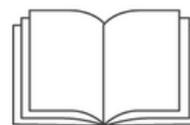


BETA READER REPORT

Romance Novel by Writer's Name

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This novel is a romance flipped on its head. Yes, the story hits the usual beats - the meet-cute, the break up, the happy ending - but your use of [specific detail] brings a fresh take on the beloved genre without upending it entirely. Your **ideal reader** is well-versed in romance. They like their stories spicy, but not too spicy, and they appreciate realistic characters (especially female leads) with messy, less-than-perfect lives. They like a feel-good ending and aren't afraid to watch the protagonist fight and suffer to get there. [More specifics redacted.]

As a **point-of-view** character, [main character] is engaging, funny, and pitiful in the best way. Her stream-of-consciousness storytelling adds urgency to the plot; this is imperative since one of the main conflicts is an internal one. [Redacted.] It's [the main character's] history, personality, and worldview that makes [the plot twist] more believable.

I appreciated the **worldbuilding** of this story. You've set up an excellent city verses country juxtaposition, but as a reader, I felt confused during the scenes that take place in the RV. The city and the country are well-rendered - by comparison, I struggled to get a mental image of the RV and the characters' time on the road. Common questions I had during these chapters: Where did they sleep? Who was driving during [specific scene]? They're strapped for cash - how do they afford gas? Where exactly did they park the night of the fight - a parking lot, a hotel, a campsite? Why does [character name] say several times that they have carsickness, yet we never see them afflicted by this in the RV?

Structurally, this story is relatively sound. This story carefully considers the beats required of the romance genre and has the right scenes at the right times. One consideration for revision is the **pacing**. Your reader is sure to notice that some key chapters are less than half the size of less important chapters. My recommendation is to put more pressure on [specific chapters and details]. Consider asking yourself which scenes are most important to the plot, to [the main character's] character growth, and to [the relationship between the main character and the love interest], and see whether these important scenes get enough "screentime."

Similarly, the pacing from page 271 to page 324 became rather stagnant. As a reader, I found myself wondering about the stakes of the story and what exactly [main character] wanted. This is a matter of **plot**. At the beginning of the story, all [main character] wanted was [redacted]. After [specific plot point], which occurred at the midpoint, [what

the main character wanted] is no longer an option. This is excellent storytelling - but what's missing is a new goal. It's okay for [main character] to be lost at the beginning of [specific chapter], but by the end of [specific scene], I recommend that something (or someone) gives her an epiphany that locks in her new goal and gives the story some momentum. You've done this with the main external romantic conflict, but the story seems to forget [her internal conflict] and [the B-plot with another character].

You asked for my thoughts on the **COVID-19 context**. First of all, I believe you've chosen an excellent time-period: the pandemic isn't in full swing, and folks are going back to normal, which gives people like [main character] time to deal with their delayed grief while others (like [character]) are fully back to normal. Thankfully, your book avoided some of the storylines that are quickly becoming cliches in pandemic-era novels and TV shows, but I wondered what other readers would think of [redacted]. Additionally, the pandemic was a politically charged issue, especially in [area mentioned in the book], yet the book chooses not to delve into political beliefs at all. I think many readers (myself included) will be distracted by this omission. One solution is to briefly mention [main character's] apathy toward politics and maybe add a few references toward politics - just things people would naturally say or see on the news and mention.

Lastly, you asked about **dialogue**. I agree with you that your dialogue could use some revision, but I disagree with your assessment that [main character] and [other character] don't have distinct voices. During key scenes, their personalities really come through. What I noticed most about your dialogue was the overabundance of "filler" conversations that don't need to happen on the page. Read through your manuscript and mark anytime a character says hello, introduces themselves, or engages in small talk. Your reader knows how these sorts of interactions go, and they're rather uninteresting on the page. [Examples from manuscript of good dialogue and bad dialogue.] Your dialogue was most engaging when the characters were saying things no other character in no other book would say - things that were sometimes "off-topic" but had deeper meanings or paid-off later.

My overall feeling is that this novel is one to two drafts from a final draft. As is, your book is delightful, fresh, and innovative. The stagnant plot around the three-fifths mark, the [specific detail redacted], the lack of clarity surrounding the RV scenes, and those short, underdeveloped chapters I mentioned are all areas where your reader will flounder or set the book down. Strengthening these areas will allow your reader to focus on [main character], her relationship with [character], and the overall **theme** of the novel, which is the vital importance of self-love.