

Izzard Ink Editing Action Plan for *Between Past and Present*

After authors receive their manuscript assessment with comments from our editors, we work with them to create this action plan, with takeaways that we can bring to potential editors to help guide the project forward. This action plan helps us communicate with editors and keep our eyes on the bigger picture of author goals and marketing strategies.

Basic Information

Title: *Between Past and Present*

Subtitle: *Tales and Tides of the Little Spokane*

Author: Jenna Dunham

Brief Synopsis of the Manuscript:

"Between Past and Present: Tales and Tides of the Little Spokane" traverses through a vivid tapestry of history, architecture, nature, and local life around the Little Spokane and Spokane Rivers. Through the lens of a knothole in a century-and-a-half old barn, the narrative reveals the quaint and rugged charm of Spokane County, mingling historical recountings with contemplative musings.

Peavine Jimmy, a historical figure, brings to light the essence of frontier spirit, while the exchanges between native child Slough-keetcha (later Chief Spokane Garry) and the new neighbors, Mister White and Will Black, offer a glimpse into the evolving dynamics of the locale. The manuscript also delves into the curious, sometimes whimsical, sometimes darker vignettes of local life, symbolized through characters like Viper Bugloss, a mysterious and somewhat mischievous figure intertwined with the area's folklore.

As the narrative meanders like the rivers it describes, it evokes a nostalgic picture of the past, a nuanced understanding of the present, and a contemplative look into the complex, intertwined identities of the individuals who have, over time, molded and been molded by this distinctive landscape. Through its multifaceted narrative, *Between Past and Present: Tales and Tides of the Little Spokane* captures the enduring dialogue between humanity and nature, past and present, native and newcomer in a region alive with history and natural splendor.

Category/BISAC:

1. Historical Fiction (FIC014000 - Fiction / Historical):

- The manuscript explores a rich historical setting, detailing structures, persons, and events of a bygone era in a very specific locality (Spokane

County). The narratives intertwine historical facts with fictional or speculative elements, which is characteristic of historical fiction.

2. Literary Fiction (FIC019000 - Fiction / Literary):

- There's a substantial amount of introspection, symbolism, and exploration of human conditions and experiences that are characteristic of literary fiction. The storytelling approach, the philosophical musings, and the intricate details about human interactions and the environment reflect a literary fiction genre.

3. Nature (NAT045000 - Nature / General):

- There's a profound engagement with nature, its landscapes, and how humans interact with it. The detailed descriptions of the Spokane and Little Spokane Rivers, the flora, fauna, and the rural setting are central to the narrative. While it's woven in a fictional narrative, the way nature is depicted aligns with themes found in nature writing.

Top 5 Keywords/Key terms: (we will revisit these keywords with the help of an editor who's delved deeper into the content)

1. Historical Fiction
2. Spokane County
3. Frontier Life
4. Native American Heritage
5. Nature and Ecology

Author Plan

What are your goals in publishing? (Author Redacted)

What types of readers make up the target audience, and how will you reach that audience?

1. **Historical Fiction:** Readers who enjoy being transported to different times and places may find the setting and historical elements engaging.
2. **Regional Histories:** Individuals interested in the history of Spokane County or the Pacific Northwest may be drawn to the detailed local lore.
3. **Native American Heritage:** Those interested in indigenous cultures and histories might appreciate the references to Chief Spokane Garry and other elements of Native American life.
4. **Nature and Ecology:** Readers who appreciate a strong sense of place and detailed descriptions of natural settings might find the ecological and environmental aspects of the story compelling.

5. **Frontier and Pioneer Life:** Fans of frontier life, pioneering tales, or rustic Americana might appreciate the setting and the rugged characters present in the story.

Strategies to Reach the Target Audience:

1. **Local Bookstores and Libraries:** Given the regional focus of the manuscript, promoting the book in local bookstores and libraries within Spokane County and surrounding areas could be effective. Organizing book signings, readings, or discussions at these venues can draw in interested readers.
2. **Regional Historical Societies and Museums:** Collaborating with regional historical societies and museums to promote the book can reach individuals interested in the local history portrayed in the manuscript.
3. **Online Communities:** Engaging with online communities and forums dedicated to historical fiction, regional histories, or Native American heritage can help spread the word about the book. Posting in relevant Reddit communities or Facebook groups, for instance, might pique the interest of potential readers.
4. **Social Media Advertising:** Utilizing social media platforms to create targeted ads can reach a wider audience. Ads can be tailored to individuals who have interests aligned with the themes of the book.
5. **Blogging and Guest Blogging:** Regular blog posts on the author's website, as well as guest posts on established blogs that cover similar themes, can help build an audience. Blog posts can delve into the historical or ecological aspects of the book, share insights into the writing process, or explore the real-life locales depicted in the manuscript.
6. **Amazon and Goodreads:** Ensuring the book is listed on Amazon and Goodreads, with appropriate keywords and categories, will help reach readers searching for books in these themes. Encouraging early readers to leave reviews can also improve the book's visibility.
7. **Email Marketing:** Collecting emails and sending out newsletters with updates, special offers, or related content can help build a dedicated readership over time.
8. **Local Newspapers and Magazines:** Securing reviews or features in local newspapers or regional magazines can also help reach the target audience.
9. **School and University Partnerships:** Given the educational potential of the manuscript, forming partnerships with local schools or universities for readings or discussions can help reach a broader audience, including students and educators.
10. **SEO Optimization:** Ensuring the author's website is SEO-optimized for relevant keywords will help attract readers searching for related topics online.

What steps are you taking to build a platform? (Author Redacted)

Are there elements you'd like to rework or rewrite yourself before enlisting the help of an editor? Are there any steps you can take on your own to improve the manuscript to get the most out of an editor? (may not be applicable for all authors)

Describe the authors voice and three other authors who are similar.

