

## A Book in Progress – Editing Journal for Visions

I'm going to walk through the process of editing a book—start to finish using **Visions** (Cainsville 2) as my example. When I teach writing, I'm often asked what exactly happens during edits—both the process and, more specifically, “what kinds of things do publishers want changed?” This post will give me something I can refer students to for a much longer answer than they ever actually wanted 😊

I'll be adding to this post as I go. Note that this will be what I consider “spoiler-free” for both **Omens & Visions**, but I *will* be referring to characters and very broad-strokes plot points from both.

### The Editorial Team

Yep, I have a team, namely because I have 3 English language publishers (Canada, US & UK) I've been with my Canadian editor (Anne Collins) and UK editor (Antonia Hodgson) since **Bitten**. My US editor (Jessica Renheim) came on board with **Omens**. Over the years we've developed a process. Anne takes the lead. My US editor (now Jess) sends her comments to be incorporated into Anne's notes. Antonia waits for the second draft so she can see that version with fresh eyes.

I also have an agent who's a former editor, plus critique partners, a writing group, beta readers and a daughter who reads and critiques. Whether I use those additional editing resources depends on the project.

### The Editorial Process

The process for edits varies by genre and publishing house. While I've changed US publishers a couple of times, the process has remained the same, and it's the same for my YA and MG books (which are at different US houses) So this is relatively standard, though not absolutely so.

After I deliver the manuscript, I get an editorial letter roughly 10 pages long. The first couple of pages are the overall editorial analysis. “This works, this also works, this doesn't, and, oh Kelley, you *really* need to work on this part.” The remaining pages are specific comments by page number. You'll see that in action later.

I edit. I resubmit. They reread. I get another letter. This time, it's mostly those page-specific comments. I also get line edits at this stage.

I edit. I resubmit. If it's early in the series, I may get another quick clean-up round. Early books in a series require more tweaking as I work into a new world with new characters. Once the editors sign off, the manuscript goes to copyedits. Then to proofs. Again, you'll get more on those stages when we reach them in this walk-through (likely in the new year)

## The Final Say

There's a lot of confusion about editing, particularly among new writers. I'm often asked what changes that I was forced to make by my publishers. The answer is "it's never happened." That's not how it works. My editors suggest changes they think will improve the book. It's up to me to apply the ones that work for my story. My name goes on the cover, so the final say is mine, as it is for most authors.

*Okay...onto the **Visions** editing walk-through...*

## First Draft Edits

*Time to write book: 3 months*

I finished the first draft of **Visions** in October 2012. Then I put it away pending edits. I need a few months to get some distance from it. In this particular instance, it stayed tucked away longer than usual because I got busy doing other things. Not a problem, though—it wasn't due until July 2013 and I had it delivered by March.

There are two main tasks for me with a first draft.

First, cut, cut and cut some more. The first draft weighed in at 171,000 words. Yikes! That's my longest book ever, but I do write long, giving me lots of freedom to cut unnecessary scenes and even subplots without fear of releasing a too-short book. The draft I delivered was 140,000 words, which is much better. At that point, I expect to both add scenes and tighten overall, so I'm on track for a 120,000-130,000 word novel (**Omens** was 125,000)

Second, housekeeping. I'm a fast drafter, which means I barrel through, not stopping for anything, especially editing, because once I start editing, I'll get trapped there and never finish the damn book. So if I make changes mid-draft, I don't retrace my steps to fix the earlier bits. I jot notes and then fix it in edits. For example:

*Early in Visions, I decided to have Pamela agree to hire Gabriel back, on the condition he breaks off all contact with Olivia. He agrees. He's lying (shocking!) I intended for this to add conflict, but as the draft progressed, it only seemed to add complication. So partway through, that agreement vanishes, and Pamela is fine with (well, grudgingly accepting of) their working partnership. In edits, then, I needed to remove all early references to that agreement.*

Lots of that happens as a draft progresses. I realize things I thought would work don't, and the thread must be tugged out. Or I decide to add a new thread and need to weave it into the early part of the book.

At this point, I made a list of potential issues to discuss with my editors and officially submitted it. You'll notice I didn't use my agent or critique partners before delivering.

