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19th April 2007

Dear E,

Re: TPC

Thank you for submitting **TPC** and **TSP** to **Daniel Goldsmith Associates** for a free assessment.

Please find below our Report on **TPC**.

First, it was a pleasure to read it. It has a very strong plot, well-defined characters, a well-built, intricate and very consistent narrative, a fairly well constructed pace (I will emphasise a few faults below) and a theme with high marketability.

It's also true that **TPC** needs a careful editor and a few revisions here and there in order to maintain consistency and to improve the pace and the market score, by narrowing the targeted audience.

Here are a few suggestions you might want to consider.

Narrators

The three narrative voices are generally consistent throughout the book. I expected to find at least one meta-narrative slip, where the author gets carried away and subordinates the narrator's voice to his own in a sort of "God's eye point of view", but it didn't happen. The only suggestion I would have regarding the narrative is for you to revise the few places where the 1st person narrator addresses directly the readers. It was considered the best invention once, but now it tends to be just another thing the postmoderns thought was great. It's still fashionable in diaries, memoirs, newspaper articles, but fiction tends to keep distance from it these days. See p. TPC3/3 "You don't have to hear about it...", the address to screen writers on page TPC11/11 and "I would like to tell you that I was impressed by the Shiny Tacos..." (p. TPC13/7)

Characters

- Tom is a standard character. Charming, intelligent, noble, gold-hearted, passionate about his job, even psychology graduate, he has all the ingredients of a success recipe for a standard main character in a book concerning this theme. The character is mainly constant and very well defined, apart from a few slip-aways, e.g. he accepts too easily Mrs Wilbraham's blackmail into getting him married to Theresa. Readers know him as an intelligent, manipulative, strong character, always thinking of a plan B. In chapter 8, Tom doesn't even think of the perspective of a plan B, he accepts the blackmail and starts negotiating financial plans with Mrs Wilbraham. The fragment has pace faults as well (please refer to the **Pace** section).

- The most interesting and the grandly portrayed character that brings so much to the book is Simon. This nearly Dostoevskian character is so well built throughout the book and his metamorphosis is so surprisingly well developed, it stands the chance to become the evil character that the nowadays noir literature is lacking.

- Mickey is a fairly inconsistent character. The image we gather from the telephone conversation with Theresa (failed student, indifferent about Theresa's family situation) is unlike the image you create later in the book (very much in love with Theresa and very careful with her).

- Mrs Wilbraham is the most implausible of your characters, mainly because of the marriage affair and of the sudden change in her behavior towards her daughter. Please see below.

Content

The content is generally well structured in short, well paced chapters. The locations are all plausible. The reality-check facts, such as The Snow Patrol season and the Ipswich crimes help locate better the time of the story. The only suggestion I would have is regarding chapter 18. This long, unnecessary, quite boring dialogue completely misses your targeted audience. Everybody knows what these girls have to put up with in the rough world out there and it's already common sense that Eastern European girls are pimped over the Channel and they have a hard life over here. And, yes, everybody talks about UN, human rights, charities etc whenever the subject comes into discussion. So this chapter

doesn't bring anything new, au contraire, it reloads the old stories everybody knows.

Besides, missing your audience in the hope that more (topics) means better (sales) is sometimes considered as a firm amateur symptom.

General Style

- Consider reviewing some long fragments of dialogue that break the story, such as the Police interview in TPC3 and the extremely long and tiring fragment I've just mentioned above, which nearly turns the book into a screenplay or drama.

- Consider revising short fragments that sound too explicit or too didactic, such as "The obsession with overcoming psychological barrier to orgasm is the condition known as nymphomania" (p. TPC5/2) Condescending approaches normally prove amateurism as well.

Pace

The pace is normally good, apart from a few slip-aways easy to revise.

- p. TPC8/12 – p. TPC8/15, starting with "I couldn't believe my ears" and ending with the end of the chapter is a long, very fast paced, unconvincing fragment. The scene of Tom and Mrs Wilbraham negotiating his marriage with her daughter is way too fast. Tom accepts too easily the blackmail, with no plan B and even starts talking about money with Mrs Wilbraham.

- Tom's interest in Monica is not very well paced, either. All of a sudden, he is thinking about her with surprising intensity and, reader caught off guard, he is even talking of settling down with her. Tom's image was the

confident-I-love-my-job-type and, if presented gradually, his increasingly revealed weakness for Monica would come as natural to the readers.

- The Police suspicion about Mr Spence as the murderer is not presented gradually either. In fact, it didn't even start as a suspicion to grow into a certainty. It feels that, all of a sudden, the Police know he is the murderer, without noticing the reader, and start acting accordingly.

