



Ms Sona Vogel
c/o Ms Amy Boorstein
Crown Publishers

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Dear Sona,

My thanks for a meticulous job on this typescript.

As we discussed, I've thought about your suggested serial commas. You have also put in a comma before the conjunction in most compound sentences, and I've given a lot of thought to this too.

My feeling in the end is that these extra commas don't make the sentences easier to read, but do give the prose a faintly old-fashioned feel; and I'm afraid I still prefer my original style in most cases. So please delete all inserted commas except where I have ticked them in pencil.

For similar reasons I like your many deletions of commas and I have only occasionally stetted these.

Now and again you have corrected my punctuation within dialogue, and I have sometimes stetted it because I think semicolons look odd in informal conversation.

I appreciate your occasional reminders to use the subjunctive mood and the pluperfect tense. .

However, I don't like contractions such as "they'd" or "she'd" outside dialogue so I have changed these to "they would" and "she had". In one or two exceptions, where there are too many "hads" in the sentence, I have stetted.

I soon gave up doublechecking you on compound words: you were always right!

The City, capitalised as on p49, means the original Roman walled city of London, which still exists as a postal district, and whose boundaries are still discernible in place names such as Aldgate, Cripplegate and Temple Bar. It covers a square mile. The City (or the Square Mile) can also mean the financial district (like Wall Street). Grosvenor Square is outside this neighbourhood. So is Covent Garden, where Mack goes to the theatre; and on p157 he is talking about the city with a lower-case c. As this distinction is not known to many American readers I don't think it is worth preserving, so I have simply deleted the words "in the City" on p49, and left the word lower-cased in every other reference.

A more knotty problem occurs in sentences such as this one on p67:

The hinds were downwind of the hunters and, as they always grazed into the wind, they were facing away, showing the white flash of their rumps to Jay's glass.

You want to insert a comma after "hunters" and delete the comma after "and". I see that *Chicago Manual of Style* agrees with you. But I think it's more elegant to isolate the dependent clause, especially as the sentence would still make sense if that clause were omitted. So I have stetted my original in these

cases (pps49, 187, 208, 305).

Finally, a question of book design rather than copy editing. I always put an asterisk to indicate a scene break, and I see you have replaced these with a simple missed line. The trouble is that when the missed line occurs at the turn of a page it does not read. Some publishers use the asterisk only where the scene break occurs at the turn of a page, but this is inconsistent. On balance I prefer to use the asterisk, or other symbol, consistently throughout. If this is a problem perhaps Amy will call me.

I have enjoyed reviewing your work and thank you once again. If you feel strongly that I'm wrong about any of the above please call me--I would be delighted to discuss these points further.

Yours sincerely,

Ken Fries