

BETA READER FEEDBACK

Disclaimer: The views and opinions stated are my own and not influenced by any factor whatsoever.

My suggestions and critique are not to be quoted anywhere, or used to justify anything added or deleted or altered in this work. The book title and author name are confidential and won't be shared by me on any platform without permission.

Chapter by Chapter Feedback

Chapter 1

The opening scene is strong with a hook and just enough information to draw the reader in. It starts off with an adrenaline rush in the form of fear [*Heart pounding, rigid with terror.*] and is closely followed by a situation that's absurd and hence, interesting [*Where the hell was she and why was she naked?*] Another particular thing I liked were Shannon's reactions to little details, like hurriedly pulling away the cover and upon finding the guy naked, she whispered 'sorry' or how she wondered how that guy was surviving since she couldn't see any cables or wires attached to him. Though, the way she observed almost everything, from the doctor to D'lane (even his diamond-shaped pupils), pushed me away from the current scene since an entire paragraph dedicated to only his appearance, especially during a situation where they both were probably *rushing* to see what has gone wrong, seemed a little off to me. After a few more reads I realized that maybe it's Shannon's adrenaline peaking her focus which is why she noticed everything at once. However, it's important to understand that the readers wouldn't always give a second chance, to the first chapter in particular, so filling them on everything about D'lane might not be the best option. Instead, you can try toning down that bit and leave out more details for later.

For example, the first thing she can notice with his sudden entry is the height, but comparing his height to the doctor is not particularly necessary in this urgent situation. Another thing that can catch her eye instantly is the tail. It's a bit illogical for Shannon to mention his nose, eyes, lips, and then his tail. What I mean is, the scene demands urgency and a tail would be way more evident than darker lips or a nose with a larger base. Since the readers can only look through Shannon's eyes, it's important to make them see only what she can logically view at the moment, or it won't take long for them to feel info-dumped.

The revelation of Shannon being in a coma for thousand years and being revived after all these centuries is definitely mind-blowing and I'm sure it can work as a great propeller for readers to turn the page. I would also mention how impressive the abbreviation idea was: *After Victory*.

Moving on to the romantic aspect of the first chapter: There's not much being explored--which is a good thing since most of the times romance gets into the scene too quickly--but there's one particular thing (or cliché, if I would say so) that needs to be addressed. [*A growl vibrated through her. The sensation both alarming and strangely calming.*] I'm assuming that D'lane let out a growl that vibrated through Shannon since they were in contact. And that's fine. But what's questionable is the fact that she just woke up from a thousand-year coma and is unable to decipher what's going around, yet

somehow found a stranger's growl calming. I understand that it can work to show her attracted to this alien but you should, too, understand that many romance readers might've read this too many times and might've cringed at it too many times. It's probably best to keep this aside for maybe a scene during the latter parts of the story. Or delete it all together. Whatever works for your vision the best.

Chapter 2

This chapter opens with a *great* line. I think it sets the perfect tone that the character needs to convey and builds up the fear that the character is experiencing. The relay of past events, both through the screen video as well as Shannon's interaction with the doctor, is a well-developed way to let the readers on about what occurred and still being in Shannon's head.

There are also some promising lines to best vocalize the thoughts and feelings that Shannon is living. One of these is: *[Each loop accompanied by a painful throb in her head. It felt like the information was surging forward only to slip through her grasp.]* Definitely don't delete any of such lines. The chapter also strikes the main problem that Shannon will have to face in the near future: living up to the expectations of Kro-Gen and providing them with valuable information--the reason why they revived her in the first place. It's evidently hinted that the League is not too laid back and Shannon will have to work on her memories as soon as possible.

Moving on to a few aspects I didn't particularly like in this chapter. Firstly, Shannon's quick decision at the minute she woke up to drape herself in the sheet is understandable...but only for the time being. Now that she has a chance of asking for clothes or anything more comfortable than a mere sheet, she's not. The readers might not be able to understand Shannon as a character since her action is surprising and not in a good way. You know, one of those times when a viewer shouts at the TV for a fictional character isn't making a logical decision? We don't want our readers to have even the slightest of frustration; at least not until we want them to be frustrated for a reason.

