Basic Developmental Editing Checklist for Editors

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Customize this checklist for each client’s novel.

\_\_overall pacing and tension

\_\_no loose plot threads

\_\_subplots feed into main plot

\_\_plot events are clear/understandable

\_\_logical sequence of plot events

\_\_plot is plausible/believable

\_\_action sequences are not confusing

\_\_characterization

\_\_characters have motivations for the things they do

\_\_characters have arcs—they start at one place and end at another

\_\_character continuity—characters sound/act/think differently from each other

\_\_appropriate number of characters

\_\_appropriate number of POV characters; POV characters are the right ones

\_\_POV is handled appropriately

\_\_clearly rendered setting

\_\_historical/specialized vocabulary or facts that needed checking (list):

\_\_accuracy within time period and setting

\_\_continuity issues (timeline, repetition, consistency of character actions, descriptions, etc.)

\_\_appropriateness of story (and scenes) to intended audience

(for line editing, when appropriate):

\_\_awkward, lengthy, or confusing sentence structure that requires polishing

\_\_tightening (trimming filtered feelings; superfluous action; repetition)

\_\_dialogue that seems wooden, off, or anachronistic; dialogue tags misused