

Ken Follett Private

From: Barbara Follett_Private
Sent: 20 April 2004 10:38
To: Ken Follett_Private
Subject: Whiteout

Dear Wolf,

Congratulations on a truly gripping second draft of *Whiteout*. I thoroughly enjoyed re-reading it and found myself wanting to get back to it even though I knew what was going to happen.

Only two overall points - I would have preferred more about Christmas. Especially given that it will be coming out just beforehand and is an ideal gift. I think it would also be a good idea to say how and why *Mama Marta* died. Breast cancer - smoking. It would make her more real.

X Day One- December 23rd

I like the introduction. It sets the scene and increases the tension. This got this reader more involved in the book right from the start. However, it does need to be far less explicit. Especially the bit where the young man is musing about whether or not he could kill the people in the theatre. How about making it more general? Set it in a busy, pre-Christmas, department store where a pretty young woman, dressed as little red devil with horns, is promoting the latest perfume by spraying people with it? It could still be viewed through a non-Christian observer's eyes and the threat could be implied not explicit. With everyone so worried about terrorism not much needs to be said.

Day Two - Christmas Eve

✓ Page 22/23 I do not think that Toni should be "almost enjoying" going through the dead man's papers. I know what you mean but he was in an appalling state in the shed and she should be shocked. On Page 28 she has to "fight back tears" when she hears that he has died. This does not fit with "enjoying"

X Page 24 I think that the police racism issue needs to be one that gets into the press and Toni's reaction does too. Otherwise it would be difficult to get her to resign. It would also give Frank a reason for leaving her. Embarrassment and, if he is very ambitious, fear of guilt by association. I feel that a bit more has to be said about the break-up and the relationship. Where they go to marry? Have children? Why, for someone who reacts as she does to Stanley's remark about not wanting to start another family, has she not raised this matter with Frank? Could she lose a child - miscarry?

X Page 31 Where, in the timeline of the Toni/Frank relationship, does the Farmer Kirk incident occur? It is not clear and could be part of the reason for his leaving her. It could also be a reason for not leaving her. He might want to keep her quiet.

Page 37 Kit's "way of skimming money from Oxenford Medical" is introduced too casually. There is no explanation, at this point, of why he is doing it. It is needed. Son's do not often steal from their father's companies. We need something here about gambling debts, feeling that he is entitled and that his father will never notice. We also need to know where this event is in relationship to his mother's death. If it was discovered soon afterwards it might have made his father more lenient - or less involved.

X Page 39 "Normally, he would have *gloated* at his father's trouble". This is a very strong, and

unexplained, verb to use here.

✓ **Page 40** How did Toni feel about having to tell a recently breaved man that his son was stealing money from his company. Did she pause? Was this when she first felt something for him. Was this when she say behind the reserve?

Page 64 Some of this is hinted at in the conversation between Miranda and Olga

✓ **Page 70** I found the last sentence of the first paragraph "because she feared no one would ever love her as Stanley had loved Marta" too needy. You could say something like "She wondered if anyone would ever love her the way Stanley had..." It makes Toni sound less Mill's and Boonish.

✗ **Page 71** I feel that the hand on the shoulder should be more of a quick squeeze and less of a lingering pat. It gives the game away too quickly. I do not htink that it is a good idea to let the reader know, or guess, what Stanley feels yet. However, it is a good way to hear about some of Toni's feelings.

✓ **Page 77** "She longed to give him a comforting hug". I am uncomfortable with this. Toni is the sort of woman who would joke a person out of depression. She could be surprised by the urge to give him a comforting hug and remonstrate with herself - get a grip girl - but "long"? Not Toni.

✗ **Page 107** "Date" is an Americanism.

✓ **Page 123** "She longed to say *Do you think that you could ever love again?* etc. I would prefer this paragraph to be removed. Plus the preceding sentence about strength of character. It is too Mills and Boonish. I almost expected him to "crush her to his manly chest" where she could feel "the rough tweed of his jacket on her cheek".

✓ **Page 145** "Mean" is an Americanism. "Quits" also.

✓ **Page 152** "The women of the house had found jobs to do" - this could be more Christmassy.

✗ **Page 157** This is the first glimpse we have of Kit's reasons for behaving as he does. They are good but need to have been dealt with earlier. Could he have been very ill as a child and spoilt by his mother?

✗ **Page 162** "Hamper" is an Americanism and I have never heard of anyone living in a one bedroomed flat who had such a thing as a special "dry-cleaning hamper". Most people put it into a shopping bag in the cupboard to take down to the cleaners later in the week.

✓ **Page 193** "That was brutal". I think, as a parent, I might have said a bit more. Like unnecessary and cruel. Also why?

✗ **Page 195** "acting charades". Don't people normally say "playing".

Day Three - Christmas Day

✓ **From Page 218** - What about making contact with the outside world by e-mail or fax? I think these need to be mentioned and dealt with.

Page 376 I think that a little more about Kit's reasons is needed here. "First you fired me". Perhaps he should have asked for money BEFORE the creaming off scam. That is more undersatndable.

Around Page 400 - I was looking forward to the first meeting between Toni and Stanley after the passionate (and brilliant) telephone call. Nothing much needs to happen - could not really under the circumstances - but it would be nice if they could catch each others eyes or something. It is a bit of an anti-climax otherwise.

Boxing Day - I like the bit about the man with many names being apprehended.

A Year Later

Very nice. Just one point -

Page 457 "Cover up that tent-pole". This is a bit crude. When a step-daughter is at the door, a step mother, particularly one who has not had childre, would tend to become a-sexual and slightly embarrassed. All women do this. You must have seen it. She is more likely to have whispered "Go and have a shower" and not to have opened the door until he had left the room. There is a taboo about children seeing, (even a covered up), sexually aroused parent.

That's all folks,

Well done Wolf.

Bugs

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