Then comes a time when Hellen asks Shannon if she would like something to drink, to which Shannon says no. While Shannon being impatient to know what is going on is a pretty valid reason for her denial to this question, Hellen--being a doctor--giving her patient a chance to choose whether to drink something or not is pretty unreasonable. Shannon woke up from a coma and revived ahead of her time, isn't it only obvious for the doctor to force the patient to hydrate themselves? I would suggest Hellen handing over a glass or water bottle and advising Shannon to watch the video while sipping the water. This would allow you to take the scene forward while making it all seem more natural.

Something rooting from this point itself, I would've preferred to see Hellen guiding or directing Shannon more toward her recovery like when she should be eating or where she should go to eat or something that's more than just a tour of the room or facility. Though, you might be having some reasons for not doing that. If that's the case, feel free to ignore this suggestion of mine.

Chapter 3

It's the first time, here, in the story that Shannon's family is being talked about. I was impressed by the mixed lineage she belongs to. It gives a diversity to your protagonist and there's a dire need of those. So good job! The little interaction between her and D'lane regarding the opening of doors was a good scene to get them talking to each other--something that's vital for the relationship they'll be building later on.

Shannon's anxiety regarding the new era and upon hearing snide remarks in the canteen, her reaction was obvious and I felt that this was the point when she started coming alive to me. Her thoughts about how different she was feeling and being left out made her *real*. I also loved the thoughts Shannon speaks to herself [*Stop creeping on the alien cat, Shannon.*] since they make her POV all the more entertaining. Plus, her and D'lane's exchanges are a good hint at what the future chapters hold.

The chapter was overall a pretty good one and it consisted of quite a few important scenes. Even the ending was a good page turner since the protagonist being the chosen one is a trope we can never get tired of.

Chapter 4

I liked the realism in this chapter. For the first time Shannon demanded stuff and the things she asked for were definitely necessities like a toothbrush. This made Shannon all the more transparent to the readers, and realistic, of course. Also, what I was missing in the second chapter was given here: Hellen recommending exercising and a good diet. So yes, this chapter was pretty good too.

One thing I would mention, though it isn't directly linked to the story, is the use of repetitive words. I understand that writing romance can force a writer to use some words frequently like someone blushing or someone shying away. But it's best to keep the number of such words in check. Especially when the genre isn't solely romance. This allows the readers to never dive into a single aspect of the story but to devour both the sides of this fiction. Especially when we write in a third person limited, there's only so many times that a person can realize their own expressions. Someone can sense their cheeks warming up but not always. Similarly, Shannon flustering upon stumbling by D'lane's practice session is a chance event but it's not particularly necessary for her to know that she's flushing when her attention drew to his muscles. It's best to keep some reactions closed and only *hinted* at by the character's actions. Like simply mentioning that her attention went onto D'lane's [*fine line of muscle curving around his hips*] can subtly hint at her being flushed because obviously, it's something she would be blushing at.

This chapter even touched upon the Chriw'rian customs and that's a good aspect of world building as well as establishing D'lane and his story as a character.

Even from the romantic point of view, this chapter was good. Not only was D'lane's offer of teaching Shannon some martial arts moves was a good *move* on your part but even their little argument regarding each of the two's inability to understand the other's thoughts or gestures a great way to build a rough path for their relationship. [*It is hard to read you without a tail, and I do not know if what I am saying will upset you until it already has.*"]

Chapter 5

The fifth chapter brings the real crisis into the picture: Shannon's fate was in the hands of the League and if she can't provide any information by the time they desire, she won't be needed. It's a good propeller for the tension in the story. The entire exchange with the League was shocking especially with the strategies and clauses they were using--like getting up from the seat would add five years of service. But it hooked me as a reader and there's nothing more one wants.

Shannon's character is getting more polished in this chapter. She proves herself to be smart when she decides to keep shut about her views regarding the entire cryogenics idea. While she did initially rebelled during the meeting, she quickly understood her situation and acted accordingly. This definitely strengthened her character all the more.

In terms of romance, here's the first time when D'lane's bow is played and Shannon keeps wondering what this different gesture implies. It's a nice take on the vastly different cultures of the two beings but the magnetism between the two forces them to keep pondering over what the other might be indicating.