Sometimes I do, but in this case, I felt the first draft was solid enough to deliver, and decided to save those other resources to look at later drafts.

*Time to complete first draft edit: 1 month.*

### **First Round Editorial Edits**

I delivered in March, as I said. I was due to get edits in June, but got bumped by Chris Hadfield (Anne was working on his book, with a fast-turnaround—it's out this fall—and I was, as usual, ahead of schedule) Damn astronauts ☺ So I got my editorial letter in late August, as I was on tour, and I'm starting now (early September)

Quick general editing notes before I begin. To me, there are two kinds of editorial advice—advice in service of the story, and advice aimed at making the book more marketable. While I've had editors give the second type (add more sex! make Derek hot!) my current editors give advice purely in service of the story, which is what I want. I have a decent handle on my audience, and if two choices are equal, I'll pick the one that will appeal to the larger audience, but I can't make change *against* story in *service of* marketability. Can't and won't. Story comes first.

### **Major Notes**

As I said, the first editorial letter is partly overall analysis and partly specific comments. I start with the large-scale stuff. Remember that list of potential problems I jotted down before submitting **Visions**? My two biggest concerns were echoed in their comments.

*Cainsville* is a mystery series. Each book contains a murder to be solved, but it also contains overarching mysteries. **Omens** introduced two of those. One is partly resolved in **Visions**; the other is tackled in book 3. The problem is that it seems as if “overarching mystery #2” gets dropped in **Visions**. I did give a reason why it was stalled, but feared it wasn't enough. It wasn't. It still feels like a major dropped thread. Entwined in this mystery is another question that also gets shifted to book 3, which feels like a minor dropped thread. Both need to be picked up and woven, lightly, through **Visions**.

Okay, so I knew dropping these two threads might be problematic. Why not just fix them before I submitted the manuscript? Because those explanations for the delay might have been enough, and if they were, then adding new scenes to bump up their presence would over-complicate the book. This is why writers need editors—even when we can see possible problems, we're too close to the material to grasp the depth of those problems. We can overestimate them and do more damage “fixing” them...or underestimate them and leave the problem unresolved. I make my list before submitting, then I wait to see if either Anne or Jess picks up the same issue. If one does? I fix it.

The other potential problem on my list is pacing. These books are slower paced than the *Otherworld*—intentionally so, because they're mystery-based, with less action and more subplots. But because the first draft was so long, I had a lingering worry that I hadn't cut

enough of the fat and the book was slow. That wasn't mentioned in the editorial letter, but I don't ignore it. I ask. No, there are the usual places I can trim, but the overall pacing is fine. Whew.

That's it for big stuff on this book, which is very nice. Only two big ticket items—the rest are spot fixes. Also nice that there weren't any issues I hadn't foreseen.

Next step? I talk to Anne about potential fixes for those two problems. I had an idea how to fix them, and she agrees it should do the trick. So I'm off into revisions.

Oh, forgot something. The praise. There's always praise in an editorial letter, and that's something I feel strongly about when critiquing work. I've gotten into heated debates on this. Some people who critique fiction feel that praise is a waste of time. If they're also writers, they'll say "I don't want the praise, so I won't give it." I disagree. Praise is not about stroking a writer's ego. It's about saying "You did this part right" and that's an important aspect of craft development. We need to know what we did right so we can put that aside and focus on the rest. A purely negative editorial letter feels like "this book is a disaster, but here's a few things that might salvage the wreck." Professional editors always include praise, often specific to certain elements of the manuscript—e.g. "I loved the character development on Joe and Bob!"

### **First Editorial Round Revisions**

In these, you'll notice sometimes I refer to "Anne" and sometimes just "Editor"—the edits aren't marked to say what comes from Anne and what's from Jess. Sometimes I can tell, though—with problems that Anne always catches. If I don't know, I don't guess!

There was a third issue mentioned in the "overall" part of the editorial letter, but it applies specifically to the first chapter, so I consider it a spot fix. It's about my opening scene. I rarely get these right in the first draft. For **Visions**, I need to balance the "where we are now" backfill with an intriguing opening scene. The very first scene was mostly backfill. So I chop it off. The book now starts with scene 2.