The author's voice in the manuscript is reflective, deeply rooted in historical and cultural references, and showcases a vivid descriptive narrative style that paints a clear picture of the setting and era. The narrative also carries a sense of reverence for nature and the land, combined with a respectful depiction of Native American history and culture. The storytelling style is evocative, with a blend of poetic and gritty elements that reflect the rugged yet beautiful Pacific Northwest setting.

1. **Willa Cather:** Known for her novels set on the American frontier, Cather's descriptive and evocative narrative style, along with her focus on the human connection to the land, resembles the voice portrayed in the manuscript. Her storytelling often explores the complex relationship between individuals and their environment, a theme that seems to be shared with the manuscript.
2. **Ivan Doig:** His narrative often explores the history and life of people in the American West, particularly Montana, with a deep respect for the landscape and the past. The reflective and historical voice in the manuscript shares similarities with Doig's storytelling style.
3. **Louise Erdrich:** Erdrich's works often delve into the intricacies of Native American life and history, much like the manuscript. Her narrative style, rich with cultural and historical references, echoes the voice of reverence and authenticity seen in the manuscript's depiction of Native American characters and themes.

Book Concept

What are the top five books that are comparable to, or competing with yours, to reach a similar audience with similar content?

1. **"My Antonia" by Willa Cather** - This novel explores life on the American frontier and the immigrant experience, with a strong emphasis on the landscape and the human connection to it.
2. **"This House of Sky: Landscapes of a Western Mind" by Ivan Doig** - An exploration of life in the American West, with a focus on the relationship between people and the land.
3. **"The Round House" by Louise Erdrich** - This novel delves into Native American life and the quest for justice, with rich cultural and historical references.

4. **"The Orchardist" by Amanda Coplin** - Set in the Pacific Northwest, this novel shares a setting and possibly thematic elements with the manuscript, focusing on the relationship between individuals and the wild, untamed land around them.
5. **"Snow Falling on Cedars" by David Guterson** - This novel, also set in the Pacific Northwest, explores the intertwining of personal and historical narratives, with a strong sense of place and cultural introspection.

Copy and paste the book's first paragraph. Is the first paragraph engaging and will readers find it interesting and hooked?

The opening paragraph of "Between Past and Present: Tales and Tides of the Little Spokane" creates a vivid scene with a unique perspective, juxtaposing the natural beauty of the location with human endeavors to control or alter it. The mention of a "war on native bunch grass" and the desire to form a "more perfect union" at the expense of the "rebel vegetation" personifies the landscape in a humorous and engaging manner, making a statement about human intervention in nature.

Here are a few specific observations and suggestions:

1. **Imagery:**
 - The imagery is striking, painting a picture of the scene with phrases like "uncharacteristically cool summer afternoon" and "hardware store turf grasses." It sets a tone that suggests a deeper exploration of the tension between natural and man-made environments.
 - Enhancing the imagery further by providing more sensory details might deepen the reader's immersion. Describing the texture, colors, smells, or sounds in more detail can enrich the scene.
2. **Engagement:**
 - The engaging aspect of this paragraph lies in its subtle commentary on human-nature interactions, hinting at a larger thematic exploration.
 - The humor and irony in phrases like "declared war" and "rebel vegetation" adds a level of interest and intrigue, which might hook readers who appreciate a witty take on environmental themes.
3. **Clarity:**
 - The narrative jumps quickly from a description of a digital image to an audio soundtrack to a commentary on human-nature conflict. Ensuring a smooth transition between these elements or providing a bit more context could help in maintaining clarity while keeping the reader's attention.
 - The mention of a "digital image" and "soundtrack" could be a metaphorical way to set the scene, but if these elements are literal, a bit more explanation might be helpful to avoid confusion.
4. **Introductory Hook:**

- The hook here seems to be the witty commentary on human attempts to control nature. It's clever but may benefit from a more direct or personal angle to pull readers into the narrative.
- Introducing a character or a personal anecdote early on could provide a stronger emotional hook for readers.

5. Title Connection:

- It might be beneficial to tie the description in this opening paragraph more closely to the title, "Between Past and Present: Tales and Tides of the Little Spokane," to establish a clearer connection between the imagery and the narrative that will unfold.

This paragraph indeed sets a whimsical yet thoughtful tone that could captivate readers interested in environmental themes, delivered with a touch of humor and irony. With some minor adjustments for clarity and engagement, it has the potential to be a compelling opening to the manuscript.

Why does this book need to be written now, and why are you the right author to do it?

For the Editor

What kind of editing do you want for your manuscript?

Line Edit

Developmental Edit

Fact Check (Recommend Unless Well Sourced)

Proofread

Attribution check

Other: _____

Are there specific issues that the editor should address? Example: Clarity, organization, appropriate language, and background information for the target audience?

Is the current title appropriate? What are possible alternatives to consider for a title?

1. **Whispers of the Little Spokane:** This title hints at the narrative's deep exploration of a specific locale, its history, and the interwoven stories of the characters. The word "whispers" suggests a certain mystique or hidden stories waiting to be unveiled.
2. **Axe Notched Memories:** Drawing from a phrase within the manuscript, this title evokes a rustic, historical, and personal narrative, hinting at the past's imprint on

the present through the vivid imagery of axe-notched logs as silent witnesses to the unfolding stories.

3. **Riverside Reflections:** This title encapsulates the narrative's flowing reminiscences and historical evocations centered around the Spokane and Little Spokane Rivers. The word "reflections" can denote both the mental reverie and the physical mirroring of the surrounding nature in the water, linking the environment with the introspective narrative journey.