

Writing Sparkle Books

15246 106 Street
Grande Prairie, Alberta, T8X-0L9



To: Cookie Smith, Author
From: Shari Marshall, Editor
Date: February 2, 2025
Re: Nonfiction—Memoir—Manuscript Edits

Thank you for sharing your manuscript, Cookie. Your narrative voice is conversational and easy to read. *Cookie in the Sky* delves into the fascinating world of aviation, a primarily male-dominated realm. I enjoyed learning about it. Women will appreciate reading your story.

Categories, also known as BISAC codes, are what retailers use to shelf your book. Some possibilities are:

- Aviation (Books)
- General Transport Referencing
- Air Travel Guidelines

Self-published authors can create eBooks on platforms like Amazon and Ingram Spark. There's an aviation category specific to the Kindle store. An audiobook is another possibility. Making books in additional formats targets different readers. It offers marketing options like the Kindle Select program, which changes the eBook royalty rate and gives access to free Kindle count deals and promotions.

The initial target for *Cookie in the Sky* audience was those interested in flying and those who know pilots. This is too broad. The primary target audience is women—youth, teens, and adults—interested in flying and people who know female pilots. As a woman in a male-dominated area, you're a role model, an inspiration, a leader, and someone forging a path. This primary audience will also include readers who want a story about women pilots. The secondary audience is hobbyists, which will also pull in retirees. For them, advertise flying as a thrill, an escape, and a hobby that can lead to paid employment or a career.

As requested, I have a new title to share: *Take to the Sky: Stories from an Ardent Airwoman*. This title keeps the original feel of *Cookie in the Sky* but removes the confusion about the book topic. According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, "take to the sky" means "to begin flying."¹ Four books use the title. However, one is a colouring book and the others are fiction novels: historical fiction, romance, and fantasy. Your title is a memoir. In addition, the subtitle—*Stories from an Ardent Airwoman*—further sets your novel apart. What follows is my vision for *Cookie in the Sky* and the steps to achieve that.

My vision for *Cookie in the Sky* is to showcase being a woman pilot—an airwoman. Not just any female pilot, but a retiree making her dream a reality. The chapters contain a lot of material that just needs rearranging. However, I recommend some additional writing. I've attached the structural edit as a chapter-by-chapter outline. The goal is to reorganize the story to improve readability to reach your target audience. I recommend paragraphs comprise three or more sentences. I have provided questions and

¹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/take%20to%20the%20sky/skies>

statements where additional information would benefit the story and suggested removing information that doesn't advance it. Proposed chapters:

Table of Contents

Note from the Author	page #
Dedication	page #
Chapter 1 Escorted from the Sky.....	page #
Chapter 2 Operating the Controls	page #
Chapter 3 The Myths	page #
Chapter 4 Path to the Sky	page #
Chapter 5 Secret from the Cockpit.....	page #
Chapter 6 Test Flight.....	page #
Chapter 7 Ground School	page #
Chapter 8 Before Wheels Up	page #
Chapter 9 Yoke in Hand.....	page #
Chapter 10 Flights of Peril.....	page #
Chapter 11 Women, Let's Fly.....	page #
Glossary	page #
Resources.....	page #

I recommend including a table of contents. This will help you edit and it's a tool for readers. If you create an eBook, a table of contents is required. Consider the chronological timeline. For example, in chapter one, the narrative speaks about chihuahuas. However, the second last chapter discloses getting the second chihuahua. Here is a proposed timeline at a base level: recognizing you want to be a pilot, researching, discussing with your husband, signing up, training, and where your piloting status is now.

Name use—Amy, Amelia, Amelea, Anna, and Andrew—if these are fictional names, I advise using names that don't start with the same letter. It's less confusing and easier for readers to follow. My final recommendation is to include a glossary of aviation terms at the end of the book for readers less familiar with flying.

We will use Word's track changes to complete the next stages. I review the manuscript and return it to you with edits, comments, and questions. You make changes, as you see fit, based on the recommendations.