Chapter 6

The general's meeting with both Shannon and D'lane works as an information bulletin but in a good way to let the readers know what the League and the entire Kro-Gen is playing upon and expecting from this revivee. However, I would like to mention that here, for the first time, there's a line that particularly made me change my views. All this time, the story was reading like a third-person limited style but when I came across this line [*He knew she was asking about whatever he had planned when he demanded she grab everything of value. He remained silent.*] I was forced to ponder over the possibility of the writing being third-person omniscient. If that's the case, alright! Though, I didn't get an omniscient feel from the previous chapters but then again, there are some amazing books where omniscient is used accordingly and not necessarily as the only highlighted writing style so feel free to ignore this. But if you were not intending to give a hint about third-person omniscient, then this is a loophole. In that case, try tweaking it a bit to sound third-person limited. For example: [Shannon was sure he knew was asking about...] This gets across the meaning while sounding like it's in the character's head.

Another thing I noticed was the confusion during conversations since the scenes had three character together--the general, D'lane and Shannon. At one point, I got a bit confused as to who was saying what and was further unable to live through the scene since the writing seemed to keep *telling* what was happening.

["Have you?"

"What?"

"Paid off your debt?" The general's expression froze. "Or are you doing this to me out of the goodness of your heart?"

Cold crept into his ice blue eyes. "That is none of your concern."]

Here, there's absolutely no dialogue tag and simply a recollection of what's happening to the general. When in reality, this conversation is pretty important since we later come to know in the story that the general's views were for the betterment and completely opposite to the evil company he was working for. This bit can be tweaked with the following ideas:

- a. Add a dialogue tag somewhere in these four lines. If you're not a fan of 'said', you can even use indirect tags. For example: [*The general's expression froze. Shannon took this as an opportunity to speak her mind. "Or are you doing this to me out of the goodness of your heart?"*] Here, I'm not boring the readers by simply using 'said' and also not jumping out from Shannon's head, and still indicating she's the speaker.
- b. I don't think the phrase [*cold crept in his eyes*] is the right one to use in this context. Firstly, cold usually creeps up the spine or upon the neck especially when someone is almost scared. That's definitely not the case here. I'm assuming you want to give away a hint of softness to the general's character and that would be great because he would later be disclosed as a good person. But you also want to show the rigidity that he's trying to portray as a general. The best path is to go mid-way. Something like: [His face surprisingly softened a little before

going rigid again. “That is none of your concern.”] This works good from both Shannon’s eyes and from the perspective we want the reader to see.

I’m not sure if this is the lack of editing that is making me point out this but I feel the need to at least mention it once so here I go: sometimes there’s just too much repetition of words, especially facial expressions. The word ‘grimace’ is used for the general with just a difference of ten lines. This makes the scene read bland since the character make the scene and their constantly same expressions can throw the readers into monotonous zone.

Instead, you can try spicing up the words sometimes. For example: [The general showed pure dislike, like there was some truth to what D’lane said, and she realized he might be just as much as a pawn as she was.]

Chapter 7

This chapter was impressive from the romantic point of view. D’lane and Shannon have a little moment where they disagree--when D’lane regards her as almost unneeded on the ship to which Shannon replies with just as much hostility. It’s nice for their relationship development. Similarly, Shannon’s thoughts upon seeing the red pillows in her ship’s room and wondering how sexy D’lane would look there is a good indication of the attraction she feels towards him.

Just like that, the bow and D’lane’s explanation of it was also a great conversation between the two love birds. Plus, the entire idea behind the bow was excellent with the importance and symbolization of the jugular vein.

Chapter 8

Again, the romance in this chapter was really good and the main characters shared their first kiss so that’s great! Then there was a shocking revelation where Shannon tells Hellen that she can see the blue light of the scanner. Same with the fact that she can’t read the lettering imprinted on top of doors or exits because of the paint used to engrave it.

While both these were good ways to bind the readers further, I felt that they also left a trail of confusion behind them since the reader’s don’t get any more information about the two things later on. Like when Shannon mention the blue light, Hellen asks her to describe it and simply says “amazing” and continues the conversation. I would’ve preferred if Shannon would’ve pushed the doctor further to at least explain a little bit about this weird, sudden ability of hers to see a light nobody else can. Is it somehow related to her genes or to her revival procedure? Or something else? The readers might ask these questions too and we don’t want them to be disappointed.

