

Melinda Jasmine Crouchley

Editor

Faultland, Suzy Vitello
Developmental Edit Round One

Dear Suzy Vitello,

Thank you for sharing the manuscript for *Faultland* with me. This was a gritty, funny, grim, but ultimately hopeful story about a troubled family unearthing their secrets while a 9.2 magnitude earthquake unearths their home. The strength of this story is in the interweaving viewpoints and narratives of the Sparrow siblings as they navigate survival in a completely altered Portland landscape. The biggest strength is in the lyrical prose and the willingness for the story to expose the ugliest aspects of a human and still offer them redemption and a chance to start over.

I'm extremely excited to tackle this project with you and have highlighted key areas of improvement throughout the manuscript, specifically in regards to the structure and the various timelines threading through the narrative. The following notes will be primarily focused on structure, with some brief suggestions for the epilogue and titles.

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OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

Faultland has more than a few great things going for it, and the biggest of those elements is in how easily the reader can navigate through the voices of the different siblings and find things to love and hate about all of them. They are portrayed in very engaging, very human ways.

The prose itself has fun winks and nods, and doesn't mind getting a little grimey in reporting tongue-in-cheek details about some pretty intense life threatening situations.

I like to think of this book as a season of *Arrested Development* if that entire family suffered through an earthquake. There is a glibness and an exposure of the wealthiest, most trite members of the Portlandia landscape that really resonates with me as a local Portlandian. I know exactly who those people in the West Hills are and I have a good inkling of how they'd operate in a natural disaster. Which is what made this such an engaging read.

But the purpose of this editorial note is to dig deeper into all aspects of the manuscript, ferret out anything that doesn't feel 100% real or is inconsistent, and make all the best parts even better. We've got some important work ahead of us, so let's get started.

STRUCTURE

This structure section is focused on the larger strokes of story, including major events and timeline restructuring. We'll look at each chapter, the major scenes, and individual narrative timelines that need to be addressed.

INITIAL TIMELINE

The current timeline is near-future but there are a lot of new technology and societal elements being referenced. Because of this and a better need to understand the world, a more concrete time range should be clarified for the reader. Near future might work as language for summaries or descriptions of the book, but the reader will have a better grasp of the setting and the series of unfolding events if we let them know a clearer timeframe from the initial chapter onward.

Are we ten years into the future? Twenty years? Thirty years? The further we move into the future, the more advanced the technology and the more world-building and explaining. My suggestion is ten years in the future because that aligns with the technology, societal, and climate elements of the manuscript a little more closely.

Think of the difference between 2000 and 2020—smartphones, tablets, robot vacuums, drones, etc. A ten year stretch of time is going to be less of a logistical leap for all of the futuristic elements and will allow for the reader to quickly grasp the life experiences of the characters. Even three to five years in the future might be a consideration.

Once we've established the world-timeline setting for the story, then we can start to attack the other elements within the story that operate on their own timelines.

We'll do this next by breaking down the major sections, chapters and scenes, and then we'll focus on specific narrative events that should be clarified for the reader.

CHAPTER + SECTION BREAKDOWN

In order to get at the heart of the timeline, we need to break down each section and the chapters within it, and look at the various tools we might use to better help the reader navigate the Cascadia world.

Tracking three different characters, usually in three different settings, is challenging enough for the reader. Trying to get a solid idea of the time of day, where the character is currently located, is even more challenging. This book is a character driven story, but it also digs into action quite a bit and this is a quick, succinct way of keeping the reader on track.

One of the biggest suggestions here is to use time codes and locations in all chapter headings, just like in the big Hollywood movies, especially during the trickier action sequences. Even if the time stamps are dropped between action sequences, calendar dates might continue to be appropriate. Especially given how time sensitive and crucial many of the plot elements are to the story.

It's also suggested that the POV switches are tagged with chapter numbers, as switching between the names becomes repetitive and possibly confusing for the reader. Imagine a reader losing their bookmark and trying to figure out which "Sherman" chapter they were on. This kind of structural element (chapter titles and numbers) may seem like TOO MUCH but will fade into the readers mental background allowing the narrative to sit at the front of their attention.

