

Beta Review

Bitter Days – Pageeda & Scuffee, Episode 1

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Introduction to the Beta Review Process

A Beta Review is different than the detailed critiques that are usually done in writing groups. By this point in the development process, the entire story has already been critiqued at that level and (hopefully) revised as needed. A Beta Review serves the same purpose for a written story as a test audience does for a movie. Basically, it answers the question: Is the story working as intended?

There are essentially two stages to a Beta Review:

1. Reading Notes During reading, the reviewer marks any or all of the following:

- Scenes/paragraphs/lines that they liked or didn't like.
- Scenes/paragraphs that were boring or confusing.
- Scenes/paragraphs that emotionally resonated with them.
- Exposition that needs to be compressed.
- Typos, punctuation and grammatical errors.

Some reviewers read the story twice: once for their general reaction, and then again for the purpose of marking up the document (but that is up to the reviewer).

2. Questionnaire After reading the story, the reviewer answers a questionnaire that will help organize their reactions and also address certain concerns that the writer may have with the story. Note that the questionnaire inevitably contains spoilers about the story structure, plot twists and characters.

Let the Beta Reviews begin!

**DO NOT VIEW THE QUESTIONNAIRE
UNLESS YOU HAVE READ THE STORY**

QUESTIONNAIRE

General

1. Did you like “Bitter Days” as the title of the story? If not, do you have any suggestions?
2. Did you like “Pageeda & Scuffee” as the name of the series? If not, suggestions?
3. Did the story hold your interest from the first page? Were you “hooked”?
4. Was there a point where your interest increased/decreased dramatically?
5. Was there anything that confused or frustrated you?
6. Was the ending satisfying? (Particularly important since this is a Part 1 of a 5-part serial).
7. Was the ending believable?
8. Did the ending make you want to read the next part of the serial?
9. Did you notice any inconsistencies in the details of the story?

10. Were there any plot holes or unexplained leaps of logic?

11. There is a crime/mystery at the heart of the story. Was the crime believable? Was the chain of events that led to the crime believable?

12. Would you feel you got your money's worth if you paid .99 cents for this story on Amazon? How about \$1.99? Or \$2.99?

Characters

1. Could you relate to Pageeda? Did you connect with her emotions?

2. Could you relate to Scuffee? Did you want to know more about him?

3. Was the developing bond between Pageeda and Scuffee believable? Too slow? Too fast?

4. Did Scuffee seem young? Slightly scary? Likely to be more dangerous in the future?

5. Were Pageeda's actions believable for someone with her rough upbringing? If not, why not?

6. Excluding Pageeda and Scuffee, who was your favorite supporting character?

7. Were the bad guys believable?

8. Which characters need more development? Did you want to see more of any of them?

9. Are there any characters you'd like to see in a standalone story?

10. Were there any character actions or reactions that took you out of the story?

11. Did you ever feel there was too much dialogue? Not enough?

12. Did the dialogue sound natural to you? If not, whose dialogue did you think sounded artificial, and where in the story?

13. What do you think Pageeda should do next?

14. Is Illyria alive or dead?

Setting

1. Did the setting pull you in? Did the descriptions seem vivid and real to you?
2. Did you feel there was too much description? Not enough?
3. Did the Church of Turkos come across as a dangerous organization?
4. Did magic seem prevalent enough in the story?
5. Did the details about the City Guard seem realistic?