Similarly, when she tells D’lane that she can’t see the letters and then suggests that maybe the paint wasn’t available during her time, he drops the conversation by saying that the doctor would have an answer for that. It’s understandable for him to drop that question but the readers can again be frustrated at the lack of information here. I would suggest adding a scene later in the story--maybe at the time when she researches about the Annunakis--where she searches for the reason behind not seeing the letters or the paint and stumbles upon a definitive answer.

Chapter 9

I really liked Chapter 9. It starts off with all the interesting stuff that Shannon finds regarding the Annunaki attack. One line in particular, the one she finds on a post of years ago, stands out to me as a subtle hint to the overall attack and what followed: [*You all have got it all wrong, the powers that be are the powers that act.*] Then there’s the make out scene and the little funny scene when D’lane catches Shannon off guard with the video he assumes she was watching on purpose. Overall, pretty good!

Chapter 10

In terms of romance, this was good too. For the first time, I saw an emotional connection building up between the two, especially when D'lane lightly touches Shannon's arm to tell her that she does have a purpose. It's sweet and will definitely be cherished by the readers.

Chapter 11

Pre't's entry as a new character is quite interesting in this chapter. His vividly similar appearance with D'lane throws Shannon off guard and he definitely gives a first vibe of someone who's skeptical about her. So if that's what you were aiming for, you did exactly that. Essra's meeting with the three was also a good scene to pass on some information to the readers while developing the rift that Pre't has with Shannon. Even their intensive make out scene was a strong factor of this chapter and touches on the romantic aspect of the story.

However, there's one thing I would suggest: don't let the characters simply say stuff to the readers. Make them think, especially when we're talking about the protagonist. We need to be inside her head (most of the times) so her thoughts should work as a connecting link between this story and the readers. I'm talking about the conversation between Shannon and D'lane and Pre't when D'lane calls out the general for being one of the Annunaki sympathizers. Shannon sifts through the information and even ponders over the weird name--Joseph Smith--and then there's this line [*she was unable to believe he was involved in this*] I think a "why" would be very much appreciated by the readers here. I mean, the protagonist crossing out a suspect requires a little longer train of thought than simply a statement. Maybe try adding something like: [*She was unable to believe he was involved in this. After all, she had noticed how much of a pawn he appeared during their last exchange. He couldn't be a sympathizer in this situation.*] Here, I tried to add a reason in the form of a thought to Shannon's mind so the readers can mentally jump back to the last scene between the general and Shannon, and decide for themselves if they agree with Shannon or not. This way, the readers have a chance to guess or bid their takes and not simply believe something that the protagonist stated. I also tried to repeat her thought here because that gives a nice sense of *thinking*, if you get what I mean.

Chapter 12

I definitely liked the sex scene in this chapter. It builds up well and is almost being picked up from where they left in the previous chapter. This gives a sense of connectivity to the readers and doesn't let them believe that it's merely a sex scene, instead they do act upon their feelings and attraction.

Chapter 13

This chapter works great in terms of pulling the plot forward. Shannon has some valid and interesting information that would certainly bind the readers. Some of her memories have been disclosed and we now know Steven, her boss in the previous life, and her theory of Annunakis being triggered to attack the Earth earlier than they themselves would have. All these are good leading points.

This chapter also marks the first twist in the story and an amazing one at that. Logically, Pre't and D'lane's idea of Shannon being the one behind the attack is quite valid and I can see them making a decision of that sort. After all, she was found with the actual triggering device.

Though, I felt D'lane's reaction to the entire scene a bit too relaxing. I mean, he has started liking Shannon (evidently) so when Pre't does point her out and with proof--if that's the case--I can't believe he immediately decided to "follow the procedures" and loko her out. Especially when he *feels* she isn't wrong and when she's able to decipher the meaning and truth behind all this. D'lane's response to this entire ordeal is too convenient, if you ask me. A reader would prefer at least a slight denial by D'lane to Pre't's accusation so that the romance would not die down when there's no lovemaking. Maybe he frowns or tries to cut Pre't off, to which Pre't becomes insistent on explaining all the evidences that point toward Shannon being involved with this entire attack plan. And maybe *then*, D'lane is left with no choice but to follow the procedures and lock her out.