A bunch of the early line notes are the usual "Kelley, remind us who/what this is!" variety. There are 3 basic readers for **Visions**. 1) those who read **Omens** months ago 2) Those who went straight from **Omens** to **Visions**. 3) Those who pick up **Visions** not knowing it's the second in a series. The opening chapters must work for all 3 groups. I don't want to bore group #2 with in-depth descriptions of characters and events they just finished reading about, but I don't want group #3 to be so lost they put the book down. In this round, my editors will remind me when I haven't properly reintroduced a character or situation. In the next round, they'll let me know if I overdo it ☺

Example: *Page 6: need to mention what Gabriel does. (That he's a lawyer who lost her mother's last appeal...)*

Anne is an amazing line editor, and she's quick to point out where my words don't flow as well as they should. "Dialogue could be sharper," "too much mulling," "lags a little," "a little clunky," "too many details," "too much explaining" – there are a couple dozen notes like this, with Anne prodding me to do better in a scene, on a page or even within a paragraph. These are things best fixed in my line edits, so I don't fix them now. I insert "notes to self" like \*tighten scene\* or \*fix dialogue\* or \*TMI!\*

Example: *Page 18: the Ciara Conway intro feels a little clunky*

Then there are the continuity errors. Earlier I said that I pull out threads in edits. Sometimes bits remain, which is why each new draft needs a fresh reader—those who've read earlier versions won't always catch the leftover bits.

Example: *Page 31. They're driving back to Cainsville, but weren't they supposed to be going to get the car?*

Then there are the James issues. Poor James is getting no love from Anne. He's like the Philip of the Cainsville series ☺ With **Bitten** Anne and I went back-and-forth on Philip, trying to make him more than a walking symbol of Elena's "human life" option. No matter what I did to his character, he was still the outsider and that made him pale in comparison to the Pack guys. Now we have James, who does play an actual role in the plot, rather than a merely symbolic one. But again, he's the outsider...and therefore pales in comparison to the others. I need to do some early work on his scenes to keep him on the playing field until his role shifts and aligns with the main plot.

### **Specific points...**

- Gabriel tries to con Olivia into dinner. Nothing wrong with that...except that given how pissed off she is with him at this point, she's never going to agree, so editor suggests Gabriel is too smart to even attempt it. She's right. I change to him suggesting he stop by the diner to discuss it, which Liv still refuses.

- the elders want to post flyers in the city for a missing young woman. Editor feels this is too retro. True...but it's supposed to be, emphasizing their penchant for the old ways. The fix is to make it clear that I know this is retro. I do that by having Liv comment on it.

- Liv makes a remark to Rose about something Gabriel did. Editor wonders why Rose doesn't ask what she means. But we've seen Gabriel telling Rose in an earlier scene, so that's covered. For added clarity, I have Liv reflect that Rose doesn't ask, and presume that means Gabriel told her what happened

- Liv has dinner with James. Editor thinks it's odd that we don't see the dinner play out. I will argue with this point. Nothing during that meal would advance plot or character, so it's an unnecessary scene

- opposite to the note above, editor thinks I can remove Liv's doctor visit. I think "What doctor visit?" I follow the page reference. The "scene" is two lines long, mid-paragraph, basically saying that Liv got checked out. I think I can keep it...especially since she promised Gabriel she'd see a doctor. So the two-line reference stays.

- Gabriel has misbehaved. Shockingly. But as editor points out, Liv dwells on the issue too much. She's totally right. Liv's brooding is out of character. The problem is unintentional repetition. It takes months to write a book. It's easy to forget a subject has been hashed out already because that scene was written weeks ago. On this issue, when I add up the brief references in a read-through, I can easily see the problem. I delete most of them.

- similar issue: Ricky and Liv's texting. Given their age and their personalities, once they become friends, they're going to be in regular virtual contact. But it's mentioned too often. I cut more than half the references. And, yes, Ricky plays a role in this book. I'll sidetrack into an editing decision from **Omens** that I still debate. There was, initially, a scene before the last chapter where Liv calls Ricky. It was done from Ricky's POV. My editor felt that it would confuse readers, having this character—introduced in the last quarter of the book—getting his own scene. So I moved it to **Visions**. However, I've since had a few comments on **Omens** about Ricky, saying I seemed to dwell on him and his gang too much for walk-on characters. I even had someone accuse me of inserting bikers for marketing, playing off a popular TV show that I've never seen. If I left his POV chapter in **Omens**, would it have been clearer that he was an actual member of my Cainsville cast? I don't know. Sometimes we make editorial choices that seem correct and later we second-guess them. I'll just say that nothing in **Omens** is accidental ☺ It's all intricately bound up in the larger picture, which includes Ricky, whether he knows it or not!

