

*Lie Fallow* is an enthralling narrative about a daring and brilliant teenager named Sophia and her tumultuous life as the daughter of Special Ops Agents and the target of relentless terrorists.

This coming of age story hits the nail on the head in targeting young audiences, the same audiences as *Twilight* and *The Hunger Games*, and it has the same cinematic properties and opportunities. However, Sophia is much more interesting than Bella in *Twilight* and the world she lives in is much more grounded in reality than the world in *The Hunger Games*, therefore *Lie Fallow* is set apart as its own narrative jewel. Sophia is a badass. She's mastered weaponry but can also fight the bad guys with her fists, she has a sharp tongue, and she can speak fifteen languages. There's a bit of a Hamlet element to her too as she battles her own consciousness in an internal struggle to learn the truth.

The story has a slow start, but the pace speeds up once more mysteries unveil themselves. *Lie Fallow* has all the properties to become a hit. It is a love story, it is action-packed with fight scenes, and it unravels a mystery that keeps the reader in suspense the whole way through. There's a tangle of secrets – like *Pretty Little Liars* and *Riverdale* – more questions than answers, until the very end. But, the author is very good at building tension. The plot is exciting as it develops and moves. By page 36 Sophia is just within Death's grip when a grizzly bear nearly attacks her – shortly after, she's nearly frozen alive when an avalanche buries her in the snow – but she escapes every time, and we root for her.

The author also does a great job at capturing the teenage voice. A great example of this is on page 77, “The only boy she [Charlotte] danced with was Cole, her on-off boyfriend for like, *ever*, according to Emma.” The delivery is subtle – yet, poignant. In that one sentence, you know who's the speaker: a teenage girl who's gossiping. The characters are also the perfect stock character friends. We've seen these characters before in *Twilight* and even *Mean Girls* – the nosy, but vapid, but all-in-all good-hearted girls of a typical American high school. And the love interest, Aksel, is a lot like Edward in *Twilight*: he's moody, aloof, strong, protective and much more mature than his high school peers. He's the perfect foil to the cookie-cutter, humdrum average folk of this small town.

The biggest distraction I found in this manuscript, and what I think holds it back the most, is that it's written in passive voice. Passive voice makes the pace so slow and it also weakens the overall tone of the piece. The main character, Sophia, is a strong character and she deserves a strong voice, an active voice. This will also quicken the start of the text; like I mentioned, the start is very slow, and that's because it's a lot of prose and a lot of passive voice.

I'll use the first page as an example as to how this change would benefit the text. It reads:

I hadn't slept all night, hadn't closed my eyes. Through the window I'd watched darkness fade into a cold gray morning. I'd listen to the quiet stillness surrounding me...

Take out the passive voice, and it reads like this:

I didn't sleep all night, didn't close my eyes. Through the window I watched darkness fade into a cold gray morning. I listened to the quiet stillness surround me...

By making this change, the prose reads finer and the point of view is stronger. This technique should be done throughout the manuscript.

The author's habit of using inverted sentences and ending sentences with prepositions were other stylistic grammar choices that bothered me.

Here's an example:

With my life, I trusted him. (310).

It should say:

I trusted him with my life.

Another example:

The only words that came to me weren't strong enough to articulate how mad at him I was. (359).

It should say:

The only words that came to me weren't strong enough to articulate how mad I was at him.

I marked many of these changes with red pen on the text.

The ending of *Lie Fallow* is set up for a sequel. It has the chops for a trilogy, and it can compete with *Twilight* and *The Hunger Games*. There are a few loose ends that can be threaded into a sequel, but they're not so loose that it feels lackluster. All in all, the author stuck the landing.