

Story Title: *Uncovering Amekkia*

Genre: Contemporary Fantasy

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Reviewed By: Phoenix

Date of Review: Jan. 26 2017

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Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for sharing your story with Writer's Rebirth. Phoenix has read your story as a Reader and as an Editor. As a Reader, she has questioned, contemplated, and queried her way through your work and made a thorough investigation into the workings of your material. As an Editor, Phoenix has analyzed your material for macro errors in the more common aspects of story expression. Her thoughts, opinions, and questions regarding this Full manuscript for *Uncovering Amekkia* are presented here.

Story Summary

Uncovering Amekkia is an engaging, well-paced, contemporary fantasy set in nineteenth century England that follows the titular character as she falls on hard times and is forced into prostitution under the watchful eye of the Dawlrey Brothers. But the brothers soon find out that Amekkia is more than your average impoverished, malnourished gutter-rat when she refuses to adhere to her new way of life and a mysterious man offers a king's ransom to take her back to his ancestral manor. This fascinating tale of discovery then takes a surprising turn as the mysterious man and Amekkia fall in love and find their relationship rocked to its foundation by a secret from her past that they cannot escape. A secret that changes everything forever and forces the mysterious man to repeat his gravest mistake.

First Impressions

This story was a true surprise. I had expected the typical fantasy tropes and was smiling ear-to-ear each time they were subverted. Amekkia's wit and maturity was a nice shift from the typical damsel in distress that populates this sort of story. The mysterious man gave me V-vibes every now and then, but he was different enough to be fascinating on his own. Your villains, however, were cookie-cutter gangster characters that acted more like spoiled children than menacing crime lords. The plot was a little confusing at times, but nothing took me out of the story. As a standalone novel, this story is a breath of fresh air and I'd love to see a continuation with these characters, in this world.

Theme(s)

Identity is a Discovery, not a Construct is an intriguing theme to use in itself. But to weave this theme throughout this story was genius. I cannot praise enough how beautifully this theme and story mesh. Change nothing.

Plot

Timeline: The timeline of the story was clear and developed well. While the Prologue was hard to follow for the first few pages, the timeline of the story proper was smooth and offered little confusion.

Loose ends: There were a couple loose ends in the plot though. Where did the mysterious man come from? Why is he so driven to save Amekkia over any other woman? You hint at a backstory that answers this question, but you never commit to giving the reader the information. Additionally, you started to explain why Amekkia is terrified of the phrase "Come to me", then stopped before the information was expressed. Did this scene get chopped in revision and you forgot to add it back in? This fear is a major character trait and needs to be fully explained for the weight of the moments to work. Another loose end for me was the pages and pages of backstory on the Dawlrey feud. Honestly, this portion of the story was engaging, but overall seemed pointless. You spent so much time explaining the feud, but no time showing it in scenes.

Standouts: The biggest standout moments in this story were the Bedroom Challenge (pg. 57) and the final showdown (pg. 204-210). The bedroom challenge scene was the point in the story where my reader-mind truly became hooked on the mysterious man. It was also a highlight for the romance subplot. The final showdown was nothing I expected, and that is what made it work so brilliantly. You managed to answer all the nagging questions with one great scene.

Stumbles: Amekkia's backstory before the Dawlrey Brothers was barely developed. This seems like an artistic choice, but it has some pitfalls to consider. Starting the story at the moment Amekkia is thrown into the streets works fine. However, the choice to reflect on how she got there without actually detailing her fall and who she was beforehand does not work. She does not have amnesia, no selective memory. Her fall needs to be shown in flashbacks or hinted at throughout the story a piece at a time.

Pacing

Your pacing of this story is spot on. Great job.

Characters

Protagonist 1: Amekkia is an interesting mix of cool-headed observation and calculated analysis within the actions of a spitfire and a challenger. She fascinates and aggravates at once. Her extreme loyalty to the mysterious man is compelling, but odd. Her knack for finding ways around her obstacles via her intelligence and knowledge is a welcome trait too. Her weakness as a character in this story, however, is

that she comes across as ignorant of her own backstory and that hinders her character arc. Her best moment is the final showdown scene by far. Everything about her character came together perfectly there.

Protagonist 2: The mysterious man is an interesting balance of presence and absence. His character arc is somehow significant, yet insignificant at the same time. And his side of the romance subplot is deeply felt in ways I did not expect. His biggest weakness as a character is not even his fault; giving him no name is a curious choice that can work, but right now does not. While his biggest strength is the way he approaches each new action, as if he is scripting out the scene in his head and deciding on what to say and what to do before ever walking into the room. The best character moment for the mysterious man is the bedroom challenge scene. His words, his actions, the way he instigates... my jaw was on the floor.

Antagonist: The Dawlrey brothers are a bit of a mess as characters. They are cookie-cutter copies of gangsters when they should be more like seedy crime lords from old England. Their goal and motivation are also undefined in the story, making them ineffective villains. And several times in their big scenes, their actions were written so comically when they should have been menacing.

.....Pages Skipped For Author's Privacy.....

Words

Vocabulary: A healthy mix of medium and high-level vocabulary that works well within the style and voice of the story.

Crutches: Please search your document for the following and either remove them, or change them: he gasped, she croaked out, shone like a star.

Readability: 7

Some hard-to-read sentences. A couple hard to understand paragraphs where you forgot to use punctuation effectively. See pages 14 line 9, 76 paragraphs 3 to 7, and 209 lines 12 to 15.

Post-Read Questions

Why is the mysterious man never given a name?

You chose to end the book with a non-resolution. Why?

What is the significance of the Dawlrey feud in this story?

How does the Prologue's events tie into where you start the story in chapter one?