- more Ricky: editor points out that one of the scenes with his starts slow, namely because Liv is telling him about the reception she got at a charity event. But...we actually saw her at the event. So why is this reaction here and not there? Because the silly author forgot to put it in the event scene and then realized Ricky would be concerned about her reception, so I stuck it here. Easy fix. Lift and rework it back where it belongs. That leaves a quick 2 line summary in the Ricky scene as he asks and she replies.

- okay, so Liv's out jogging and she needs her gun and a credit card (to break into a house, naturally) Don't ask. Editor questions taking gun & card for what was supposed to be a routine jog. She's right. But I need the gun—not being an idiot, Liv won't go in the empty house unarmed. I figure out a workaround for that and leave the credit card at home (she finds another way in)

- setting is not my strong suit. I can visualize the location, and I just describe the action happening in it, which leads to notes from Anne like the one below. I go in and try to clarify the geography. If I fail, she'll catch it in line edits. There are a few of these. It's an ongoing issue with me, and one of many great things about having a long-term editor. She knows me and my work...and is patient with my shortcomings!

Example: *having a bit of a hard time figuring out where the cat is trapped: I mostly get the layout of the house, but sometimes you lose me, and I don't know what door the kitty's scratching at, or what corner he flies around...*

- I need to return to the issue of Gabriel's mother and the photos that Will Evans showed Liv. They're awkwardly introduced here. Editor catches me on it and also points out a better spot for this. She's totally right and I fix it.

- condom issue. Editor is concerned that it didn't actually go on. I've often joked that my sex scenes don't get edited much—as evidenced by the infamous “Paige removing her shirt twice” error in DSM. But clearly they are...sometimes. Now, with this point, I could argue that because we see the condom beforehand, we can presume it went on, but I'll give them this one. A couple words added and it's undeniably safe sex. There's another comment here too that, afterward, Liv does something that seems more like a seizure than an expression of satisfaction. It seemed fine, but having read that, I will never again be able to read those lines without laughing. I fix it.

- couple more sex scene comments. With **Omens**, editor pointed out the lack of scx. Not a complaint—just a comment. I said **Visions** would make up for it. When I delivered the book, one of my concerns was that there was actually too much sex. One of Anne's early comments agreed, but now that I get the editorial note, I see what she really meant. There's one scene where the scenario is too close to a later scene. The actual sex in it is completely fade-to-black. Later, during another fade-to-black, editor says it's not as sexy as it could be. Agreed. So I cut the first scene and expand this second, which is a decrease in the # of mentions of having sex but an increase in the slightly more explicit scenes. It doesn't matter whether it's action or dialogue or sex. Repetition is dull and sometimes, a scene needs a little more oomph.

- stupid mistake. I gave a detective the name of a Mexican novelist. Duh. I see it as soon as I read the name again. Sometimes I pick a surname and then add a certain given name that seems to fit...because it's the name of an actual person! If I notice in edits that the name seems familiar, I'll google it. Luckily the editor caught this one.

*...they don't have a body, but do they still have Ciara's head?*

- bar none, my favourite line in the entire editorial letter. I clarify that yes, her head is also missing, poor girl.

*So how do you pronounce Daere? (put the phonetics in there?)*

- I have no idea! I've inserted a place for Veronica to correct Gabriel's pronunciation, but Google isn't helping much with pronunciation. If anyone knows, please tell me!

