

HNS-NYC BETA READER PROGRAM: MANUSCRIPT REVIEW QUESTIONSⁱ

Suggestions for Beta Readers and Submitting Authors

November 20, 2025

Beta Readers: Consider these questions in your review. You don't need to comment on all of them, but consider them as guidelines for identifying a manuscript's strengths and needed improvements

Submitting Authors: Your reviewer will probably emphasize some questions more than others. But if some are especially important to you, please flag them for your reviewer ahead of time. That way, your reviewer can give them special attention.

HNS-NYC BETA READER Review Questions

1. VOICE/POINT OF VIEW

- Is the narrative voice consistent? Does it enhance the tone and emotional atmosphere of the story?
- Is the chosen point of view clear and purposeful? Does it draw the reader into the world of the story?

2. STRUCTURE/ HOOK

- Does the story open with a compelling hook that captures the reader's interest right away?
- Does the plot develop logically from the hook? Does it keep the reader engaged through well-paced events?

3. PLOT, TENSION, CONFLICT, FLOW, AND THEMES

- Are tension, stakes, and surprises used effectively to sustain narrative momentum?
- Does the story structure flow smoothly, with clear transitions and a satisfying arc?
- Is the central conflict resolved in a way that feels satisfying or narratively purposeful—whether through closure, an open ending, or a cliffhanger?
- Is the central conflict integral to the plot? Does it drive character growth and decision-making?
- Are the story's central themes clearly presented and woven into the narrative with intention?
- Do the themes resonate on an emotional or intellectual level? Do they add meaning to the story?

4. CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

- Do the main characters display emotional depth, believable growth, and/or internal conflict?
- Are the character motivations and decisions well-developed? Do they make sense within the story's context?
- Do the relationships and interactions between characters reveal complexity or transformation?
- Are the characters written with enough emotional depth or motivation for readers to understand their actions and responses?

5. WRITING/STYLE

- Is the prose polished and immersive? Does it support the tone and genre of the story?
- Does the sentence structure and narrative rhythm enhance the reading experience?
- Is the dialogue natural and character-specific? Does it serve both plot and character development?

6. EDITING

- Is the book well-edited and free from distracting grammar or consistency issues?

7. PRESENTATION & DESIGN READABILITY (where relevant)

- Does the book's interior formatting and layout support ease of reading in print or digital form?
- Does the cover clearly convey the book's genre, tone, and intended audience, based on professional and genre-appropriate standards?

ⁱThese questions have been adapted from a framework developed by the Reader Views Awards Program.