

# 10 STEPS TO REVISE YOUR ROMANCE NOVEL

*Turn it into the story you know it can be*



*Libby M Jriks*

ROMANCE BOOK COACH

[romancebookcoach.com](http://romancebookcoach.com)

# Welcome, writer!

Congratulations on finishing a draft of your book! That's an amazing accomplishment and one not all writers manage to achieve. So be proud! And by the way, I hope you've celebrated your success, because it's almost time to get back to work.

On the next page is a checklist of five things you should do *before* you begin editing your manuscript. It's important not to skip these steps, as they'll help you gain distance from your story so that you can come back to it with fresh eyes and be the best developmental editor you can possibly be. And that's something your story deserves, don't you think?

Once you're ready, I don't just want you to just *revise* your manuscript. Instead, I'm issuing you with a challenge:

*Re-envision your story.*

Remember that the aim of revising a manuscript, the aim of developmental editing, is to *strengthen the story*, and that will quite possibly require you to let go of some things. Sometimes, we need to forget what we think we know about our stories in order to open our minds to the possibilities.

Happy editing,

*Libby M Jriks*





# Pre-Developmental Editing Checklist

- Finish the first draft**

This is essential. In order to revise your novel, you need to evaluate the story as a whole. Without a finished draft, you cannot effectively edit your book.
- Set it aside for 2-4 weeks**

As tempting as it may be to start revising as soon as you write "the end", give yourself some distance from the story so you can come back to it with fresh eyes.
- Print out the manuscript (or create a PDF copy)**

Working with a hard copy (or non-editable version) of your manuscript will remind you not to waste time fixing grammatical errors, spelling mistakes and typos.
- Read the manuscript**

With fresh eyes, read through the story from start to finish, focusing on the bigger picture and your response as a reader. Jot down any thoughts, feelings, or concerns.
- Create a scene list**

Condense your story into a scene list, noting down for each: the POV character, supporting characters, location, the day/time, and a brief explanation of events.

# Editing Goals

Read through your manuscript again, this time jotting down notes against the relevant place in your scene list about changes you need to make in the manuscript to ensure the following:



## PURPOSEFUL STRUCTURE

Regardless of which structural model you've used, check that the main turning points of your story are where they need to be to keep readers engaged and turning pages.



## CLEAR GOALS AND MOTIVATION

Check that you've clarified for the reader what the protagonist is working towards and why that goal is so important to them. Focus on main goals, but don't forget scene goals!



## DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS

Examine the supporting cast of characters to determine whether the role each one plays is vital to the story and that they have their own voices, goals, and motivations.



## ROMANTIC DEVELOPMENT

The development of the relationship between the protagonist and their love interest is your story's main plot. Ensure that it develops at a believable pace and in a realistic manner.



## RELEVANT SUBPLOTS

Analyse each subplot to ensure it has its own beginning, middle and end, and that it enhances the main plot by directly impacting the story's climax.



## IMPACTFUL POINT OF VIEW

Analysing the impact point of view (POV) has on each scene, reflect on whether you've chosen to tell that part of the story through the eyes of the character with the most at stake.



## A CAUSE-AND-EFFECT TRAJECTORY

Examine each scene to ensure the POV character reacts to events in a believable manner and makes decisions accordingly, linking one scene to the next and creating a cause-and-effect trajectory.



## A CHANGED PROTAGONIST

Review who your protagonist is at the beginning of the story and who they are at the end, ensuring the lessons they learned on their journey allowed them to undergo a significant transformation.



## A POWERFUL MESSAGE

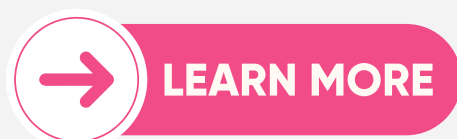
After identifying your story's themes and the message you want to convey to the reader, reflect on whether you've delivered that message with meaning, clarity, and truth.



## A SATISFYING READER EXPERIENCE

Research and list the conventions specific to your story's subgenre and ensure you've addressed them all in order to meet reader's expectations, thereby providing a satisfying reading experience.

Have you edited and revised your story but still aren't sure if it works?  
Let me remove the overwhelm. Find out how I can help you turn your  
messy draft into the story you know it can be.



# Testimonials



Tanya Nellestein, *The Devil Within*

Libby offered practical guidance in the steps I should take to tackle revisions. She is so easy to work with. Her services are a worthy investment for any writer wanting to take their novel to the next level.



Vikki Holstein, *Breaking Storm* and *Reckless Lies*

Libby is dedicated to making each story the best it can be; she guides me to hone my strengths and build on my weaknesses without destroying my confidence. Libby has encouraged me every step of the way to be a better writer.



Nancy Cunningham

Libby has helped me shape the structure of my manuscript, enhance its themes and deepen both character and point of view. My manuscript is a much stronger story for Libby's involvement and I highly recommend working with her.

# Featured Project

## *The Lady Detective* by Ava January

### THE CLIENT

Ava requested an evaluation from me after receiving feedback from beta readers and publishers, saying that the story “meandered”. Ava interpreted this feedback to mean that there wasn’t enough story, and she hoped an evaluation would highlight where she was going wrong and help her to revise in preparation for submitting to a publisher.



### HOW I HELPED

I conducted a full read-through of Ava’s manuscript and discovered that its issues stemmed from a lack of clarity surrounding the protagonist's goals and motivations. This gave the impression of the meandering storyline, because there was no clear purpose to the events of the story. I also determined that if Ava drew on the protagonist’s backstory in crucial moments, it would help the reader to better understand her character’s motivation.

### AVA'S RESPONSE

“Libby, I just wanted to touch base with you to say thanks! Your feedback made perfect sense and helped me dig a little deeper into the motivations and goals of my protagonist. I’ve officially sent the manuscript to the publisher now, so fingers crossed!”

### THE OUTCOME

The Lady Detective won first prize in the Orange County Rose Prize for Emerging Writers 2020 (Historical category) and was a second round winner in LERA’s The Writer Contest. Ava also landed a publishing deal with Escape Publishing!

# Contact Information



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*Helping romance authors write stories with heart.*



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