- oh, here's an interesting note. This comes from both of them—I know that because Anne mentioned it when I was in her office. There's a scene where they're going to potentially rescue someone and there's something to suggest that they might not be as concerned about the victim as they ought to be. The editorial note is that it makes them

seem cold. Now, I could debate this point. These characters *can* be cold, in their way. They're survival-oriented. That's most obvious in Gabriel, but we see it in Liv too, and to a lesser degree in Ricky. It's a common trait because they share a...commonality. They can develop extremely close "I'd take bullet for you" bonds but their capacity for general empathy is limited. Still, they aren't cold-hearted. If they can help someone, they will. Well, Liv and Ricky will. In this particular instance, they seem less than properly concerned about the victim because they're reasonably sure there is no victim—that they've been led to a trap (but a trap that promises answer they need) Given all that, I could say that the exchange can stand. But if two editors picked it up, I'm going to concede their point. With this cast, I always run the risk of them seeming unsympathetic, and I don't want to tip that direction if I don't have to. The exchange isn't necessary to plot, so it's cut.

- final note! Editor questions a scene near the end where Rose tries to explain Gabriel to Liv. There's repetition here because, 300 pages ago, Rose reflected on Gabriel's... complexities of character. But she did so to herself. I'd like to have her tell Liv. Not because Liv doesn't understand Gabriel, but because it's an important interaction for the Rose/Olivia relationship. On a quick read-through, I immediately see that the exchange is too long. Rose is explaining too much that both the reader and Liv already know. The point of the scene—Rose supporting both Gabriel and Liv—can be accomplished in ¼ of the page space. I trim it to a few lines and it's good...I hope.

Revisions done! The next step is line edits. I go through the manuscript, editing it on paper (I can't line edit on a screen.) While I make some corrections, this is mostly tightening and smoothing, which means it's a slow process (about 35 pages a day is all I can manage.) I also make notes of things I want to return to and reexamine. The pages go to Alison, who transcribes them into the Scrivener file. Once Alison is done, I'll take it, search on my "notes to self" and tinker some more. Then it's back to the editors.

*Time to complete first round revisions: 5 weeks.*



Okay, onto the 2<sup>nd</sup> editorial letter. This blog will be much shorter...because the letter is ☺ Major problems are tackled in the first round. This is cleanup.

The actual letter only mentions a couple of issues. The bulk of the comments are in an annotated copy of the manuscript.

The two big points first, and by “big” I mean “will require more than a few lines of tweaking. They’re still relatively easy fixes.

1) There are two coffee shop scenes with Ricky. That introduces the element of repetition. To be honest, I saw it in the last draft, but I looked at the scenes and they both need to be there, so I told myself it wasn’t an issue. It is. The fix is to pull back and see the bigger picture. The issue is not the content of the scenes, but the setting. I rewrite the second as a walk in a waterfront park. That works better, actually. Neither is really the “sitting around” type. I also make some serious cuts to both scenes. These are two sociable, chatty people—it’s easy to let their dialogue stray from its purpose.

2) One problem from round one was that Liv still doesn’t meet her birth father, Todd. That’s a huge plot point with major ramifications, and therefore had to be left for book 3. But my editors wanted some form of contact. So in the last draft, I had Liv get a letter from Todd. She never opened it. This was a problem. In fact, my daughter read the draft, put it down and said “It’s good. Now you need to add the letter.” My editors echoed that here. The problem was placement. Liv gets the letter at about the ¾ mark, and it’s nonstop “stuff happening” from there, with no moment to say “oh, yeah, about that letter...” My editor suggested I put it at the end. I balked at this because, well, the ending was Liv happy and relaxed, enjoying a moment with Gabriel to relish their victory before book 3 when they need to face all the crap it stirred up. Putting the letter after that? Yeah, it changes the tone. But it needed to go in and it was the only place to put it so instead of my “moment of peace and happiness,” we end with tears. Want the happy ending? Stop before the last scene ☺ On the plus side, when I did submit the version with the letter, my editor sent me an email with the subject line WOW! so apparently, I did it right. Tough writing it, though. Which may be why I resisted so hard.

## **Line Edits**

Some continuity corrections. Example: I called the sitting room at Liv’s parents the parlor, and my editor pointed out that in *Omens*, I used the term for Rose’s place but not this room. Bunch of little stuff like that.

Also a bunch of “Can you do better?” usually when my description is weak or clichéd.

And a bunch of queries asking me to give Liv’s reaction. I’m bad at this, because I know her reaction—I’m in her POV—so I tend to skip that stuff because it’s like stopping mid-conversation with a friend to actively think “I feel unsettled by this.” Unnatural, but necessary in a story.