- Mrs Wilbraham's behavior about her daughter suddenly changes from being extremely intense to being second to none. It's understandable while she lives with Tom, but when she is informed that she disappeared, her behavior doesn't seem to switch back to being very intense. The whole marriage affair (including the amount of cash Mrs Wilbraham gives Tom too easily, without any "insurance") is quite unconvincing and I suggest revising it entirely in order to improve its consistency, its pace and its plausibility.

Questions to solve

- p.TPC3/12 Why would Didi call Tom for 6 o'clock if her husband was still there? Of course, it solves a lot in the book, but it feels like this little detail has been forced into the story in order to solve the later development of Didi's murder. The pack of cards seems to have been introduced in order to solve the Police enquiries. My suggestion is to revise the telephone conversation between Didi and Tom or to introduce a small fragment about cards and Tom as a pretend fortune teller before the telephone conversation takes place or even before Didi ever appears in the story. This way you create a more natural feeling about the story blend.

- Why would Mrs Wilbraham want to marry Theresa to Adrian Fletcher and not to Andrew Thornley? Alternatively, consider making it clear that Mrs Wilbraham did not know the Lord's family name and assumed it was Lord Fletcher. (As you make it quite clear that she wanted a title for her daughter as well as getting rid of her).

Suggestions

- “But the thief would have thought he had plenty of time, once she was dead, so he would put everything back carefully once he had taken what he wanted. He would arrange her neatly on the bed hoping that anyone coming in would think she was asleep and hope to be miles away by the time she was found.” (p. TPC6/3) Simon’s point of view (planning to tell the Police): Maybe the thief put everything back when he/she realised she was dead to look like it was a non-thief crime (as murder wasn’t their intention in the first place).

- Consider changing “shaved vagina” (p. TP12/3) with shaved pussy/shaved labia etc, as your readers are expected to notice the confusion vulva/vagina.

Revisions

- Brand names in fiction books conflict with the laws of publicity and copyright. Please revise Marks & Spencer x 1, Tesco x 3, Manolo Blahnik x 1

- Spelling: Tracy (chapter title, TPC18)/Tracey (chapter content, TPC18).

- Anya, Mickel and Simeon are not Romanian names. Consider Ania, Mihai and Simion (pp. TPC18/3 – TPC18/9)

Marketability

I found it easy to locate **TPC's** targeted audience. It must be female, 25-45, socially active, chick-type, educated, business orientated, doing her shopping in the supermarket and looking for entertainment in the supermarket.

Publishers present at the **London Book Fair 2007** agreed that the supermarket is re-shaping the publishing industry of our days. The "supermarket revolution" started in the middle 90s, when Asda introduced small stands of books and CDs in their stores. Their statistics showed that, last year, Asda sold 1.5 times more books than Waterstone's. The housewife or business woman doing her weekly shopping in the supermarket and turning to the book shelves for home entertainment is today's publishing market guide.

It's also true that they seem to have agreed upon the fact that the fiction shop in the UK seems to be nearly closed. Agents and publishers are happy to deal with established authors on a long term, rather than looking around for new comers. Eddie Bell, from **Bell Lomax Agency**, even said "I wonder sometimes how it is possible to get published at all."

Fortunately, your book has exactly the type of theme suitable for this large market, therefore we have decided to represent you in your efforts of selling the book to a publisher.

Publishers

The publishers we have in mind for this first-time author book is not a first-time author publisher, but a publisher targeting midlist authors. This is based on

the fact that publishers looking for first time authors are generally looking for a “good deal”, they are poor payers and they don’t always seem to have the right expertise and network for a proper representation and distribution nationwide.

(...)

This is the most realistic choice we could think of. Of course, we could submit the novel to the likes of **Random House**, **Harper Collins** or **Pan Macmillan**, but we do stand the chance to wait for a long time for their feedback. The rationality of this action is therefore minimal. We believe that using a midlist publisher for a first book is an efficient strategy not only to get published, but to open better opportunities for your second book.

What to do

First, edit the book to standards. Major publishers tend to treat equally edited and unedited manuscripts, but smaller publishers tend to prefer ready for print works, for obvious cost reasons.

We can recommend an independent editor or employ our freelance editors for this purpose.

Consider my suggestions made in this letter, which I believe will bring an improvement to the market score of the book.

Consider looking for a publisher as soon as possible, due to the contemporary time set of the story.

Finally, I hope my review to **TPC** has been of some help to you.

Thank you for using **Daniel Goldsmith Associates'** free assessment service and I'm looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Best Regards,

Lorena Goldsmith, MA, Editor

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