The stages are as follows:

1. Stylistic edit. This edit—still focused on the larger manuscript—will address inconsistencies and contradictions and identify areas needing further clarification. I will flag awkward sentences and unclear language, as well as passive voice, transitions, word choice, and other stylistic issues. I'll create and provide a project style sheet listing style rules that affect the project.
2. Copy editing. I review the manuscript for style, grammar, punctuation, and consistency.
3. Proofreading. This stage catches any errors that might have previously been overlooked: consistency, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and formatting.

Thank you again, Cookie, for sharing your manuscript with me. If you have questions or require clarification at any stage, please email me. If we can address it by email, I will, or we can set up a phone or Zoom meeting. We have already set the timelines for each editing stage based on the Simon Fraser University Final editing schedule. I look forward to moving through this project with you.

Warm Regards,
Shari Marshall
 Editor

www.sharimarshall.ca
writingsparklebooks@gmail.com

Cookies in the Sky—Proposed Structural Edit

Add:

- Table of Contents

Note from the Author

This section combines the “Disclaimer” and “About this Book.” Using the title, “Note from the Author” keeps the intended message but isn’t an intimidating tone. These original sections work well with a few adjustments, like reordering paragraphs in the Disclaimer.

Add:

- A few sentences about how amazing flying is when done following the guidelines and safety measures—use your wording.

Remove:

- Remove the **bold** from the narrative.

Dedication

- Some changes to sentence structure would improve the readability.

Chapter 1—Escorted from the Sky (To be written except for some Chapter 11 details.)

Begin your story with an account of your flight and escorted descent. You mention this event in Chapter 11, “Surviving Arizona.” It’s attention-grabbing. Write it as a short story. The themes to consider while writing this chapter will cover those that occur throughout the book: overcoming the odds, adjusting to a new life, hope, and personal triumph.

Add:

- Flight details: were you alone, at what point in your flight training did it occur, how you felt, your internal thoughts, the weather, the sky, the escort . . .
- What happened when you landed?
- Did this keep you from flying again? What did you learn?
- Sight, sound, taste, feel, and smell—where appropriate. The addition of sensory details makes the reading experience immersive.
- Conclusion and transition into chapter 2.

Chapter 2—Operating the Controls (Previously “The Wrong Stuff.”)

Make this chapter about you, specifically your dream to fly. Frame it with the idea of operating the controls of your life. Theme: adjusting to a new life/a life of change.

Add:

- Who is Cookie? What kind of woman is she?
- Why do you want to fly? Why is it your dream? How long has it been your dream? Why did you never act on this dream until now?
- Clarify that you own property in Canada and the US. Is that part of the reason you want to be a pilot or is being a pilot just a nice benefit?
- Describe you as an unlikely pilot. What is a likely pilot? What is a pilot’s profile?
- The section about wanting to learn to dive can stay if reworked to support the idea of a pilot profile and why you don’t fit it. Was it the riskiest activity you wanted to take part in? When snorkelling became the only option for you, was this risky enough, or did you want more?
- Sight, sound, taste, feel, and smell.
- Conclusion and transition into chapter 3. You’ve already written beautiful material that could work for this, concerning unpacking the myths.

Remove:

- Anything about training. These details will be described in later chapters.
- Remove the diving and find a new airport comparison. It feels out of place because it hasn't been established that you are flying yet.
- Quote from Chris. It doesn't fit with the chapter, and we don't know who Chris is.

Chapter 3—The Myths (Previously Chapter 6 "Top Gun Myths.")

This chapter serves two functions. It describes myths to the readers and explains how those myths affected you. Theme: overcoming the odds.

Add:

- Expand Myth 2—being in perfect shape. Does "perfect shape" include exercise and sleep? Or is it medical conditions only? Can you include a few of the most difficult or controversial health requirements? Is there anything that relates specifically to being a man or woman?
- Clarify what a techie is.
- Myth 6. Do you have to be brilliant? What do you have to be? Dedicated? Goal orientated? What? Do you have to possess these qualities, or are they learned?
- Add myths about being a woman pilot? Are there myths about pilots and age?
- Sight, sound, taste, feel, and smell—where appropriate.
- Conclusion and transition.

