



# BOOK PIPELINE

– [Title] by XXX –

**CONCEPT / MARKETABILITY:** *{Title}* is a first person narrative journey through a dystopic near future war-scape, centered on the experiences and transformation of an individual woman who is dramatically changed by the world around her. Part predictive politic critique and morality play, this concept is both prescient and classic. The story finds itself somewhere among the *Y the Last Man*, *Handmaids Tale* and *Lord of the Flies*; this type of fiction always has an audience in multiple media, and has the benefit, in this instance, of being well written.

**PLOT/ STRUCTURE / CHARACTERS:** I struggle to speak to the plot, alluded to in the synopsis, as it almost feels like there might be two separate books described. Kim's journey and then the forthcoming building of a new society/cult. Perhaps the backstory for her arrival in this position of power is quick, and then the novel itself focuses on her time spent in power? I found the synopsis lacking in a central plot, as it pointed toward a hero's journey that abruptly hangs a left and turns our protagonist into a mentor antagonist. A hero can be complicated, fallen, and failed, but turning them into the actual villain is a unique choice, and begs the question who is the hero now? I'd recommend rewriting the synopsis with an eye toward the pacing of the plot, and excluding information that may be distracting and not primary in your storytelling.

The characters have excellent interior worlds of their own, and you use a great facility in moving from mind to mind and character to character. The exposition laid out for the reader, in detailed writing and description (clothing, feeling, behavior) puts us in the middle of things in an extremely effective way. I know what your characters look like, sound like, and feel like. Well done.

I understand your fast drop *in medias res* to the story, but I need a little more contextual information to understand the motivations of the characters' actions. I know there was a war; these people are refugees. But how in 24 hours did they find themselves so completely at the mercy of the smugglers, and how did the smugglers find their line of work and become so competent as to have the refugees at their will? A few expository flashbacks would lend credibility to the authority of the smugglers and the desperation of the refugees. Is there no longer a government? Do the people of this world have no recourse for disaster situations? 24 hours feels like

not nearly long enough for Kim to find her life destroyed and find her way to a band of smugglers and travel so far. If it is long enough, please let us see how.

**VOICE:** Your voice is strong and consistent, within your novel, although it seems to start on page 2. The first page is a little weak, compared to the strength of the writing as the novel goes on. This may make agents and publishers less inclined to turn the page, which I would be sorry to see. That page, and opening, are a perfectly reasonable way to start your story, but need to be written with the robust and effective language you're capable of. And again, the synopsis is meandering and inconsistent, whereas the novel itself promises legitimate storytelling, I would reiterate that inconsistency here.

**MECHANICS:** I would recommend a proofreader, as I saw one floating "anyway" that may have been unintentional. But overall, it was a very smooth read, well-paced, clear, and well written. A handful of run on sentences might benefit from re-punctuating, but that may be stylistic as well and certainly didn't distract from the story.

**EMOTIONAL RESONANCE:** I resonated with the potential of an impending apocalyptic end to our current way of life in this country as well as the hints that the people of this world had been suffering from going along, long past the point of reason in an increasingly dangerous situation. I think you did a lovely job of showing people of different demographics, all experiencing the trauma together, as well as giving blunt realism to a catastrophe of that nature. I would recommend, some moments of joy or even success, if only in flashbacks, so the reader isn't overwhelmed by the consistent sorrow of the read.

**OTHER THOUGHTS:** This writer is certainly a novelist. The subject matter for this novel is high concept and could easily become untenable or rife with too many subplots and characters. I'd suggest a strong outline, a revised synopsis, and holding yourself to task in maintaining forward motion. The readers will have to believe the reasonable, yet recently traumatized woman we meet in the beginning is capable of becoming a punishing cult leader. We will have to clearly see how that is possible.

You do yourself a service writing what you know (personalizing) in a heightened reality, but try not to let yourself slip all the way in (were you a speech writer? It's oddly specific and doesn't seem like a piece of historical backstory that builds Kim's character in a meaningful way, maybe it does later on...) When writers write about characters who are writers, it has a way of breaking the fourth wall, and in dystopia, it's terribly important to keep the suspension of disbelief in place. All of that considered this story has legitimate potential as a novel.