Chapter 14

There's some amazing adrenaline in this one. The chapter starts off strong with the sudden attack on the ship and Shannon being kidnapped. The fact that the kidnapper was not someone she had looked at before gives something more for the readers to look forward to. Then there's the flashback of the day she died.

I liked the idea of transcending her from the sudden hit to the ground to her past memories, it's fun to read. Though, the transition wasn't as swift. Maybe the usage of ellipses can work wonders to properly, and with pacing, transfer the audience from the current scene to the flashback. [Her consciousness rippled out...] And then start the next paragraph with the scene. This gives a hint to the readers that the set would be changing and they're travelling to Shannon's past.

The death scene and the panic build up during Steven's chase to kill Shannon was on-point and there's nothing you should change in that.

Hellen being involved in all this is a huge revelation but I felt that it wasn't as properly conveyed as it could be. I would suggest being subtle about such shocking twists since those make much more impact than simply mentioning the person. For example, [A few inches away from her destination, someone stepped into view--someone she never imagined to see here.] This builds up a hype about this person and when Hellen says the next dialogue, the dialogue tag already has her name so that's the revelation right there while not sounding too *telling*.

Chapter 15

Before anything else, I was so happy when she actually couldn't escape during her first try by breaking the field plane and crashing through it. It gave a sense of realism especially since the force keeping her hostage is so much more (at the moment) powerful than her. However, the turn of events finally brought the ball back in her court and she managed to execute a plan against the Gandiki. There was a little piece where her humanity was shown when she is worried about what she might be doing by activating the main drive on Griver's command [*What would she be unleashing on the universe if she complied?*] This works really well for character's development since she proves to think before her actions.

Having said all this, I do felt the entire chapter was a little dull in terms of writing. Honestly speaking, everything seems like it's being *told* to the readers. While the content idea is good, I think the narration reads a little bland at some points. I felt that some italics or the use of onomatopoeia can immensely help rejuvenate any scene better. For example:

[At the last moment, she realized her mistake. *Oh, no!* The manuever had been executed...]

[She slammed into the edge of the tunnel. *Snap! And a sharp burst of pain.* She bit...]

The addition of these small details can help the readers picture out the scene (or the entire story in fact) more effectively.

Chapter 16

This chapter has another set of crisis for Shannon since the emergency pods are now deployed. I was glad to see her use her new abilities like heat scanning the room to see if she has any company. In terms of writing too, this was a pretty good chapter and there were quite a few things in the narration that I felt missing in the previous one. Like adding Shannon's thoughts in between the actions: [*The ship held steady. Would she fit?*]

However, a few suggestions:

1. Adding onomatopoeia to the narration, not excessively but at least in the right places, can wonderfully lift up a scene. For example, *[Thud!]* Debris clattered as it fell to the floor.]
2. Like I previously mentioned, the writing sometimes sounds too much like a retelling of events and not actually a scene currently being lived by a character. While I was unable to decipher the prominent reason behind this in Chapter 15, I finally caught what the real bug might be. The use of shorter sentences. Yes, shorter sentences are great and fun to read, great to hook the reader, etc, as long as they're being used to recount sequences where the panic and urgency are required or when there's something too spontaneous happening, like an action or argumentative scene. But when Shannon is alone on this ship and she has a problem regarding the oxygen levels and she's roaming around the ship, the use of shorter sentences make the scene read more urgently than required and thereby doesn't allow the reader to spend enough time with the character in a particular scene. While there are many examples I can quote, I'll be using just one so as to give you an idea, and the editor can best work on it later.

[She returned to the empty storage room in the middle of the hall. It was a weird place for it. Why not keep the storage room near the entrance? She spread out her fingers, and pressed on the wall, working her way from the center out. On the right side, interior to the lever that opened the door, a click sounded. A doorway swung open. Shannon peaked inside. A ladder ran up and disappeared into the ceiling. The not-her memories filled with bullet holes built into ships.]

[She climbed the latter, and pushed the hatch open at the top. Dim green light streamed down from inside.]

[She hurriedly ran to the storage room, wondering why it wasn't situated anywhere near the entrance; the storage room being in the middle of the hall definitely seemed weird. She lifted her hand, spread her fingers and pressed on the wall. Instantly, on the right side--interior to the lever that opened the door--a click sounded and the door swung open. Anxiously peeking inside, all Shannon saw was a large empty space except for one single thing. Quite a distance away from the doorway, a ladder ran up and disappeared into the ceiling.

