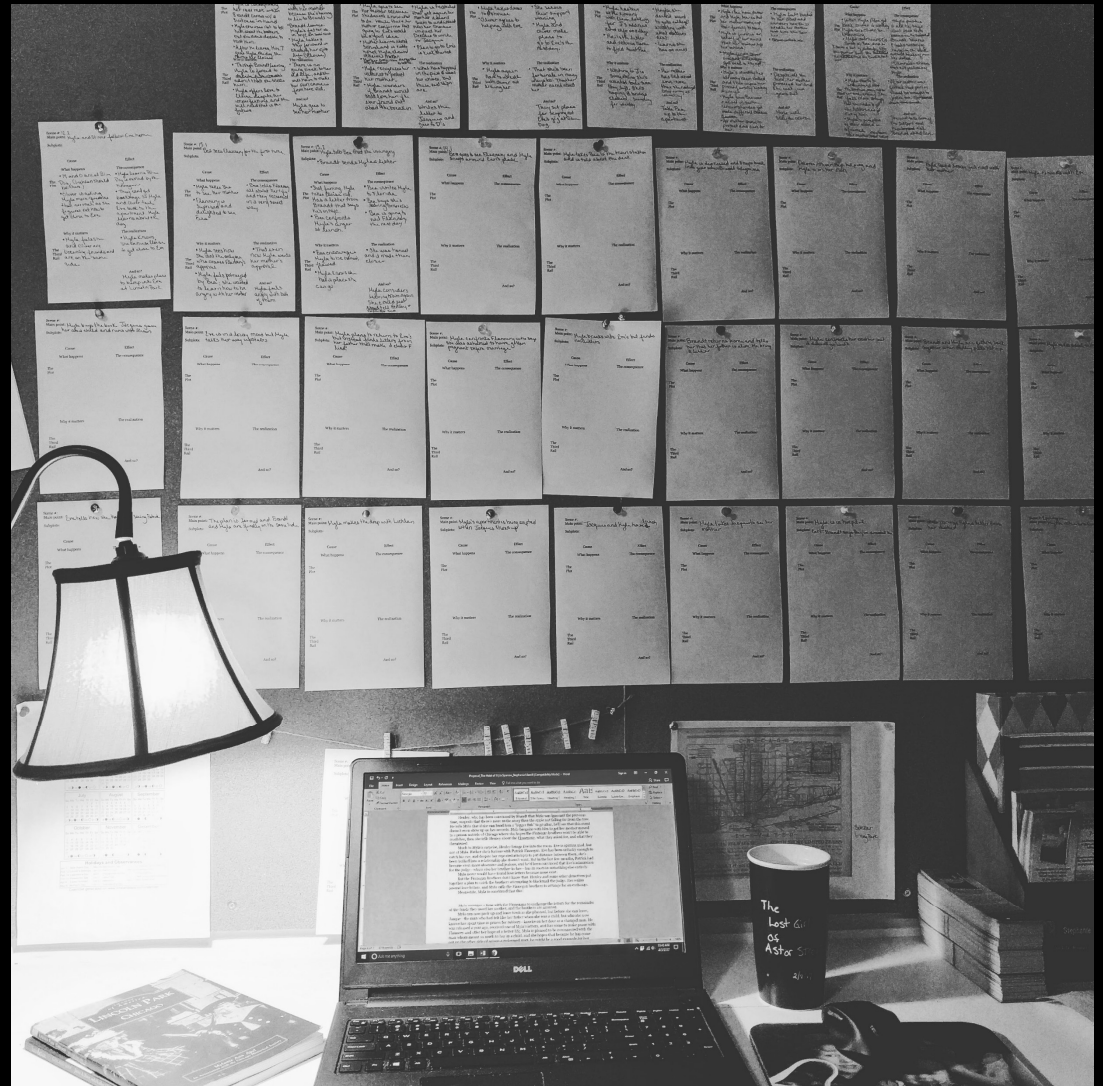


Editing Your Novel Scene by Scene



StephanieMorrill.com/OYANer

Editing is hard!

- There's no glory.

Editing is hard!

- There's no glory.
- You can't be lazy anymore.

Editing is hard!

- There's no glory.
- You can't be lazy anymore.
- You haven't practiced it as much.

Editing is hard!

- There's no glory.
- You can't be lazy anymore.
- You haven't practiced it as much.
- It's difficult to clearly see our own work.

Steps for Editing *before* you go scene-by-scene

- Take a break.



“...you’ll find reading your book over after a six-week layoff to be a strange, often exhilarating experience. It’s yours, you’ll recognize it as yours ... and yet it will also be like reading the work of someone else, a soul-twin perhaps. This is the way it should be, the reason you waited. It’s always easier to kill someone else’s darlings than it is to kill your own.”

Stephen King, *On Writing*

Steps for Editing *before* you go scene-by-scene

- Take a break.
- Read the whole thing.

Steps for Editing *before* you go scene-by-scene

- Take a break.
- Read the whole thing.
- Make the big changes.

Rachel Aaron's

2,000
to
10,000

How to write **faster**,
write **better**, and write
more of what you love.

“You might have built [your story] based on your fantasies, but once you invite people inside, it’s no longer yours alone. The world you’ve created now has to make sense to others. It has to delight and surprise and, most importantly, capture them.”

Rachel Aaron, *2k to 10k*

The First Pass Through Your Scene

- Do I need this scene?

Do I need this scene?

- If I cut this scene, what would change in the plot?

Do I need this scene?

- If I cut this scene, what would change in the plot?
- Would I lose any character development?

Do I need this scene?

- If I cut this scene, what would change in the plot?
- Would I lose any character development?
- Would I lose important information?

The First Pass Through Your Scene

- Do I need this scene?
- Could I make this scene work harder?

