Memo

To: Tera Cuskaden

From: Jordan Poll

Date: June 7, 2015

Re: Manuscript Critical Analysis

I would like to take this moment to thank you for this opportunity and express my excitement to apply for the position of content editor with Samhain Publishing.

**Overview**

The purpose of this memo is to provide my critical analysis of the romance manuscript attached to your email. My analysis includes my ideas and analysis of the manuscripts strengths and weaknesses and how I would proceed with it.

**Strengths**

The plot and its flow are strong in this manuscript. As a reader, I really enjoyed the twist of having Noah and Holly as the love interests/protagonists. Going into it, I thought for sure it would be the happier ending of *My Best Friend’s Wedding*, the one where Julia Roberts succeeds in winning back the heart of Dermot Mulroney. However, this is so much better and the threat of the wedding just around the corner makes it all the more exciting.

The flow between sections and narrators are well done. Even though the progression was quick between events, I never felt jarred. I was only left hanging when chapter two ended. That said I would have liked to have more backstory in the beginning to really set the scene and give insight into characters.

This is a really good base for building off of. The characters are relatable, the dialogue is entertaining, and the humor is definitely there. The sexy scenes are also quite steamy, which is a make-it or break-it for romance novels.

**Weaknesses**

While the plot is strong, the characters and setting need more development. The biggest issue at hand is that Holly and Noah currently lack dimension. For example, Holly seems almost like a teenager in her single mindedness and immaturity earlier in the chapter. It didn’t help that her two motives for breaking up the wedding were to retrieve her DVD set and let everyone know Ainsley is only out for Harry’s money. With further backstory and character insight in the form of reflection and personal thoughts explaining her actions, Holly as a character can become better rounded and relatable. The same applies for Noah. Noah is dead-set on keeping Harry’s wedding from being interrupted. Yet, I almost think that Noah hates his cousin’s guts. His loyalty to his cousin in this area is not explained but, like Holly, with backstory and more reflection then Noah as a character can become more fathomable.

In addition to character development, setting the scene is an important aspect of romance novels. Having a clear world and understanding how the characters interact in it provides a lot of insight into their personalities. This is something that this manuscript needs more of. The basic setting is established in Seattle. Whether it is in the restaurant, salon, or the church, the reader should have a clear picture of it. How the hair felt beneath Holly’s fingers, or how the cathedral inspired hope or dread in Noah. These little details add up and really help form that picture in the reader’s mind’s eye. In my in-text edits, I pointed out sections where I thought this kind of setting development could be added.

At points in the manuscript, descriptive terms were jarring, repetitive, or didn’t make sense. This most commonly appeared in sentences with sensual content, which are the most important to have flow smoothly and make sense anatomically. For example, the very last line of the manuscript reads, “Crushing his lips down on hers.” This is not only a jarring fragment but the action of “crushing down” doesn’t work. “Crushing” implies that the force is already being applied downwards. Thus, “Crushing down” is unnecessarily repetitive. However, like I suggested in my in-text edits, this could be easily changed with a simple word deletion or rewording. I noted only a few of the other sections in my in-text edits that are similar to this instance. They just need a little more to give them the detail, flow, and clarity that a reader needs to be in the moment and get a good mental picture of the act.

**Conclusion**

This manuscript has a lot of potential. It has a plot with a twist that I found entertaining and it left me wanting more after the second chapter. That said the revision suggestions I made concerning character and setting development are quite extensive. Thus, I would ultimately propose an encouraging revision and resubmit.