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Dear Ken,

I love THE RUSSIAN PRINCE. I'm thrilled with your improvements. The book is wonderful. To me, it's your best one so far.

Still, I think it needs another week or so of very minor improvements, all I would think easily accomplished.

In the earlier chapters there are several chunks of not fully digested exposition. Some of these need to be condensed, some cut, and others made more personal in terms of the particular character.

The climax is superb, but again there are a few little scenes toward the end which have little or no emotional impact, and here and there we need just a bit of "punching up."

Also, in the first half of the novel, there are stray scenes in which the suspense plot seems to disappear. In a few places, the reader needs to be reminded that the character is in danger, tense, worried, et cetera. For example, I love your having Walden catch the nitroglycerine, but then we need some reverberations subsequently in the book, and this is never mentioned.

By the same token, we need to do something about Lydia's piano playing. Either we need some mention that once she has left St. Petersburg, she never touches the piano again; or we need occasionally to have her repair to the piano and let her feelings out as she did as a young girl at the British Embassy.

What I'm going to do now is indicate the pages which I think you ought to consider "improving." The bulk of the book and most of the pages need no improving at all, so I don't think the list is going to be too long:

2) I think the bottom paragraph as well as the top paragraph on 3 are rather impersonal and historical. I wonder if this paragraph couldn't be rephrased somehow as an amplification of Walden's feelings about Churchill. Perhaps we could throw in some adjectives, i.e. instead of saying, liberal government, maybe the damn liberal government, or the bloody liberal government. When you say, after the liberals had won the election in 1906, I wonder if it might not be better to personify the liberals in terms of

Asquith or some other individual. There might also be an adjective he would use to describe Asquith. The term, political life, is also a little abstract to me. I don't quite know what Walden is talking about or thinking. Nor is it fully clear to me what he means by, good society. Similarly, on 3, I wonder if we couldn't have an adjective for the words, trade unions. And who issues the best invitation lists? Could we just speak in terms of who Walden invites or who some close friend of his invites or maybe there is one trend-setting invitation list. Ken, English readers may digest all this with no difficulty at all, but for the U.S., I would prefer to see all this more richly personalized through Walden's sensibilities.

5) See my handwritten notes. 10) Handwritten notes. 11) Handwritten notes.

12) The top paragraph I find rather distancing in terms of the relationship between Walden and Aleks. I wonder about Walden's giving him time, et cetera and being rewarded, et cetera. Where is the pleasure?

16) Handwritten note.

24) Charlotte's climb goes on roughly for two pages, which I feel is too long. Granted, we need to set up all this roof stuff for the climax at the end of the book, but still all this detail here stops the action. I would restrict the climbing around to a page at most. ✓

27) Handwritten note. 29) Handwritten note. 30) Handwritten note, 31), 33).

34) I would make a somewhat larger event of Feliks' finding 165 Jubilee Street. It is his temporary haven; and we ought to have some sense of how he feels about the place, i.e. handsome - ugly, inviting - not inviting, delighted to have found or apprehensive about what he'll find inside, et cetera. At the bottom of that page we need some sense of the time span between Feliks' arrival and the day Orlov is arriving. It could be a week later, two weeks, et cetera.

35) and 36) I find too purely factual. Feliks is encountering all sorts of new things, new people, customs, et cetera; but we have very little here about how he feels, i.e. rage, concern, delight, whether he's worried about failing, or being caught if he succeeds, whether he likes or dislikes England, the English, et cetera. We don't need much of this, but just a little to give color to these two pages.

39) Handwritten note. 40) What is his reaction to the spectacle of Orlov's arrival. Is he amused, dismayed? On 41) does Feliks feel any pleasure or joyful anticipation in the fact that Josef had been right?

50) Handwritten note.

65) Let's double check our Yiddish greeting.

70) Handwritten note, 72).

74) Charlotte must be concerned primarily with the success of her debut, but at the same time I think that we need to try and connect this up with the main action, so I would suggest that at some point in this scene she ought to observe some nervousness or other behavior not characteristic of her father, which might suggest to her that he could be having some problem with Aleks. See handwritten note.

81) Since Churchill himself is of the English aristocracy, would he use that as a term with which to compliment Walden? It seems to me that he ought to make this compliment personal rather than generic.

83) Walden strikes me as being too complacent in his scene with Churchill. After all, what if the deal with Aleks doesn't get made, or what if the Russians demand more than the English can give? Walden, it seems to me, can be delighted with his daughter and with the progress he thinks he's making, but he shouldn't be too cocksure of himself -- I think.

I would rephrase the description of The Mall at the top of 83 as seen through Feliks' eyes.

95) Handwritten note. 97) - 101) I think we could do with a bit less Kropotkin. 102) Handwritten note.

114) Thomson's career, as recalled in his mind by Walden, ought, I think to be condensed and perhaps also "colored" a bit. I've suggested some cuts in the text, but I think you can improve on these.

You have Walden clutching rhythmically at the arm of his chair at the beginning of the scene, but I think you need to see this more throughout the scene, and also to punctuate his speech with a few irregularities to show the tension that he must feel, having had such a close call. On 115 you have Walden realizing that he had been talking rather loudly, but we the readers do not experience this as it is happening. We need to.

116) Bottom paragraph. Would Walden speak this way in front of Aleks?