Remove:

- Consider removing the reference to Maverick and *Top Gun*. It is unclear how the myths listed in this chapter were created by the movie.
- Remove the information about your grandfather from Myth 3. It is unclear how this has is connected with the techies-only myth.
- Under Myth 4, delete the ground school stuff. It doesn't speak to the myth. These paragraphs will work when the narrative discusses getting to know the instructors.

Chapter 4—Path to the Sky (To be written and some cut and paste.)

Focus on your flying research. You've decided you want to be a pilot, and you've debunked the myths holding you back. How do you become a pilot? There are paragraphs mixed throughout the book that you could rearrange to fit within this chapter. The theme is hope.

Add:

- What are flying clubs' roles in training and flying? Some details are in Chapter 8, "Keep on Enter."
- Flight schools and how you picked the school you trained at.
- Prices.
- Recreational versus Commercial—the information from the chart in chapter two.
- Canada versus the US.
- Sight, sound, taste, feel, and smell—where appropriate.
- Conclusion and transition into the next chapter.

Note:

- Some of these details are in Chapter 3 "Flights of Fancy," Chapter 10 "Women, Let's Fly" and Chapter 11 "Cross-border Flyer."

Chapter 5—Secret from the Cockpit (Previously Chapter 3, "Opposite Reaction.")

Armed with the knowledge from your research and your decision, this chapter is about you making your decision public by discussing it with your husband. Theme: adjusting to a new life/life of change; to quote this chapter, "There'd be sacrifices ahead."

Add:

- Add tone and how you felt during the discussion. Add movement. For example, were you both stationary and unmoving during the discussion? Or, were you both sipping coffee, fiddling with a pen, tapping a foot . . .
- Did sharing with your husband reinforce your decision or change it in any way?
- Did your husband support your decision? Did he express concerns or objections? How did you take those things and what, if anything, did you do with them?
- What does "Born with Quills" mean?
- Make the underlined points into a bullet list. How do these points connect to you and your decision to fly?
- Did you share your decision with another person in your life that had an impact?
- Sight, sound, taste, feel, and smell—where appropriate.
- Bring the chapter full circle by returning to the discussion with your husband.
- Conclude and transition.

Remove:

- Remove the Isaac Newton quote so the dialogue can flow.
- Remove the underline, making it just regular text.

Chapter 6—Test Flight (Previously Chapter 2, "Test Flight.")

***I'm unclear about this test flight. My original interpretation was that it occurred before you committed to starting flight school, so I placed it here. I understand it as a flight that helps you determine if you want to proceed with training. However, if that's incorrect, the following recommendations remain the same, but the placement of the chapter will change to reflect chronological order.*

Fully develop the test flight. It starts strong with the turbulent winds, but I recommend describing the flight from take-off until landing. There are paragraphs from other chapters that feel as if they are part of this flight. If so, rearrange them into this chapter.

Add:

- Is a test flight mandatory? At what stage of training does it happen? Why are you having a test flight? Who are you flying with?
- Tell us about the instructor. Amy? From this interaction, can you paint a picture of her using words? What makes her a good flight instructor?
- How did you feel before, during, and after that first flight?
- Who does what during the flight?
- Sight, sound, taste, feel, and smell—where appropriate.
- Conclusion and transition.

Remove:

- Remove narratives not related to the flight and the outcome of the flight.

Chapter 7—Ground School (Previously Chapter 7, "Cohorts.")

Theme: Overcoming the odds, hope, and personal triumph.

Add:

- Medical certificate details. You noted you did this before you started training. Develop this. For example, what is it? Why is it needed? Are aviation doctors for pilots only, or do they see regular patients and pilots on the side? Were you anxious about passing your medical? How did you feel when you passed?
- What is ground school? How long is it? Who teaches it? Where are the classes?
- Any specific experiences you can build in? Anything about being a woman in this environment? Develop Anna's character and your relationship here.
- How many women were in training with you? Was there a special camaraderie between you? Female empowerment? Valuing women's point of view?
- The opening from Chapter 4, "The Kit" will work in this chapter.
- When is the starter kit given to students? What is a kneeboard?
- How did you feel when you first held the Pilot's logbook?
- What is "Pilot's Bite"?
- Sight, sound, taste, feel, and smell—where appropriate.
- Conclusion and transition.