A lot of “need more explanation.” This is book 2, and this is the round of edits where we work hard to walk that balance beam between not boring current readers with repetition from book 1 and not leaving new readers totally lost. I tend to err on the side of “not enough” so here is where my editors show me where I need more—usually just a line.

Car talk. Liv talks about riding with her dad in her favorite of his cars—an old Maserati convertible. She says she sat in her booster seat beside him. Editor queries because of safety. That model in convertible has no rear seat. I could mention this, but it interrupts the flow of the paragraph, so I’ll leave it out and hope readers “get” that it’s the car design, not that her dad was a bad parent ☺

“Does he kiss her?” Editor would like this clarified. I clarify. It’s not that exciting. It’s James. Enough said.

“Robins don’t have blue eyes.” Yeah, yeah, it’s a typo. Robin’s egg not eyes. Fixed.

“Nothing about Ricky makes me believe there was nothing flirtatious in his smile.” True. Fixed.

“Would he call her Eden?” There’s significance in who calls Liv by which name, particularly those associated with her past. Editor questions choice here, but I’m going to stick with Olivia, because calling her Eden is a sure way to get her back up, and this particular person (using that term loosely) wouldn’t want to piss her off.

“What pocket?” Editor rightly points out that Liv cannot shove the boar’s tusk in her pocket if she’s wearing a formal gown. Whoops. As for the boar’s tusk... Don’t ask.

Still fussing with the plot thread on Gabriel’s mother. At the end of Omens, Liv is shown old photos of a dead Jane Doe and told it’s Seanna. She tells Gabriel, and offers to go to the police station with him to identify those photos. Complications early in Visions mean they don’t go, and Gabriel isn’t going to do it alone—and without a good, solid push. So it happens about 2/3 through Visions, but it needs to be setup with the full explanation and that can’t come out of the blue 2/3 of the way through “Hey, about those morgue photos of your mom...?” Nor can it be mentioned at the beginning and dropped for half the book. Nor is it a big enough thread to keep revisiting for 2/3 of the story. So, yeah, still fussing with placement of the reminder.

“She seems to spend a lot of time checking out his crotch” LOL. Comment is specific to this scene, not a general observation ☺ There were two references to his crotch in this scene, but...all things considered...both stay. It’s Liv. It works.

“jeans make a terrible blanket” I agree, but I’m not changing it.

“This does not sound comfortable. I can’t figure out how he would even do whatever he’s doing here” Awesome comment. And no, it’s not in a sex scene. Fixed.

“Seems the wrong moment to do this...” Also not from a sex scene ☺

“How far do they have to walk to find the crib room? How much dialogue could there be?” They’re talking really, really fast. And walking in circles. Fine. Adjusted both distance and dialogue.

“Isn’t a lawyer supposed to report a crime, as an officer of the law?” This required some research and some talking to, you know, actual lawyers. Consensus is that Gabriel should report the crime, but it’s a gray area. Gabriel’s all about the gray areas. Remember, this is the guy who hid a body in a Dumpster in Omens because its discovery could prove inconvenient.

“If he’s drumming the desk, how can he be sitting back?” Very long arms. Fixed.

“I’ve never heard anyone click their teeth, except when pretending to be a zombie in World War Z.” Awesome comment. But I’m keeping it in, though I did read the line to a couple of people to see if they had any issue with it. They didn’t.

“Didn’t they have coffee with their dessert?” Maybe... Hey, Liv likes coffee. Fine. Fixed. She won’t suggest going for coffee after they just had coffee, but that’s going to make it hard for her to stay awake later for all the sex. Kidding. Maybe.

“Would a street kid dream of tables??” Ah, there’s a deep, philosophical question. And...no. Point made. Fixed.

“Don’t need to WWF it...” It’s WWE now. Oh, look, I’m correcting my editor. Bad author. As for the comment, point taken. Fixed.

“Doubt he had that conversation lying on the cold ground.” And why not? Okay, he can sit up. But he’s not getting dressed. ;)

“Not a sucker-punch if James hit him first.” True. Fixed.

“Heat doesn’t get “hard”” Also, not from a sex scene. The issue here was grammatical. Bad wording, making *hard* seem to refer to heat not steel.