121) What does Charlotte think when her father says, "Oh, it wasn't as bad as it sounded." I think we need to keep the tension going, and Charlotte at this point might notice some discrepancy between what her father says and what she thinks he really feels. This also would prepare nicely for what comes later. On 125 you mention that Charlotte feels the incident in the park still preys on papa's mind, but it's not clear what he does that she notices.

126) This might be a place where Charlotte could observe that Walden might be somewhat concerned about "larger things." I love the moment where he talks to her about tobacco, but she might notice that he also is perhaps overly concerned, anxious, et cetera.

127) Handwritten note. And I wonder if they might be apprehensive as they get into the carriage. Only recently when they got into a carriage they were attacked. Might there be thought of some extra precaution, or at least some sense of concern?

128) Handwritten note. 129). 132).

138) The ²~~be~~ long expository paragraphs contain too much information in too short a space. I suggest either that you expand one item and drop all the rest, or cut all this down to a sentence or two. Proper names get in the way, I feel, and they don't really register unless we get much more information, and there's no time for that. Maybe it might be better simply to say that he was involved in several murders, the founding of two secret newspapers, that he witnessed massacres, pogroms, et cetera; and leave all that just rather general.

170) At the bottom where you have Walden having all his worries, I think you ought to include his concern for Aleks' life.

183) Again, I urge you to cut ^{some of} Mrs. Pankhurst. I think that her message will come across more richly to your readers if it's not so long. I think you easily can cut this in half.

200 - 202) Through this scene, Walden needs to feel the after shock of almost having died. ✓

233) Walden begins this scene with nervous indigestion, and then carries a gun as he and Aleks go for a walk; but once they begin talking about farm machinery, all the tension and suspense disappear. As Walden speaks with Samuel Jones, I think from time to time he ought either to feel a twinge of his indigestion, or look over his shoulder, or do something to indicate that there is something on his mind or in his subconscious aside from buying new machinery, and that something has to do with Aleks' safety and their negotiation. Aleks too can't be totally calm. Maybe he's the one who's looking over his shoulder.

241) Handwritten note.

245) Shouldn't Churchill say something about Walden's having caught the nitroglycerine? Some mention of Walden's bravery would be appropriate, I think, as well as a reference to the personal danger which Walden is in; and of course Churchill too ought to bring in the national danger.

250) Handwritten note, 251). 273).

281) I think Charlotte is feeling much more anguish than comes through. She must be feeling very torn, her love as opposed to her anger at what Feliks is asking her, all this needs a bit more expression. We hear what she says, but we know little of what she's feeling. At the end she sounds a bit smug, but I suspect that she's feeling pain, only we're not sure because you do not tell us.

284) I still feel that Walden when he refers to Feliks as Feliks makes it all sound rather familiar and friendly. Perhaps they ought to struggle with a term for him and then decide simply to call him Feliks.

Asquith too ought to comment initially, I think, on Walden's bravery. It's not every day that an earl makes a flying leap to catch a bottle of nitroglycerine, and I imagine that the prime minister would be politician enough to say something nice to Walden about this. You might also mention something about the fact that Walden himself ^{was} ~~is~~ trying to shoot at Feliks as Feliks was escaping from Canada House.

285) Handwritten note.

305) You say, "The boy was like a son to Walden;" but we haven't felt quite enough of this through the book. There is a moment when we feel Walden's fatherly pride at Aleks' skill as a negotiator but in the earlier Walden scenes, we are going to have to have a few more feelings of love and pride if we are to take this worry on 305 at face value.

306) Handwritten note. 308). 310). 311). 312). 315). 318). 324). 325). 326). 330).

331) The top paragraph is a little hard to follow. Feliks' physical action isn't all that clear to me, nor do I feel the terror and/or tension which he must be feeling at this moment.

335) Handwritten note. 336). 337). 345). 347). 348).

367) Feliks in this part of the climax is much, much better than in the previous draft, but we still need more of a balance between action and emotion. For example, what a relief that he has found the fuel! He must feel some pleasure, but you don't let us in on that. On 368, we need to feel more of his tension when the policeman is close by, and then more of his relief when the policeman goes away. On 369, Feliks is discovered. There has to be a horrible moment, or a fearful one, or something, before he hits the policeman with the gun. And isn't there some relief that the blow has indeed hit home and the policeman is no longer a threat and maybe also some relief that the policeman falls quietly as opposed to falling noisily?

377) I think we need to feel more of Walden's despair when he discovers that his house is on fire, more of his pain when he shouts, "My house is burning down!"

379) Lydia shouts, "I can't leave you", but we don't fully feel her pain, terror, desparation -- all the horror that must be going through her at the thought that her daughter may be burnt up in this fire.

381) The sight of Lydia running out of the house with her hair on fire is acted on too quickly, I feel. I suggest that we need a moment here, a moment that first embodies Feliks' emotional reaction to the sight, then a moment of decision, and then the action of running to her. This

is a major turning point in the story, and we do need just a bit more time and space for this big turn.

384) Handwritten note.

385) I think we could have a somewhat fuller description of Walden as he emerges from the fire, not just his skin color, but his general look. He must look very different from any other time when anyone in this book has seen him.

387) Handwritten note.

And that's it. Bravo!

Love,

A handwritten signature consisting of a stylized, elongated cursive letter 'A' that tapers to a point on the right side.

Al