ALSO: If the timecode and locations are adopted at the beginning of each chapter, we could easily dispense with chapter numbers. But my suggestion is one or the other, or possibly both. The following table demonstrates how it would look if we threw everything at the wall. As the author, you get to decide what sticks and how it best illustrates the story you're telling.

The suggestions are outlined here along with the section and chapter breakdowns, as well as a timeline of when the events are unfolding:

PART ONE: Foreshocks Late October, Ten Years in the Future	WHO	WHERE	WHAT
THE NIGHT BEFORE			
Ch 1: Morgan (p.3) (time code/location)	Morgan, Clyde, Wanda	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Prepping for business meeting, taking care of Clyde
Ch 2: Olivia (p.12) (time code/location)	Olivia	Gym - unsure of neighborhood	Final coupon trainer session
THE MORNING OF			
Ch 3: Morgan (p.16) (time code/location)	Morgan, Christopher, Melanie	Christopher's apartment in the Pearl District area	Awkward morning-after conversations
Ch 4: Sherman (p.28) (time code/location)	Sherman	Bed, Bud, & Beyond - NW PDX	Talking with lawyer, arguing w/ employee
Ch 5: Olivia (p.38) (time code/location)	Olivia	Inner SE Portland	At the salon, discussing the divorce
Ch 6: Sherman (p.45) (time code/location)	Sherman, Morgan, Melanie, Clyde, Wanda	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Picking up the piano, the first reference to the Nisse dolls and the Christmas episode
Ch 7: Morgan (p.52) (time code/location)	Morgan, Melanie, Clyde, Sherman, Wanda	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Conducting a remote work meeting

PART TWO: Mainshocks	WHO	WHERE	WHAT
THE EARTHQUAKE			
Ch. 1: Sherman (59) (time code/location)	Morgan, Melanie, Clyde, Sherman	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Loss of power, gas leak
Ch 2: Morgan (64) (time code/location)	Morgan, Melanie, Clyde, Sherman	The Carriage House - NW PDX	Chaos and a landslide
Ch 3: Olivia (68) (time code/location)	Olivia	Salon in SE PDX/ Willamette River	Olivia travels to the base of the Hawthorne bridge and crosses the river
Ch 4: Morgan (78) (time code/location)	Morgan, Melanie, Clyde, Sherman, Wanda	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Wanda's leg is broken, they enter the carriage house
Ch 5: Olivia (84) (time code/location)	Olivia	Waterfront Park/ Pioneer Square	Discovers Melanie and Christopher are "dead"
Ch 6: Sherman (94) (time code/location)	Morgan, Melanie, Clyde, Sherman, Wanda	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Gathers resources, bandages Wanda's leg
Ch 7: Morgan (100) (time code/location)	Morgan, Melanie	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Helps Melanie pee, reminisces and starts thinking about motherhood
Ch 8: Olivia (106) (time code/location)	Olivia	Providence Park Stadium	Reunion node for the night
THE DAY AFTER			
Ch 9: Sherman (112) (time code/location)	Morgan, Melanie, Clyde, Sherman, Wanda	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Morning after coffee and contemplation
Ch 10: Olivia (117) (time code/location)	Olivia	Providence Park / Lovejoy Elementary	CCA militia infiltrating the safe places, armed guards at another safe area.
Ch 11: Morgan (129)	Morgan, Melanie,	The Sparrow House	Playing with mud,