The First Pass Through Your Scene

- Do I need this scene?
- Could I make this scene work harder?
- Do I need to research anything?

The First Pass Through Your Scene

- Do I need this scene?
- Could I make this scene work harder?
- Do I need to research anything?
- Did I use the best POV?

The First Pass Through Your Scene

- Do I need this scene?
- Could I make this scene work harder?
- Do I need to research anything?
- Did I use the best POV?
- What's at stake in this scene?

The First Pass Through Your Scene

- Did I start in the best place?

The First Pass Through Your Scene

- Did I start in the best place?
- Have I provided context?

Have I provided context?

- WHO is there?
- WHERE are we?
- WHAT is around them? WHAT are they doing?
- WHEN is this taking place?
- WHY are they there?
- HOW did they get there?

The First Pass Through Your Scene

- Did I start in the best place?
- Have I provided context?
- Have I included the five senses?

Manuscript: _____
Scene: _____

Scene Editing Checklist--Draft One

What do I want to accomplish?

What does the POV character want and why?

What's at stake in this scene?

Have I provided context for my readers?:

- Who is there?
- Where are we?
- What details stand out to the character?
- When is this taking place?
- What's going on around them?
- What is my character doing?
- Why are they there?

Have I included at least three of the five senses?

- Taste
- Touch
- Sight
- Smell
- Hear

The First Pass Through Your Scene

- Did I start in the best place?
- Have I provided context?
- Have I included the five senses?
- Does the scene end in a good place?

Second round of scene edits:
Emotion, symbolism, and
tension

What is my character's
dominant emotion in this
scene?

What is my character's emotion in this scene?

- How can the character show this in their (involuntary) physical response? (Teeth grinding, heart pattering, etc.)

What is my character's emotion in this scene?

- How can the character show this in their (involuntary) physical response? (Teeth grinding, heart pattering, etc.)
- How can they show this in their actions? (What they *choose* to do or not do.)

What is my character's emotion in this scene?

- How can the character show this in their (involuntary) physical response? (Teeth grinding, heart pattering, etc.)
- How can they show this in their actions? (What they *choose* to do or not do.)
- How can they show this in how they describe something?

What is my character's emotion in this scene?

- How can the character show this in their involuntary physical response? (Teeth grinding, heart pattering, etc.)
- How can they show this in their actions? (What they *choose* to do or not do.)
- How can they show this in how they describe something?
- What nouns and verbs can I use to convey their emotion?

What is my character's emotion in this scene?

- How can the character show this in their involuntary physical response? (Teeth grinding, heart pattering, etc.)
- How can they show this in their actions? (What they *choose* to do or not do.)
- How can they show this in how they describe something?
- What nouns and verbs can I use to convey their emotion?
- Is there a metaphor or symbol that can express how they are feeling?

Drawing out symbolism

Graham's heart constricted. Her brother was absolutely right—he wasn't good enough for her. The admission left a bitter taste in his mouth, and his answer emerged gruff. "Let's go."

Graham kept his back to Logan as he held the door open for Paige, who skipped through it, her ponytail swinging. He may not be good enough for her yet. But maybe in the next few months, as they worked together on Open Door, he would become good enough.

He would have to try. Paige was worth that.

Graham crossed the threshold, following Paige into the sun-soaked afternoon, and pulled the door tight behind him.

Drawing out symbolism

Graham kept his back to Logan as he held the door open for Paige, who skipped through it, her ponytail swinging. Then he too crossed the threshold, following her into the sun-soaked afternoon, and pulling the door tight behind them.

He may not be good enough for her yet, but maybe in the next few months, as they worked together on Open Door, he would prove himself.

He would have to try. Paige was worth that.

Tension

- Does the outer conflict challenge the character's inner conflict?

Tension

- Does the outer conflict challenge the character's inner conflict?
- Do I have any backstory in this scene? Is it necessary?

Tension

- Does the outer conflict challenge the character's inner conflict?
- Do I have any backstory in this scene? Is it necessary?
- What emotional friction exists between the characters in the scene?

Tension

- Does the outer conflict challenge the character's inner conflict?
- Do I have any backstory in this scene? Is it necessary?
- What emotional friction exists between the characters in the scene?
- What emotional conflict exists within the POV character?

Tension

- Does the outer conflict challenge the character's inner conflict?
- Do I have any backstory in this scene? Is it necessary?
- What emotional friction exists between the characters in the scene?
- What emotional conflict exists within the POV character?
- Is there tension on every page? Every paragraph? Each line?

Third round of scene edits:
Getting Picky

Third round: Getting Picky

- Dialogue tags

Dialogue Tags

“You’re wrong!” Joe said as he slammed the door.

Becomes...

“You’re wrong!” Joe slammed the door.

Third round: Getting Picky

- Dialogue tags
- Passive sentences

Passive Sentences

When I was a teenager, I was writing a lot of passive sentences.

Becomes

When I was a teenager, I wrote a lot of passive sentences.

Third round: Getting Picky

- Dialogue tags
- Passive sentences
- Pointless adverbs

Third round: Getting Picky

- Dialogue tags
- Passive sentences
- Pointless adverbs
- Telling

Third round: Getting Picky

- Dialogue tags
- Passive sentences
- Pointless adverbs
- Telling
- Pet words or punctuation

Third round: Getting Picky

- Dialogue tags
- Passive sentences
- Pointless adverbs
- Telling
- Pet words or punctuation
- Weasel words

Third round: Getting Picky

- Dialogue tags
- Passive sentences
- Pointless adverbs
- Telling
- Pet words or punctuation
- Weasel words
- My common typos

Final Steps!

- Listening to my book.

Final Steps!

- Listening to my book.
- Sending the book to my critique partner(s) while I take a break from it.