

RUNAWAY

General Points:

1. First of all, I loved the book. It is full of wonderful characters and situations and you have handled the descriptions of America brilliantly. I got lost in it despite the fact that I had read the outline and was trying to read it critically. Congratulations.
2. However, I felt that the following points needed attention:

Mack needs to be less of a goody goody. After the Annie episode he does not have a sexual thought (unless I missed it) for the rest of the book. Could he have a weakness - a bad temper, a liking for drink ... something.

Jay needs to be less one dimensional. For me he was too like Mickey in *A Dangerous Fortune*. I think that he needs to care about somebody else beside himself to become three-dimensional. His relationship to his mother is very similar to that of William and his mother in *Pillars* and that of Mickey to Augusta in *A Dangerous Fortune*. Die Nadel's charm was that he had feelings.

Lizzie needs to be more consistent. She does not start out the book as the kind of woman who would compromise her principles in the surprisingly easy way she does after Jay has caused her miscarriage and after he has been so cruel in the US. The girl portrayed at the beginning of the book would masturbate rather than try to crawl to Jay for sexual satisfaction or affection. She would be a little more calculating and rebellious. (See court scene note below). I feel that she too needs to care about someone else other than herself. It makes her very young and one dimensional too. Perhaps her mother could be the person. Perhaps Jay could use her affection for her mother to get her to do what he wants. Perhaps she could go to the US with them and get very ill or die on the boat and this could provide Lizzie with a coming of age experience. It would also give her a more of a context. I often did not know where she was coming from and felt that she sailed through situations without being touched by them.

The Minor Characters: George and Alicia Jamisson, Robert Jamisson and Lizzie's mother are all well drawn but sink without trace after the *Rosebud* sets sail for the US. I would like to know what happened to them and I would like some resolution of the relationship between Jay and his father.

I also feel that it is too predicatable that ALL of Mack's family should die in the mine disaster. Perhaps it might be a good idea to keep Annie alive and re-introduce her into the story at some point.

6. The Mack, Lizzie, Jay Triangle: This needed more tension for me. Perhaps Jay could fall in love with Lizzie sometime after the wedding. He could be bewitched by her frank sexuality. At the same time she would go off him because of the mine episode. He would think that she was in love with Mack and this would fuel (and explain) his violent behaviour towards them both. The Lizzie/Mack attraction happened too quickly for me. I felt that it needed more heralding. When it finally happens I felt it need more cementing (see note on Peg's discovery of them making love in the waterfall).

7. The Background: I found it odd that Lizzie went on the boat without a maid.

The role of the church in early America is hardly mentioned. Would Lizzie and Jay not have gone to church? I don't know why I thought about this, but, as I did, I thought that I would include it.

Page Points:

These are the notes that I made whilst I was reading - the numbers refer to the first draft:

1. What does Mack look like? (Intro) I think that his looks change later in the book.
- ✓ 2. How come Mack and Esther can read when the others cannot? (p. 18)
3. Wouldn't Lizzie tend to be called Elizabeth by her people who did not know her well - like Jay's father. She might prefer to be called Lizzie though (p. 23).
- ✓ 4. Need a bit more on Lizzie's childhood to explain why she has grown up so unlike other young girls of her day. Perhaps her father could have had a long and lingering illness which led her mother to neglect the finer points of her upbringing and leave her to be raised by an old (male) retainer who treated her like a boy (p. 23)
- ✓ 5. Need a bit more on Robert's looks (p. 25).
6. Jay's behaviour is anachronistic. He would not automatically sit down next to his father without being invited (he would be reproofed if he did). He would not take whisky without being offered (p.44/45).
7. Why does George Jamisson dislike Jay so much? It seems to come from nowhere. Does he think that he is

not his son or does he feel that he is a living reminder of his infidelity to Robert's mother Olive. Perhaps it is more complicated - he does not feel Alicia is really his wife - just his mistress. She loves sex and though part of him is pleased that she does another part does not consider it the proper behaviour for a wife. It also makes him wonder if she is faithful and makes him doubt that the handsome Jay is his (p. 45).

8. I find the piece about Lizzie as a curate unconvincing. Surely someone would have noticed and wondered where she came from? Perhaps the Pastor could go home in a sulk (the letter episode) and Lizzie, seeing him and his wife slip away, could seize her chance and say (in her curate's guise) that she had been sent in his place.
9. Henry Jamisson - who he? He appears - and disappears - rather suddenly (p 93).
10. Mack seems largely indifferent to Lizzie for most of the book - even during the river episode. A building tension might work better with the river episode putting her in a somewhat different light. Perhaps he could like her but not rate her - tease her because she is pretty and quick despite being spoilt and rich. The teasing could be an expression of the class divide. Mack could begin to fancy Lizzie after this episode.
11. What happens to the fur cloak? It would be worth keeping or selling.
12. Jay is too like Mickey. Totally devoid of feelings. Machine - like except for certain sexual needs. It would be a good idea if he was in love with someone else. A Melanie figure (*Gone with the Wind*) who is a foil for Lizzie's Scarlett like character but whom Jay cannot win. (Perhaps she could marry Robert who gets rather forgotten in the whole story).
13. PC point - scowling darkly rather blackly (p.164)
14. Surely Jay feels SOMETHING (like, dislike, amusement) for Lizzie (p.174).
15. What does Jay feel when he and Lizzie get married?
16. Perhaps Jay should (in spite of himself) fall in love with Lizzie just as she is falling out of love with him?
17. Jay is too black and white a villain.
18. (Court scene) The tension could be heightened if only Lizzie (not Mack) knew of the mine disaster. I do not think that a good lawyer would tell his client such news just

BEFORE the trial.

19. (Court scene) Lizzie could think: I will agree to give in. Jay's father will never know if I actually do or not. She needs to look at Jay and we need to know what Jay is thinking/feeling at this moment.
- ✓ 20. *Rosebud* is that intentionally the same name as the ship that Mack boarded earlier in the book before the coal strike? Would he not recognise it if it was the same ship? (p. 311).
21. Page 313 "Things were better between her and Jay....". This is too easy. Neither character is forgiving.
22. The scene in which Jay hits Lizzie needs more motivation from Jay. Perhaps he could be jealous of Mack - think that Lizzie fancied him.
23. Page 383. Would Lizzie have accepted the situation this easily? Given how she felt after the discovery of the sinking of the mine on her land would she not have reacted more angrily.
24. Page 416. Why, after being humiliated by him, did Lizzie dress up for Jay?
25. Page 462. Anachronism - dykes.
26. Page 470. The Mack Lizzie scene happens to quickly. Needs a more gradual pursuit here.
27. The flight. Wouldn't Lizzie have worn men's clothes? She wanted to all through the book. This is her escape to freedom.
28. There needs to be a tension-relieving scene between Mack and Lizzie in which they talk about episodes (like the river) together. A recap through the other's eyes point which always happens after you finally get someone you have hankered after for a long time. I personally do not like the idea that their feelings for each other are insufficiently strong to weather Pegs discovery of them making love. After such a scene it is a bit of an anti-climax to find them back in separate tents.
29. How many of your heroines have killed the villain - *Eye of the Needle*, *Lie Down with Lions* and *Augusta in A Dangerous Fortune*. Is this too predictable?
30. Peg should not go off with the Indian -it is too sudden - but there is no harm in hinting that she may eventually do so. It would be better if Mack had to (humourously) force her to go with them. That is more likely.