(time code/location)	Clyde, Wanda	- NW PDX	discovering a Nisse, Christopher is alive
Ch 12: Sherman 133 (time code/location)	Sherman	Council Crest Node	Medical kit, aftershocks, BB&B destroyed - OLIVIA
Ch 13: Morgan (142) (time code/location)	Morgan, Melanie, Christopher	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Guilt, suspicion, dinner, and Olivia
Ch 14: Olivia (152) (time code/location)	Olivia, Morgan, Melanie, Christopher, Sherman	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Reunion with the fam
Ch 15: Morgan (156) (time code/location)	Olivia, Morgan, Melanie, Christopher	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Survival business and infidelity revelations
Ch 16: Sherman 160 (time code/location)	Sherman, Clyde, Wanda	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	CCA looter. Face wand. Christopher knows something.
Ch 17: Morgan (167) (time code/location)	Morgan, Melanie, Olivia	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	The dog finds a Nisse.
THE NEXT DAY			
Ch 18: Olivia (171) (time code/location)	Olivia, Christopher, Melanie	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Olivia takes a nap in the main house
Ch 19: Morgan (177) (time code/location)	Morgan, Melanie, Christopher, Wanda, Clyde	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Clyde is becoming more lucid, more Nisse
Ch 20: Sherman 182 (time code/location)	Sherman, Wanda	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Dubious in Denmark, Wanda is weird with the Nisse
Ch 21: Morgan (188) (time code/location)	Morgan, Olivia, Melanie, Christopher, Wanda, Clyde	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Doling out tasks. Tensions rise.

PART THREE: Aftershocks	WHO	WHERE	WHAT
ONE WEEK LATER			
Ch. 1: Olivia (194) (time code/location)	Olivia, Morgan	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Olivia has a nightmare
Ch 2: Morgan (201) (time code/location)	Olivia, Morgan	The Rummer House - NW PDX	The sisters travel to the Rummer house and fight
Ch 3: Wanda (212) (time code/location)	Wanda, Clyde, Melanie, Christopher	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Wanda falls, Lovejoy has the Nisse
Ch 4: Sherman (217) (time code/location)	Sherman, conspiracy theorist	Emergency node (council crest?)	Sherman gets supplies, pieces together family mystery
Ch 5: Olivia (223) (time code/location)	Olivia, Morgan	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	The cliff collapses, Olivia makes a choice
Ch 6: Sherman (228) (time code/location)	Sherman, Christopher, Melanie, Wanda	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Wanda's hurt, Clyde's cut up
THE NEXT DAY			
Ch 7: Morgan (232) (time code/location)	Morgan	The Sparrow House - NW PDX, heading to a node	Morgan's Got a Gun
Ch 8: Sherman (238) (time code/location)	Sherman, Christopher, Clyde	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Sherman finds a human body
Ch 9: Morgan (245) (time code/location)	Morgan, CCA goons	Council Crest Node - NW PDX	Morgan threatens with the gun, secures medical chopper
Ch 10: Olivia (253) (time code/location)	Olivia, everyone	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Olivia's revelations
Ch 11: Wanda (263) (time code/location)	Wanda	Medical Helicopter	Wanda might die, staph infection

Ch 12: Morgan (266) (time code/location)	Morgan, Christopher	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	Morgan throws up a lot, Christopher wants to talk
Ch 13: Sherman (268) (time code/location)	Everyone + CCA goons	The Sparrow House - NW PDX	The CCA threatens them, the house breaks apart, Clyde dies, dog dies
TWO WEEKS LATER			
Ch 15: Morgan (275) (time code/location)	Morgan, Olivia	The Rummer House - NW PDX	The rest of Olivia's revelations, Morgan's pregnant
Ch 16: Sherman (284) (time code/location)	Sherman	The Rummer House - NW PDX + Nodes	Sherman rescues Wanda from COT
Ch 17: Olivia (288) (time code/location)	Olivia	The Rummer House - NW PDX	Olivia remembers the rest
SIX YEARS LATER			
Ch 18: Morgan (295) (time code/location)	Morgan, Cascadia	NW PDX - en route to a ceremony	The happy ending

MAJOR SCENES

These are the major scenes that stood out in the manuscript as being most important to the narrative and structure of the story. This is not an edit so much as a chance for you to reflect on whether or not this aligns with your understanding of the major scenes of the manuscript.

