keep Layla going.

Tamara is incredible. I really love her. She is so fierce and dedicated to her mother. I wish there was more of her to explore.

Michelle, I felt like I didn't get enough of why Layla loved her besides being a kind of rebound from her ex-husband. Their relationship was obviously ending. And I think if Michelle wasn't going to die in this novel, if she had been turned immortal, eventually she would've left Layla anyways because I don't think they saw eye to eye.

Lilith she's complicated, alone, afraid, angry, and extremely manipulative. I love her. There are parts of her that I find fascinating, almost like a teenager stuck in the ice because, for her, it comes down to daddy issues. I like this; it makes her a believable character.

I love Luca; he's amazing. That's it.

Layla, she's a great main character. She's full of pain, anger, and sorrow, and she just won't give up. I love her outlook on life that there's still so much to explore and experience even as an immortal, and I love her dedication even though it can make her veer off into bad guy territory here and there.

I'm very skeptical of Noah, and I think that because it's been 25 years (right?) that's plenty of time for him to change completely. I think he could be a dark horse that really shakes things up later on. I hope.

I was devastated when it was revealed that Mara's head was in the bag. Woah. Just Woah. I was hoping for more time for her and Layla so that they could bond a bit more as they did during that drive. It was a brutal killing for me, and I was devastated.

As for Anna. I like her a lot, and she's ruthless. There's something about her that's terrifying. She's scarier than Lilith to me, I don't know why.

Dialogue:

I noticed the tone fluctuates here and there. One moment it can be very technical like "shutting off" powers and then there will be a "Dude" or an "As if" sprinkled in here or there. I also found that there was an inconsistency with the use of contractions.

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I understand that a lack of contractions can make characters sound serious because something serious is happening, but I was trying to think of the way people talk to each other as they're feeling different emotions and when they'd either stick to contractions like "I'm" or would use "I am—."

There were parts where I felt that the structure reflected possibly the structure of a different language, and I could be reading a translation. This isn't a huge issue, and I find it fascinating. There are a few words that are used A LOT, and I feel more than half could be cut:

So

Only

Pulled/Pulling

As if

For a while

For a second

Quickly

Slowly

Instantly

Nod/Nodded

Smile

Grin

Silence

Forms of Shook/Shaking Head

I also noticed that if someone had questions, they'd either ask 3 to 5+ of them in a row, and it was really overwhelming. I marked all of these instances in the Word Doc.

And there is a habit of characters starting sentences with "So" or "Well."

The majority of the dialogue is believable. It was only when the formal tone came out, contractions wavered, and when repeated words and a lot of questions were used that I was distracted by the dialogue and pulled out of the story.

Overall strengths, and weaknesses:

Strengths are the characters, plot, structure, and overall flow of the story. These all far outweigh the weaknesses.

Weaknesses are the dialogue and the imbalance of showing and telling. Telling seems to happen 5 more throughout the second half of the novel.

SAMPLE: Recommending Reading & Resources List (1-3+ pages)

BOOKS

[Book Title] by [Author] _____

An amazing book that I highly recommend. It goes over crucial elements such as characterization and exposition, dialogue mechanics, interior monologue, and easy beats.

Chapters I recommend reading:

Chapter 1

Chapter 3

Chapter 8

Chapter 12

[Book Title] by [Author]

Chapter 5

Excellent chapter that dives into balancing showing and telling in an artful way.

ONLINE RESOURCES

[Website link]

There are numerous examples on this site on how to cut down on repeat filler and filter words.

I recommend reviewing the sections on:

[Example 1]

[Example 2]

[Example 3]

[Example 4]