“the him has just been the other “him” and this may be confusing...” Yeah, now I’m confused ☺ Worked it out. Fixed.

“Ricky was told she was sick with food poisoning, which makes sending chocolates kind of stupid...” Oh, right. Forgot Gabriel said that. Sorry, Ricky. Almost made you look like an idiot. Fixed!

“I’m not sure why she wants Ricky...Gabriel has more” Another comment that’s great...out of context. In context? It’s not nearly as much fun. Just a technical point. Fixed.

“Not sure Gabriel would sling or fling any piece of clothing...” There are so many comments in this manuscript that would sound so much more fun if I left them out of context. This one is simple wording—Liv said Gabriel had slung his jacket over the seat. The editor’s point is correct. It sounds too casual for Gabriel. Fixed.

And done! Well, the fixes are done. The book then requires another line edit from me. That takes longer than the fixes. I focus on the smaller stuff in this round—smoothing awkward sentences, cutting where possible, tightening...

*Time to complete: 3 weeks (1 for fixes, 2 for line edits)*

### **Draft Lengths:**

First draft: 170,000 words

Delivered: 140,000

1<sup>st</sup> round editorial: 130,000

2<sup>nd</sup> round editorial: 125,000

Which makes this book the same length as **Omens**, exactly what I was aiming for.

If you’d like to see a doc compare of the opening of **Visions**, from the first draft (2500 words) to this one (1300 words) it’s here:

[http://www.kelleyarmstrong.com/PDFs/Visions\\_opening\\_doc\\_compare.docx](http://www.kelleyarmstrong.com/PDFs/Visions_opening_doc_compare.docx)

### **Copyedits**

Not much to say about copyedits for this one. I try to deliver as clean a manuscript as possible, so there isn’t a lot for the CE to do. Take out a few commas. Add in a few. Adjust hyphens. Add formatting instructions. Fix the occasional tense. I have a good copyeditor for this series and he did make some great catches.

If you notice what are technically grammatical errors in my books, I will point out that my copyeditors do their best to fix them, but sometimes, in a first person narrative or in dialogue, grammatically correct doesn’t sound natural. So I veto their suggestion. In other words, blame me for all grammatical errors ☺ I’ve linked to the first 5 pages of copyedits below so you can see what it looks like. I’ve changed the CEs name to “copyeditor” and the editor to “editor” for privacy. You’ll see all three of us fussing a bit, but no substantial changes.

<http://www.kelleyarmstrong.com/PDFs/Visions-ce-clean.pdf>

*Time to complete copyedits: 2 weeks.*

## Proofs

And the final round of fussing. This is when I get the pages that go into the ARC (which is why they're labeled "uproofed" and I'm supposed to help find typos. I never find any, because I've read the book too many times by this point—I know what the words *should* say. Alison reads for typos. I read to, well, fuss. Remove repeated words. Clarify wording. Tinker, tinker, tinker. Below, you'll see all my changes for this book. This is how I do proofs: enter changes into a spreadsheet in Excel and deliver that.

### Visions

Page	Para	Line	Word	
1	4	7	2	remove "back"
4	last	3	2	unitalicize limped
13	last	2	7	"in" to "into town"
14	4	3	10	remove "in the past year"
17	2	4	12	change -- to em dash
29	8	last	1	love to passion
35	11	1	4	"with it" to "with that"
36	4	2	8	"would his own" to "might his own"
40	1	3	last	enclose "mind control experiments for the CIA" in em dashes instead of commas
46	2	1	1	"It's" to "It"
47	10	2	6	"didn't dare" to "wouldn't"
54	3	4	4	remove "her drugs and"
54	3	7	8	"herself cleaned up" to "her act together"
60	3	7	7	"cheer me up" to "raise my spirits"
61	7	2	3	come to comes
63	last	1	11	"I'd only" to "I had only"
64	4	2	4	"middle-to-upper-class" to "middle-class"
70	last	last	1	remove "Eleven a.m."
74	4	2	5	"The old feelings didn't reignite, but" to "While the old feelings didn't reignite,"
76	4	1	5	I think this is a numeral 1 but it looks like an I
81	7	1	1	"What do I do? I mean about" to "I mean what do I do about"
93	1	2	last	twelve-thirty to one
93	3	4	2nd last	fifteen to thirty
93	4	1	2	12:14 to 1:30
104	3	1	6	"I pushed" to "so I pushed"
116	1	4	3	"Gabriel broke" to "Gabriel called again, then broke"
116	1	5	10	three to two
117	8	2	8	water to lake
118	1	2	3	remove "you said"
118	1	2	9	"learner. I" to "learner, and I"

