# **PLOT & PACING**

# **PLOT**

* **Overall, are there enough plot twists to keep the story moving?**
* **How original are they?**
* **Are there any plot points that need more clarification?**
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    Description automatically generatedIs there anything that needs fleshed out more?***

**PACING**

* **Does any of it feel too slow? Too fast?**
* **Is there enough time for tension to build between plot twists and major events in the story?**
  + ***These “down times” are important for character development!***
* **Are there any scenes I would take out?**
  + ***Do they seem unnecessary to the plot?***
  + ***Do they make anything drag on too long?***
* **Are the plot twists well-placed?**
* **Do the scenes flow well?**
* **Are there sufficient hooks at the beginnings and end of chapters?**
* **Are there any info-dumping or descriptions that run on too long?**
* **Are all of the loose ends tied up properly at the end?**
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**INTERNAL CONFLICT**

* **Is there enough internal conflict?**
* **Does it feel genuine to the character?**
* **Is it something that moves the plot forward as much as external conflict?**
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**EXTERNAL CONFLICT**

* **Is there enough external conflict?**
* **Does it come from different sources?**
* **Should there be more in any given scene?**
* **Are there key times when the tension building up is tangible?**

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**THEMES**

* **What themes are presented throughout the novel?**
* **Are they done well?**
* **Are they thought-provoking?**
* **Which themes are central to the story?**

**WORLDBUILDING**

**THE SETTING**

* **Does it feel real?**
* **Is there enough description? Too much?**
* **Is the time-period well-established?**
  + ***Does it need to be?***
* **Are there more places where additional description would be beneficial—or just pleasant?**
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**DESCRIPTIONS**

* **What sort of feelings do they evoke? (Do I want to be there? Could you not pay me enough to go?)**
  + ***Do these feelings fit with the genre/current place?***
* **How many senses are appealed to?**
  + ***When I read a description, can I feel the world, smell the world, see it, etc.?***
* **Are there descriptions that really stand out?**
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**THE HISTORY**

* **Is the history of this world established well?**
* **Is it learned easily? Does it need to be?**
* **What past events shaped the world to be what it is today?**

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**GOVERNMENT**   
*(Assuming it plays a part in the story!)*

* **Who rules this land?**
  + ***How did they get to be there?***
  + ***Is it fair? Is it supposed to be?***
* **What kind of laws are in place?** 
  + ***Who enforces them?***
  + ***What penalties are there for breaking them?***
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**RELIGION**

*(Assuming it plays a part in the story!)*

* **What do they worship?**
* **What do they believe about their gods?**
* **What do they hold sacred?**
* **How do they view death?**
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**THE INHABITANTS**

* **What do they value?**
* **Is there a variety of creatures/animals/peoples?**
* **How do they live?**
  + ***What kind of jobs do they have?***
  + ***Is there a variety that would sustain them?***
* **How do they treat outsiders? Why?**

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**MAGIC**

* **What rules are there for using magic?**
  + ***Are they clear?***
    - ***Are these rules ever broken?***
    - ***If so, does it need to be fixed, or is it intentional? If it’s on purpose, what are the consequences?***
* **Is there a cost to using magic?**
* **Who has access to magic?**
  + ***And how?***
* **How do non-magical inhabitants feel about magic?**
  + ***Are they afraid of it? Do they welcome it? Is it regulated?***
* **How does it impact daily life?**
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**CREATURES**

* **Are they welcomed into the non-magical world?**
* **Do you have new magical creatures—ones I haven’t read about before?**
  + ***If so, do I have any input on them?***
* **Do you have any “typical” magical creatures?**
  + ***If so, do they break the mold at all?***
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**TRAVEL**

* **How is travel handled throughout your manuscript?**
* **Does it take up too much time?**
  + ***I love* The Lord of the Rings *trilogy*, *but I think we can all agree that there’s a lot of walking in those books. I don’t want your readers to get bogged down by something similar.***

**CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT**

**THE CAST**

* **Is it diverse enough for the story?**
  + ***Are there different character types to sustain things and keep them interesting?***
* **Are there too many characters? Not enough?**
  + ***Do most of them affect the story in some way?***
* **Does each character feel unique?**
  + ***Would any benefit from more/less backstory/description?***
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**THE MAIN CHARACTERS**

* **Do we know enough about them?**
* **How established are their backstories?**
  + ***What do they value?***
  + ***What made them the person they are today?***
* **Are they described enough?**
* **Do we know any little details about them? (Their favorite color, etc.?) The tiniest of things make them feel that much more genuine.**

* **What drives them?**
* **Is each flawed and redeemable in their own way?**
* **Are any too clichéd?**
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**THE MINOR CHARACTERS**

* **Do they add anything to the story?**
* **What would the story be without them?**
* **Where would the main characters be without them?**
* **Are they described enough?**
* **Do they need to be fleshed out?**
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**THE GOOD GUY & THE BAD GUY**

* **Why are they fighting?**
  + ***Does it make sense?***
* **What brought their paths together?**
* **What drives each?**
* **Is the protagonist flawed?**
* **Is the antagonist redeemable?**
* **Is there enough tension between them?**
* **Does the baddie monologue?**
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**NAMES**

* **Are any too similar?**
* **Are any of them annoying to read?**
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**RELATIONSHIPS**

* **Are they believable?**
* **If there is any romance, does it feel forced?**
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**CHARACTER ARCS**

* **Which characters have the strongest arcs?**
* **Are there any that need *more* of a character arc?**
* **Are they brought about by internal or external conflict?**
  + ***Or a fair mix of both?***
* **How do they (the characters) change from the beginning to the end?**
* **Do any arcs need emphasized more or less?**

**DIALOGUE**

**SPEECH**

* **Is any of it clichéd?**
* **Does it fit the character?**
* **Does it fit accurately in the setting?** 
  + ***(Time period and location.)***
* **Are there any accents that get annoying to read?**
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**TAGS**

* **Is there enough variation in the dialogue tags?**
* **Do there need to be more of them in order to understand who is speaking?**
* **Do there need to be less of them?**
* **Is it only “he said/she said”, or are there actions written in?**
  + ***i.e. “…he said, pushing himself to his feet.”***
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**WRITING**

* **Is there too much dialogue? Not enough?**
* **Are there conversations that seem unnecessary?**
  + ***They don’t move the plot forward and we don’t gain any insight into a character.***
* **Are there jokes? Do they fall flat?**
* **Is there a good combination of banter and real talk?**
* **Does the punctuation match up with the words being said/how they’re being said?**

**ADDITIONAL NOTES**

* POV
* Narration
* Plot
* Subplot
* Characters
* Creatures
* Magic
* Dialogue
* Pacing
* Opening and Closing Lines
* Realistic Injuries and Deaths
* Editing
* Other