7 Major Scenes

- In-Law Sex +The Awkward Morning After
- The Earthquake / Explosion / Mudslide / Olivia's Journey
- The Reunion / Infidelity
- Girl's Trip to the Rummer House
- The CCA Attack / Landslide / Death
- Revelations (these happen in three separate scenes)
- Epilogue

PREGNANCY TIMELINE

It doesn't resonate that Morgan (or anyone else around her) would know so early that she was pregnant. It's *possible* that symptoms could show up that early, but *not likely*.

At best, it's been three weeks since the date of conception, so almost too early to really tell and almost too early for morning sickness to really set in. It would likely be undetectable by most pregnancy test kits and Morgan is having morning sickness only a week after conceiving.

What if the night before the earthquake wasn't the first time she and Christopher had sex? What if they'd been meeting up for trysts in the month prior and this was just the first time they were caught-out by Melanie? This would make the timeline for the visible and physical symptoms of the pregnancy match more closely to the storyline. It would also add much more tension to the conflicts between Morgan and Olivia if it wasn't just a one-night mistake and there were actually deeper feelings between Christopher and Morgan.

Especially since Morgan references her botched abortion and early-menopause. The idea that one single sexual encounter bypassed all of that stretches verisimilitude a bit too much here. If they'd had sex like half a dozen times leading up to that night, the statistical likelihood increases and makes a possible pregnancy much more reasonable in the framework of the story.

If the affair were happening for a longer period of time, Morgan might start to suspect the pregnancy earlier on in the earthquake and have a more heightened emotional response to the life and death situations, especially those involving Melanie and including her sister. Pregnancy hormones are no joke. Those notes are already hinted at throughout the manuscript, so it wouldn't require too much re-tinkering to make that angle work.

Also: it wouldn't necessarily impact the reader's feelings towards Morgan and Christopher. They're on a redemption path anyway.

BROKEN LEG TIMELINE

The medical inattention around Wanda's broken leg and the disinterested response by the siblings also contributes to a fractured timeline. By the time anyone actively starts addressing Wanda's medical needs, she would likely have sepsis or have already gone into some kind of shock.

I'm guessing you already know the incubation period for sepsis is 4-10 days and she certainly falls into that timeframe, but would likely be in so much agony and delirium by the latter end of the period, she wouldn't be able to take care of Clyde or herself. The narrative has her up and moving around and tending to a grown man's needs when she would probably not be very functional and would instead be requiring much more care from others.

The inattention to her medical needs obviously underscores the selfish, distracted tendencies of the Sparrow siblings, but the fact that nobody even mentions the potential for sepsis is strange. They know about concussions and dementia and a host of other medical issues but none of them think to bring this up to any of the emergency or medical responders they speak to. They also horde pain medication and I'm guessing antibiotics from her, which is another weird layer.

Perhaps her injury could start out as something more benign, like a twisted ankle and then devolve during the course of a more violent aftershock into a broken leg.

That would leave her a little more lucid during key parts of the story, and then she could really devolve into the sepsis delirium during the final action sequence.

EMERGENCY SERVICES TIMELINE

The timeline for the Emergency responders is currently clouded because the reader just doesn't have a strong sense of how quickly these forces are rallied post-earthquake. The person who has the most immediate engagement with them is Olivia.

Olivia first reports the emergency GPS notification (page 68) which was sent out during the earthquake and then her cuff went dead.

- Were all the cuffs remotely disabled?
- Why did they all die suddenly?

It would make more sense for them to still be functional but have no network access, like airplane mode. They might not be able to communicate, but they could still function as flashlights and have other digital information recorded on them. When a cell loses reception, you can still use the other features/software/applications.

Olivia then travels to the node where emergency service workers have established a tent.

- At what point did emergency services and responders hit the ground?
- Where did this infrastructure come from? Are they Red Cross? National Guard?
- Some other nebulous government organization?

For such a devastating earthquake, the entire west coast would be thrown into shambles and out of commission. Emergency responders would likely need to be flown in from elsewhere and there would be issues with finding safe places to land and transporting individuals to the needed emergency nodes due to the unpassable roads.