118	4	5	8	the bike to my bike
133	5	2	2	missing .
152	3	last	end	missing .
166	3	1	4	"messages" to "messages to turn back"
169	4	1	9	"were on" to "were almost on"
174	1	6	6	"abuse, anything" to "abuse or anything"
183	last	4	last	unitalicize Cwn Annwn
194	9	1	last	remove dinner
198	6	1	2nd last	shot to gave
202	1	4	6	"cheer me up" to "raise my spirits"
204	7	1	1	"James tried not to wince" to "Now James did wince"
213	2	2	4	"was only a student part-time" "lived with his dad"
213	2	3	9	"part-time" to "a part-time student"
225	1	2	2	remove lines "There are twenty five police districts in Chicago. Twenty three stations plus headquarters"
228	1	4	8	"lit into the detective" to "gave the detective hell"
248	2	last	1	remove "kept moving,"
301	6	2	6	"one--the" to "one where the"
309	7	2	4	"Oh, so very" to "Oh so very" (change to "oh-so-very" if that's clearer)
350	4	4	2	remove ", which was grounds for disbarment"
357	2	4	4	remove hyphen from strong-enough
372	1	2	6	change roommates to classmates
386	15	1	11	"e-mail my" to "e-mail you my"
409	6	2	4	"But I" to "But this is because I"
418	2	3	last	"over," to "over and"
453	4	2	2	option to choice
463	9	1	1	remove "Gabriel?"
465	3	3	7	"a biological destiny of addiction" to "the biological destiny of having fae blood"
467	2	5	6	"more explanation" to "an autopsy and further investigation"
477				for my bio, can we add "Age of Legends trilogy" possibly after "the Darkness Rising trilogy"

*Time to complete proofs: 2 weeks.*

And with that, the book is out of my hands. Done! Well, almost. A professional proofreader goes through and has additional queries. Most are echoes—repeated words. I've put a few others with my fixes. What you see is the proofreaders query, one editor's suggestion, the other editor's note and then me. Yep, lots of people looking at every stage of this book!

261: Are the dialogue tags OK here or edit? [Dialogue tags seem to be off. Change 'he said' to 'I said'] YES? I THINK THAT'S RIGHT Yep, change them please!

293: OK that Olivia turns off her phone when Gabriel is supposed to call her? Or edit? [Suggest changing 'I turned off my phone' to 'I put my phone away' OR 'I silenced my phone'] I THINK THE SECOND SUGGESTION IS GOOD. Yes, please!

409: Should Gabriel say this line? Or Olivia? [Looking at page 402 when Olivia is delirious and punches Gabriel, it seems like it should be Gabriel saying this, but it would affect the next line] I THINK THIS IS FINE AS IS. I THINK IT MAKES SENSE. WHAT AM I MISSING? It is Olivia, but it's a reference to Omens, which needs to be clarified for new readers. So add ""The first time he'd slept on my couch, I'd made the mistake of waking him."

Now it's done. Which doesn't mean you won't find any errors or typos, but as you can see, it goes through many, many stages of editing in every effort to avoid this. We catch as many as we can (and, sometimes, in editing I introduce new ones!)

If you've ever heard that publishers no longer edit manuscripts, I think this will disprove that. Hopefully, it also disproves the notion that because a writer is prolific, he/she must not edit his/her work. It took me three months to write *Visions* and over four months to edit it. I'm fast with a first draft because the speed of flow works best for me, keeping me in the story. But that means lots of editing. By the time you see a book of mine, I've gone through it at least five times, making major changes to start and then slowly getting to the point where, really, I'm just fussing ☺ There may be prolific authors who don't give their books this degree of editorial attention, but many do, which is why we get a little annoyed at the presumption we "churn them out." Nope, just lots of very long days—and nights—spent getting a book in the best shape we can before flinging it to the public.