Skeptically, she took a few big steps and reached the base of the ladder. Looking up, she couldn't find anything past the closed hatch. Guess she'll have to see for herself. (OR *Guess I'll have to see for myself.*) Climbing up the silver (any color) ladder, she pushed the hatch upwards and dim green light flowed down.]

- I added the words 'hurriedly ran' to emphasize on the urgency of the situation since the ship's oxygen levels are decreasing and what can be more dangerous than that. Also, I can't seem to understand why the word 'returned' is used since I don't think Shannon entered the storage room before this. Or did she?
- Secondly, three lines can easily be added into one while not reading like a run-on sentence, which is exactly what I did here. Using phrases like 'It was a weird place for it.' sounds incomplete and not informative enough for the readers. Meaning, what was a weird place for what?
- Thirdly, her actions are sunken into one single sentence by using em-dashes so as to not drag a scene by listing out actions but still letting the readers know what's happening.
- Another thing I would point out (since I work as a developmental editor too and can't seem to help notice such mistakes) is the incorrect usage of doorway. A doorway is something that's open, either an open space in the wall without a physical door or a door open on its hinges.

So using the word 'doorway' along with the verb 'open' is incorrect. Instead, a door can be swung open and now that it's open, it can be called a doorway. Which is the reason I used doorway in the last sentence of the first paragraph.

- Now, in the manuscript's text, the word 'empty' is already used to describe the storage room and that's something I can't seem to grasp as a reader since, like I already mentioned, I don't remember her entering the storage room before and already describing the place where the character is going to be before she is even there, is a huge spoiler-like situation for a reader. Because what's left for them to expect? They now already know that the room is empty and that can pull them back from the narration.
- Words like 'anxiously' and 'skeptically' can help connect the reader and the character in a better way.
- A little thought in the scene can work wonders, as mentioned previously.

So that's about it for the bland writing and my suggestions on it. There are quite a few scenes and sequences in the next chapters that felt a little off to me but since that's not a place for me to comment (that's the job for the editor), I'll focus on the story in the next bits of the feedback. But hopefully, this little tweaking can help you understand just what is lacking in terms of writing.

Chapter 17

Right off the bat, I'll talk about this transition scene that's too sudden and not built well enough. The bit where Shannon has climbed into the pod and is almost dozing off, but suddenly there's a "crushing white light" biting into her eyes.

It's a transition scene and works as a light at the end of the tunnel--Shannon was tired and decided to try her chance by climbing into a pod, hoping she would survive the landing. And now she did or so the readers will come to know. But the transition isn't smooth and reads like a few lines where the readers are *told* that the ship had survived the landing and that Shannon is awake and alive now.

[Crushing white light bit into her eyes. She groaned. Her lashes fluttered before settling into a squint. Her chest hurt, badly. Each breath a painful fight for air. The light dimmed. She licked her lips, the cracked surface rough against her tongue.

"Shannon?"

Frowning, she rolled her head to the side. Above her a slim body swam in and out of focus. Blinking, Shannon smiled, she'd survived the landing after all.]

Again, it's all about the way a scene is written that can make or break it. Instead of mentioning the landing and the success of it after Shannon wakes up, you can push it a few lines up so the readers can be a part of that event even if for a small time. Plus, using a color to describe the light when the narration is from the third-person limited and the character's eyes are shut is not the best option. Instead, the word 'bright' can be used to describe the light since they would then appear white to a person with closed eyes.

[Shannon was briefly disturbed by a jolt or two--probably due to some turbulence--but it was when the crushing bright light bit into her eyes that she groaned. Her lashes fluttered...]

The next interactions between both Shannon and V'ren as well as Shannon and D'lane were well formed and were important from the aspects of information delivery to the readers as well as romantic development. I like V'ren's character and how supportive she is of Shannon, she tries to understand everything that she recounts. Shannon and D'lane's conversation is nicely constructed to show their support when they see each other after all this time and then their disagreement taking a toll when D'lane can't say what she needed to hear. It's a good way to heighten the tension between them.