All of the responders seem to be clean, untraumatized, and heavily resourced. How did these people survive the earthquake and immediately go into action when so many were harmed?

On page 69, a responder indicates that information is coming in from firehouses.

- Would all the firehouses still be standing and functional?

It would make sense to temper that with something like “remaining firehouses” to indicate that even emergency services were impacted by the quake. Likely the roads would be so devastated that emergency vehicles would not be able to traverse the streets.

There are multiple instances of taped-off areas immediately following the earthquake (pages 72 and 87). This seems like an odd priority given that thousands of people are dead or dying and are trapped under rubble. My sense is that all resources would be diverted to finding and extracting wounded humans and taped off areas wouldn't show up until at least two to three days post-quake, maybe even a week after the initial quake. Especially since traversing this terrain is highly dangerous and given the prevalence of aftershocks.

“Olivia ditches the bike and follows a swarm of Zombie-like people—many of them also fitted with goggles or respirators. They are headed toward the main dock, a jetty-like structure that juts out from the East Bank walkway into the churning Willamette.” (page 74)

- Likely the Willamette would be impassable by even a boat at this point. Petroleum leaks from industrial sites along the river and debris from the various west hill mudslides would choke it out. Those are somewhat referenced here, but Olivia's navigation across the river is far easier than predictions have indicated it would be. Essentially, passage between the east and westsides will be unavailable for likely weeks after the event.
- Olivia could start off on the westside. Possibly somewhere more SW or closer to the Waterfront when the quake begins?

Having her cross the river is a fun scene, but it would likely not be as easy as depicted and overall I'm not clear on how important this piece is to the overall story. It would also eliminate some of the repetitive scenes of Olivia talking to emergency responders to have her start out on the westside already.

“As she walks, she's continually shuffling around gaping sinkholes and chunks of basalt that pop up in her path. Finally, she reaches a familiar park. One that fronts the county courthouse—a building that looked oddly unscathed, though

it's ribboned with the same yellow tape that now decorates every façade in Portland." (page 87)

- Wouldn't there be more debris from the surrounding buildings? Most of the downtown buildings are not earthquake proof and would likely make most of downtown impossible to navigate.
- Especially in this area: the police station glass tower made of intersecting metal rods will have thrown so much glass and metal all over the streets. Probably impaled some people. That thing is a nightmare/disaster waiting to happen. But could make for some interesting visuals/descriptions.
- There should be more scenes of Olivia struggling to get through the streets rather than shuffling around gaping sinkholes. There would be downed powerlines and sewage pipes spouting water everywhere. You can build up tension and drama here by more regularly throwing her life into danger.

Olivia is much more interesting and relatable when her life is threatened. :)

OVERALL: show the reader more environmental devastation and how that impacts Olivia's journey.

At one of the nodes, a next of kin list is generated every few minutes. (page 92)

- Within a few hours would they have print-outs of every elementary school and building in the Portland metro area at this point?

It would likely take days or weeks to categorize all the dead. Being able to track down a dead loved one within hours just doesn't seem feasible in the light of such a huge disaster.

- What if Olivia simply sees the destruction for herself instead of relying on all the emergency responders? Maybe she even gets down on her hands and knees at the elementary school to dig up some of the rubble?

Reunion node in Providence Park Stadium. This is likely where Olivia would have the bulk of the interaction with the emergency responders. Perhaps there wouldn't be all of the needed food and water and beds but there would be plenty of places to sleep. Resource scarcity would make their situation much more dire and amp up the feelings of desperation and survival mode that the siblings fall into.

On page 120 is the first place where the magnitude of the quake is revealed (9.2). If there's a fault line under the West Hills there should be more widespread devastation.

- Worst case scenario predictions are that the entire West Hills liquefies and dumps into the Willamette, taking the entirety of downtown with it. For this sake, we might want to dial down the magnitude of the quake.

“Tucked into a shrink-wrapped space blanket is a print-out showing locations and dates where cases of water will be available.” (page 157)

- This information is available the day immediately following the earthquake. It would likely take a few days to organize this effort.

