

Editorial Notes

Chapter 1

I really enjoyed the opening scene of your book. The first paragraph drew me into the story—I'm keen to learn more and look forward to turning the page. In a few short sentences, we are teased into the world, the characters, and the tale to come.

You have successfully conveyed the importance of Hamilton in the story. This is his life's work coming to fruition. And we are shown the magnitude of his invention and its impact on humanity. Hamilton is dying of pancreatic cancer, adding emotional weight to this project, and we now know he won't live to see its completion. His disease and his desire to live longer to see his project success is related to the cryogenics project, but the reader is not made aware of this yet.

One point to note on the setting: Initially, it's a little unclear where Hamilton's office is. You mention he's viewing “the graceful arms of his rotating space station extending from his office,” but later he's gazing “at his marvel slowly rotating above the earth,” which gives the impression he is looking up, as though on Earth.

You have an opportunity here to expand on the location description and create an emotional impact for the reader. Are they in space? Can they see Earth? What about the station itself? The environment/view would be impactful, immense, breathtaking. Can you show some of this? You want the reader to be right there in the office with them, sensing the environment—trigger their imagination. Remember: show, don't tell (e.g., rather than *tell* the reader “Earth looked beautiful from space,” *show* the scene. There are livestreamed HD cameras on the ISS that could give some ideas.)

This is a great introduction to Samantha. She's poised, confident, no-nonsense, and perceptive. She'll be taking the third mission. This first chapter, however, did give me the impression that Samantha was the protagonist. The description of Samantha really needs to be from our POV character, Hamilton, but this paragraph jumps from Hamilton to Samantha.

We learn about Matt, the eponymous fourth envoy (and the real protagonist) taking the longest mission. A terror attack killed his wife, and he's uncommunicative and focused on his work, perhaps because of his loss. This tragic history has not been shared with the public. Readers may find this thread unrealistic as every detail of the astronauts' lives would likely be public knowledge.

We also learn about Aaron, the first envoy, and Samantha's distaste for him. We get the impression Aaron is a smarmy type who climbed his way to the top over other people.

Hamilton wonders “how any of these people could leave any and all of their relationships behind and jump boldly into a new world.” But I'm not convinced by this phrase. Isn't this the whole point of his project? He has built it for that very purpose. He sees himself in the travelers. I would imagine that someone whose life's work was centered around traveling into a new world would understand exactly

how anyone could do it. My impression of Hamilton is that he's devoted to his work, so it's likely he has left his own relationships and family behind in favor of his station.

Samantha and Hamilton share a moment when he discloses his cancer. When he asks if she has ever marveled at anything, it hints at a mystery he has experienced and perhaps at something Samantha will experience in the future. The final phrase, "Maybe one day you will," appears to foreshadow Samantha's story arc. Does this hint play out later in the story?

During this scene, the point of view shifts from Hamilton to Samantha. But shifting points of view can cause confusion in the reader's mind: Who is the most important character here? Who is our protagonist? Who should we be invested in? When we get to the paragraph "*To Share with Humanity...*," we are unsure whose thoughts these are. I suggest keeping control of the scene by maintaining a single point of view—Hamilton. One way to do this is to *show* the other character's opinion rather than telling. For example, rather than writing "but Samantha didn't appreciate the insult," you could describe her physical reaction to his words. Any description of Samantha's appearance or personality should be from Hamilton's point of view.

Chapter 2

This is our introduction to Aaron and Idris as they return to Earth.

For me, this scene lacks some tension. Aaron is looking forward to his return, but it all happens a little too easily. I'd like to see more of his personality shine through. In the first chapter, we learn he is a "condescending prick who should have lived the remainder of his life out as a smug accountant." When he says, "Clean this place up, I'm going to get ready," we can see how rude he is, but in the scene, there is little else to show this. Can you expand on his personality, either through dialogue or interactions with Idris or people he meets on Earth?

Much of the narrative "tells" rather than "shows" the audience. This can leave little for the reader to imagine. "The planet was beautiful, and the people seemed happy." "Dinner was perfect." Can you instead *show* this through dialogue or Aaron's experiences? This is an opportunity to fill the reader's senses about this future Earth.

The planet is great, people are great, life is great. But it's a little too nice and becomes a little dull because of it. It's been eighteen months for Aaron but thirty years on Earth—can you convey the impact of this somehow? (How does it smell to be back home? Does he meet an old flame who's aged? Are his parents now dead?)

I'd also like to see some of Aaron's (and Idris's) character flaws. Are there challenges he had on the journey on his arrival? What makes him tick? We learn that Idris is a poor conversationalist, but can you expand on the computer's personality?

I'm a little confused about Idris's capabilities. The reader would imagine the difficulty of a computer cooking sunny-side up eggs—is Idris a robot as well? Also, Aaron has been in space for eighteen months—can he have fresh, sunny-side up eggs after all that time? Where did the oranges