Then the ship shuddered. Now, this scene again lacks the urgency and suddenness that's required from it. Direct actions are being informed--D'lane slammed, V'ren's on the floor, he rushes toward the bridge. Instead, adding a little detail with everything can liven up the scene. [V'ren's yelp was hard to miss and she was soon sprawled on the floor.] This makes the scene well constructed and not sound like a recounting of what was where in the setting.

Chapter 18

The chapter starts off with an unexpected event and it definitely heightens the tension in the plot. Shannon has no idea how she walked from the infirmary to the cockpit and now T'revis has the Gandiki attacking it. I was instantly hooked to the chapter. However, there were two particular scenes that pulled me out:

1. *[She frowned. Struggling to remember what had happened...changed and catalogued information.]* This bit is super confusing. First of all, who says the first dialogue in this paragraph? Is it Shannon? If so, why is she asking about the comms system and if they were destroyed? The only information given here is that a "memory resurfaced" and so she asks this. But which memory?

Often times, we writers think some things are self-explanatory on the basis of previous sequences in the story, but that's simply because we know the story from scratch so it's obvious that we would know what we want the readers to know. The readers, though, are not *that* diligent, at least not during their first read of a book. So it's important to not leave them confused or hanging. Maybe describe this "memory" to make it clearer.

I'm assuming Shannon had tried, under the collar's command, to communicate with Griver while completing the task of transferring information. But was unable to do so and that particular memory resurfaced right now which led to her asking this. To which, D'lane gives a pretty valid answer that it was done to try and stop her, and that's when the pieces connect for me because later on when Pre't is questioning Shannon's loyalty, D'lane indicates that he knew about it all. As for the kiss mentioned in the third line of this paragraph, I couldn't recall anything of that sort but then I came to a conclusion that Shannon was sifting through the memories she made under the collar's command and found D'lane kissing her upon her entry on the Bridge.

Now, it's important for you to understand that I reached these conclusions after reading this story four times. But I'm hoping you're expecting the readers to live through the story in the first read itself, of course. So a little addition of information here and there can make the scenes more clearer especially since the story is peaking at this point and we don't want the readers to be unnecessarily confused.

2. Another bit that was not my favourite was the kiss scene in this chapter; the one that D'lane shares upon Shannon's no-her memories pulling her down. Kissing someone during a panic attack like this one is not a good idea, no matter what fiction makes us think. It can worsen the situation. Yes, Shannon is deeply bonded with D'lane and his passionate kiss can bring her back from the dark memories but the scene just throws off the reader. Especially her reaction stating that desire was coursing through her and how she was involved in the kiss too. No, I don't think it's possible for someone to be deeply infiltrated with such horrid memories and simultaneously respond to a sudden, passionate kiss. Maybe D'lane kisses her, softly, to which she starts calming down or maybe he just rubs her hands and makes her

breathe in properly. Those two options can work for their romantic development just as much, though at the end, they're merely my suggestions.

Chapter 19

This was a really good chapter and I didn't find anything particularly off or confusing in here. Good job!

Chapter 20

Again, this was a great chapter too especially in terms of Shannon and D'lane's relationship. Their support for each other has build over the last chapters and they're finally trusting each other with all their hearts and minds. It's nice to see that!

Chapter 21

Like all the previous ones, the sex scenes in this chapter were well-written and put together. In addition to those, I also liked the memories in Shannon's head when she was sifting through the notes. They gave something for the readers to look forward to and even left slight hints to what lies ahead; questions like who was that Chriw'rian who stepped forward?

These are good for building up the suspense especially when this is just the first installment in a series.

Chapter 22

The tension between Shannon and D'lane is finally over for good and they're back on their best terms. This would be such a good news for the readers who love their relationship. Finally, they've reached Earth and I can sense the climax building up when D'lane says that due to the lack of communication, they have no idea what might be waiting for them back down.

Finally they're in front of the League (or what's left of it) and things are working toward the climax. Joseph steps in and he's being sentenced for treason; this works like a shock since the readers were thinking up until here that he would be clearing out all the problems on Earth.

*["War isn't a natural disaster."
"What if you didn't fight back?"]*

This is such a good way to end this chapter. Applause!