EMERGENCY SERVICES TIMELINE SOLUTIONS

The biggest solution to the issues of reasonable timeline for emergency services is going to be establishing the timeline structure throughout the entire manuscript with date, time, and location stamps at the beginning of each chapter. Once we’re keenly aware that Olivia’s been wandering the streets for three hours after the earthquake then we’ll get a better sense that yeah, some forces could have been rallied in that amount of time.

Have Olivia encounter much fewer nodes. The sheer volume of resources and nodes so early on stretches verisimilitude a little too thinly. Olivia too easily stumbles into emergency responders and tents and people with radios and information about her loved ones. Whenever she has a question, there’s someone to supply almost the exact answer she needs and she doesn’t have to work hard for it. It would help develop the character more and add more suspense if she struggled more to find these answers.

Morgan says, “Remember a few years ago, that whole push for Big One preparedness? Maybe we can get some respirators?” (page 80)

- This is an important piece of dialogue, but it needs to be more prominent. If the entire city had recently been inundated with preparedness training, more people should talk about it and mention it. All the siblings and survivors should be echoing this sentiment so the reader understands how these people and resources coalesced so quickly. It’s something that requires more explaining than one line of dialogue can achieve.

The magnitude of the earthquake. The reader is unaware of the sheer magnitude of the earthquake until nearly halfway into *Cascadia*. Whenever an earthquake strikes across the globe that's the first thing to hit the airwaves. Everyone wants to know the magnitude. Establishing this earlier on post-quake is going to give the reader a sort of baseline for the scale of the disaster, just as much as describing the damage.

And of course all the survivors and wounded would be talking about it as well. The number gives light to the reader imagination of just how fucked up the quake was, and we need to know that as quickly as possible. Most of the characters would want to know as well.

Nothing connects strangers and gets individuals talking more than an unusual series of events and this would be one of the primary topics of conversation post-quake. Olivia could catch it in a passing snippet of conversation, even if she's not immediately curious.

IN ADDITION: The impact to the west coast isn't revealed until nearly the final chapter. That information should come through earlier as well. Sure, our characters are self-centered, but they're aware and observant and people around them are talking. Even if the characters don't care, the reader will and it will help their understanding of the lack of medical services, the scarcity of resources, and even the scope of the altered landscape.

PACING

The following elements are highlighted as areas of the story that slow the narrative. We will examine each area and provide suggestions to address.

- **The Sisters At Rest**
- **Olivia's Multiple (Sometimes Contradictory) Revelations**

The Sisters at Rest. There are at least three separate chapters with the sisters lounging in bed and reminiscing about the past and/or thinking about backstory or exposition. Specifically the scene where Morgan awakes in the night and helps Melanie pee. There's an action happening, for sure, but it's not terribly relevant to the plot.

- What else could occur in this scene to add a new layer to the story while also giving Morgan a chance to share her insights?

There are tons of exciting post-earthquake activities. Since there was already one epic urination scene (Clyde's earthquake piss), it would be great to explore another here. Examine the scene and determine what the most important elements are and consider staging it somewhere else, in some other capacity that also moves the story forward.

This happens again when Olivia prepares to take a nap in her chapter on page 171 and has a nightmare on 194. Then a little later Morgan has almost an entire chapter of rumination with very little in the way of action or advancing the narrative on page 232.

Try writing out the same dialogue and exposition but in a different setting, doing something a little more dynamic that is also revelatory of the characters themselves.

Olivia's Multiple Revelations. Olivia's secrets are compelling until we get three separate chapters where she's like "here's what happened" and then "this much more happened" and finally "and then there's this." Especially since the final two revelations happen within the last four chapters. At that point it just feels like being bombarded with exposition.

Olivia knows all this information and details, but is it possible to spread some of this narrative to other characters? What if Clyde tells part of the story in one of his more lucid episodes after the children confront him? Spreading the story out between the characters, especially one as despicable as Clyde would breathe some fresh, interesting life to the story. It would probably further humanize Clyde, and he could use some help in that area.

