

Title: A Bit of Sugar--99777

Author: Debbie Wilson

Literary Critique

What a heartwarming story! I loved this preteen novel about a young girl and her journey to find the perfect pony for her. The plot was believable and touching; I loved how it involved multiple generations of the same family facing past issues (regarding the mother's childhood horse, Trigger) and the grandfather's love for his granddaughter. This makes a wonderful story for young girls to relate to. The length of the manuscript, as well as the vocabulary, was very good, as well—just the right length and level of challenge for the intended audience. Sentence length and plot pacing were also very well executed.

I did do quite a bit of “cleanup” on punctuation and some phrasing issues. The author would probably do well to review the punctuation section of the Chicago Manual of Style for rules on comma usage—as many commas and even some semicolons seemed randomly placed. One thing to remember: In dialogue, three ellipsis points at the end of a sentence indicates trailing speech, while an em dash indicates interrupted speech. Also, numerals in dialogue should be spelled out

whenever possible—unless it would make things too awkward (such as with a dollar amount in the horse auction scenes).

Another issue I corrected throughout was the redundancy inherent in such phrases as “he thought to himself.” In such a phrase, the words “to himself” are unnecessary and tend to slow down the story.

One final word of advice: Try to avoid using a hard return at the end of each line. Just keep typing and allow the text to flow onto the next line.

Other than that—great, great job! Thank you so much for writing such an enjoyable book for young girls!

All the best,

Christy Phillippe