Chapter 23

Ash acts like a really good villain with all the maniac dialogues and actions she performed. Whether it's cutting out the general's limb or killing the fellow League members. Then comes in Hellen and she plays a really good *bad* role. The revelation of the Chwir'ians using the zu'ci collars to enslave the Annunakis is also a great shock so it works immensely to impress the readers. The torture she implements on Shannon is really grieving to read but is good from the story's point of view since the main character will be cheered here. The gor scene toward the end when Hellen pulls out the collar is amazingly written and is probably one of the best scenes in terms of writing. The ending is a huge cliffhanger because I'm left wondering what will happen next when Griver does arrive. And it's the end of the first installment so that's a serious cliffhanger that would make your readers pick up the next book as soon as it hits the shelves.

Overall Feedback

Talking about the overall, general feedback, I felt that the story was good. Since transparency is what's going to help a writer understand where the book is going, I'm going to be clearly honest here. The story wasn't something extremely different from the usual sci-fi, romantic books but it wasn't overly cliché either.

Aliens attacking the Earth, humans civilizing with other species in the universe, the protagonist waking up after years, the protagonist being a chosen one, the protagonist falling in love with an alien, they working together to save the world--these are all done before.

No, don't take me wrong. I'm not belittling your ideas or the concept of this book. Writing something that's already been done before is not a wrong thing. But as a beta reader, I feel the need to comment on clichés and tropes so that the writer can understand their place as a story developer. It's not that I found the entire book to be cliché-ridden. I was immensely impressed by the extra motive that you added to Shannon's story--she wasn't just trying to save the world; her own survival and the payment system at Kro-Gen worked to push her into the direlict too. Similarly, the revelations like Hellen being the villain and the *zu'ci* being a part of the Chwir'ian culture, were surprising.

But there were a lot of things that could've made the story so much better. Writing a story set in the future is good but it's important to do the research and to understand how the world would be working all these years from now, because only then would the readers be able to understand the same. Shannon has been revived and she has woken up in a time that's not just slightly different but is absolutely new to what she had been living in. But there was just no development or story-telling in that aspect. Shannon wakes up and within a week she is all adapted and even ready to go on a trip. Sure, Kro-Gen might be willing to send her on the trip because they expect her to do the work but Shannon as a character doesn't show the required signs of adaptation or confusion that a person should be feeling when she finds the humans (who are in turn a *lot* different from the humans in her time) civilizing with all these different species.

What I mean to say is, the story shouldn't be working on the plot itself but should also equally depend on the character development. I couldn't find Shannon developing through the story, except for in terms of her romantic relationship with the alien. Her personality as the human waking up after 1000 years was not carved throughout the story. It would've been more understandable when she would've refused to accept this reality, refused to accept the fact that she has lost all the humans she was *used* to seeing around, refused to accept that she's under a company's observation, and refused to cooperate with any of this--at least in the beginning. This would've pulled the readers closer to Shannon as a character and helped them *care* about her when she finally decides to go on the ship and find whatever it is that they're looking for.

The world building was pretty good. It gave most of the information that was required to set the setting.

D'lane's character just like Shannon's wasn't the best developed either, in my opinion. Their relationship was certainly carved in a great manner but their individual personalities couldn't come across the pages. Majority of his reactions are indicated through verbs like 'growled' or 'roared' and these didn't quite work to show his personality or real caricature. They only worked to show his actions or gestures--which, in turn, became too repetitive--and didn't make him transparent to the readers. I understand that the narration had nothing to do with his POV but as the main supporting character, and since this book is based on romance, his development and thoughts are just as important as the protagonist. I would suggest adding a few scenes where he shares his feelings or thoughts with Shannon or at least a few more words during his scene than simply 'growled'.

Next comes the entire show VS tell, something I've mentioned in the chapter-by-chapter feedback. I think a good interaction between you and your editor can work wonders to tighten up the scenes and make the story come alive.

The dialogues were a strong asset. They were distinctive and had hints of the characters embedded in them. Meaning, I could (at times) make out who would be saying what even without a dialogue tag. However, some places need more dialogue tags--again, I've mentioned that in the detailed feedback.

All in all, this can make a really good book if just the characters can become real through their development and if the writing can get a bit more polish.

Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity to read your book. I've tried my best to give a constructive feedback and look forward to an honest testimonial from you. Good luck with this work!