Remove:

- Anna's personal history: mother's death, Vancouver climate, grandmother, and father building boats.
- Remove narrative related to Andrew and Evelyn.

Note:

- Andrew and Evelyn take up a section of the narrative, which suggests they're important. If their story advances the overall narrative of *Cookies in the Sky*, it can be included in the appropriate chapter. I recommend framing it as related to you, your flying journey, and the discussed theme(s). At this time, I don't have enough information about them to direct you further.

Chapter 8—Before Wheels Up (To be written and some cut and paste.)

Theme: a life of change, overcoming the odds, and personal triumph.

Add:

- Paragraphs from Chapter 4, "The Kit" will work: the walk around, the fuel . . .
- Clarify who Amelia is. Develop her character as she relates to you and the world of female pilots.
- What kind of plane are you flying? What are the other options? There is information in Chapter 3, "Flights of Fancy."
- Information from Chapter 9, "Pirep" would fit in this chapter.
- Sight, sound, taste, feel, and smell—where appropriate.
- Conclusion and transition.

Chapter 9—Yoke in Hand (Previously Chapter 5, "Eat, Sleep, Fly, Repeat.")

The first flight is a big deal. Develop this with the themes of personal triumph and overcoming the odds.

Add:

- Rework the details about flyable skies to fit this chapter.
- Describe how you felt during each stage of the flight. Describe the flight itself, including who was with you.
- Sight, sound, taste, feel, and smell—where appropriate.
- Conclusion and transition.

Remove:

- The plane crash narrative (This may work in a later chapter, but not here.)

Chapter 10—Flights of Peril (To be written and some cut and paste.)

We don't want this chapter to terrify readers or potential flyers. Healthy awareness of risks is the goal. All activities have risks. For flying, those risks can include A, B, and C.

Add:

- The what-ifs discuss in Chapter 9, "Pirep." How do you overcome your what-ifs?
- Crash near Sechelt from Chapter 5, "Eat, Sleep, Fly, Repeat." How did this affect you and the surrounding pilots?
- The weather and when not to fly.
- Other risks.
- Importance of safety and guidelines.
- Sight, sound, taste, feel, and smell—where appropriate.
- Conclusion and transition.

Chapter 11—Women, Let's Fly (Previously Chapter 10, same title.)

Bring the concluding chapter full circle—you start with a flying story, so ending with one is nice. Tie this story into being a woman and encouraging other women to follow their dream, flying or otherwise, but particularly flying. Theme: personal triumph.

Add:

- Build the "Thanks for saving our lives" into a few paragraphs by describing one of those flights.
- How do you feel about your accomplishment and journey to become a pilot?
- Where are you now in your aviation journey?
- Sight, sound, taste, feel, and smell—where appropriate.
- Conclusion and transition.

Remove:

- Any narrative that doesn't belong with the "saving our lives" story or encouraging women to follow their dreams.

Add:

- Glossary of flying terms
- Resource page (optional)

Final Notes:¹

- Clarify, in the corresponding chapter(s) above, when you switched from flight school in Canada to Arizona and why. What is the new school? Who is the new instructor? Any feelings about leaving your old school, instructors, and classmates? This relates particularly to Chapter 11 "Cross-border Flying" and Chapter 30 "Windsock."
- Develop the difference, if any, between your male flight instructor and your female flight instructor.
- If you use quotes, they should be part of the narrative and from a known source or character within the story. Do not bold them.

¹ Additional Resources:

- *Writing your life: a journey of discovery* by Patti Miller
- *The Emotions Thesaurus: A Writer's Guide to Character Expressions* 2nd Edition by Angela Ackerman & Becca Puglisi