Clyde's true personality and intentions are obscured by his children and his dementia. I know some of this originally was told from Clyde's perspective, but he doesn't need to be a POV character. He can just be talking to his children and sharing some of the story, where Olivia would then jump in and provide some clarity or background details when Clyde's dementia takes back over or causes confusion.

Wanda as a POV character also has potential to own and share part of the story. Maybe when Sherman reconnects with her they have a dialogue about the serum and/or more of the family mysteries.

In general Wanda's arch is left a little hanging and it might be nice to bring her POV back during the last half of the story and bring her some closure/connection with the siblings.

EPILOGUE

The epilogue is a six year leap forward in time (in a story already set roughly a decade into the future) and it stands out from the rest of the narrative. One of the bigger suggestions here is to eliminate the epilogue completely or to dramatically restructure it so it includes much less exposition and more real-time engagement between the characters. Maybe instead of picking Cascadia up from school, they're having a family dinner together or we see them interacting and engaging at the awards ceremony. A scene that ties up the loose ends of the sibling relationships with the actual siblings present would resonate much stronger with the reader.

If the epilogue is removed: a focus on redeeming the characters in the moment of the revelation and through their actions directly following the earthquake is going to give this story much more impact. Maybe some sense in the final chapter of: what are we going to do? Or maybe some kind of closure around Clyde. Possibly a shorter jog into the future, maybe one or two years?

What about the epilogue do you think should be retained? What can be stripped away? What can be shown through characters interacting in a scene vs. Morgan giving exposition?

MANUSCRIPT TITLE

The title of the manuscript: *Faultland* is a brilliant play on the Cascadia Subduction Zone and the geo-political climate of the Pacific Northwest. It's also a clever nod to the role the earthquake plays in the story. As a local, I'm likely biased but it gives me a perfect vision of one of the major plot elements in the story: The Big One.

However, it loses some of its appeal when Morgan's child is named Cascadia so it seems wise to consider a few other title options if that plotline carries through the edits.

Here are a few alternate options to consider:

- The Big One
- Aftershocks
- The Sparrows
- Seismic Shifts
- Subduction
- The Sparrows and The Fault
- The Sparrows Fault
- Magnitudes
- The Magnitude of Sparrows
- Structures Like Bones
- Seismic Waves
- Tectonic Plates
- The Faults Connect
- Buried Sparrows
- Earthquakes and Sparrows
- Bring the House Down
- Sinking
- Sinking Sparrows
- The Carriage House
- The Skeletons of Sparrows
- The Sparrows Skeletons

- Let Them Be Alive
- Let Us Come Together
- Reunion Node
- The Shaking Sparrows
- Shaking Sparrows
- The Sparrows Shake
- Shake The Sparrows
- Scattering Sparrows
- Quaking Sparrows
- The Quaking of Sparrows
- Sparrows Falling Down Hill

These are not perfect options. But the idea is to get you brainstorming on other themes prevalent in the text: trauma, family, sibling dynamics, death, revenge, growth, and redemption are all key themes circulating in the text. Other prevalent imagery involves the earth, the breathing respirators worn throughout most of the text, the terror of the unknown, parenthood, sibling rivalry, and love.

CONCLUSION

This is a fantastic manuscript with many great things going for it, as mentioned earlier. The multiple themes of the story, including love, death, sisterhood, trauma and survival are all articulated with a sense of tongue-in-cheek care. These characters are tough and skilled enough to navigate a disastrous landscape and learn something new about themselves in the process.

I would encourage you to turn these notes into a checklist for yourself, going through the content of the note and checking off each item until you have a stronger version of your manuscript, then submit it for another round of editing.

Please feel free to reach out to me via email, text, or phone with any questions during the revision process, especially if there are points I can further clarify. I am deeply committed to this project, and I very much look forward to reading the new version of *Fautland*. This is a strange new world and I want to find the best, most truthful way to help the Sparrows navigate it.

Take Care,

Melinda Jasmine Crouchley
Developmental Editor