

Mark-up Sample

illustration and abbreviated sample chapter

NOTE USAGE OF SQUARE BRACKETS IN **SOME** OF THE MARK-UPS.

Bolded red for suggested additions: [words to add]

Strikeout and green to delete: get rid of this ~~word or~~ phrase

Indication of excellence (either **in** the paragraph or **after** it:

The **exhausted black cat** sat on the mat.

OR

The exhausted black cat sat on the mat. [I love this description]

Querying or commenting: [I'm puzzled by the time of day this is happening to Johnny]

Word repetitions: They **had** dinner, and **had** a great time, but **hadn't** said goodbye.

Overall comments at bottom: [I enjoyed this chapter because...]

Chapter 13

“That was enlightening,” I said to Toni as we stood...

..... (abbreviated)

“Um ...” I thought hard. “No.”

“He’s Cynthia’s husband. You know—she owns Bubbles Bath and Body Shop.”

[Oh, ha ha, another complication!]

“I know her. I don’t know her husband. I don’t think her last name is Cobb, but I guess that doesn’t mean anything nowadays. I always think of her as Bubbles, anyway. Her personality suits it.”

Toni startled as a newspaper skittered across the pavement behind her. “This wind is strong. [” she said, ” Anyway,] I think everyone calls her Bubbles.” [because needs a bit of transition]

“How do you know Phil?”

“I gave their daughter speech therapy.”

..... (abbreviated)

As I drove back to town, my mind strayed to my kids. I hadn't heard from either Samantha or Jordan since we'd found Chad's body. It was unusual not to know what they were up to, so I called Samantha on the way over. She didn't answer. I left a message asking if she'd like to come for dinner soon. I'd pick up a pizza. I left the same message for Jordan. [Good to bring them back in, even if just to remind the reader about them.]

Ten minutes later, I met Toni in front of Bubbles. As we walked in, that soothing aromas of bath time greeted us. A potpourri of lavender filled a bowl at the entrance. The shop was all pastel colors and soft furnishings. Loofah sponges and bath pillows were in the first display. Towels and bath mats in the next. I got distracted by a rack of spa-like face treatments and decided to pick up a couple for Toni and [me][subject-object issue]. She could use some pampering.

“Hello, fellow shopkeeper!” Bubbles called from behind the cashier counter. She came around and gave me a hug. I didn't see a lot of her, but when I did, she was smiling. Deeply etched crows feet around her eyes were a testament to her good nature. Her hair, golden curls, was tamed by a hair band.

“Do you know Toni?” I asked, since Bubbles hadn't acknowledged her.

“Oh, of course I do. I'm sorry, I'd forgotten your name. I'm Cynthia, in case your memory is as bad as mine.”

Since she'd introduced herself as Cynthia, I reminded myself not to call her Bubbles.

I told her about my mission to gather donations for Art in the Park.

“Of course I'll contribute. I'll get some things to you by the end of tomorrow.”

..... (abbreviated)

“Sure, I do,” I lied. “It's intermittent though. Comes and goes, so I don't know if the uh...hesitating will occur at this moment or the next.”

“Oi,” said Toni. “Well, what if Phil recognizes us from the funeral?” [Eek!]

“Great. I didn't think of that.”

“You sure do provide a good distraction from my job woes.” Toni took a step back. “I think I’ll just hang back and be entertained.”

“Very funny.”

Emerging from the back of the store, Phil strolled down the center aisle toward us. I recognized him from the funeral home, but he looked like a different man. He was still bald on top with side hair that sat like white clouds on top of large ears. But his expression was more relaxed. He had the large ears of an [?? Word missing here] but I could have walked by him on Courtesy Boulevard and not known he was married to Cynthia. [Not sure this works - what has his big ears got to do with Quinn not knowing he's married to Cynthia?]

“This here is Quinn and her friend Toni,” Cynthia said. “Quinn owns the cafe by the harbor. She’s the one having trouble with her car.”

“Nice to meet you. I’m Phil, Cynthia’s worse half.” I wasn’t sure if he said that because he recognized us from the funeral, or not. Probably not. He’d not seen much that day beyond his own anger.

I shook his hand. “It’s nice to meet you, Phil. I’m sorry to drag you away from whatever you were doing.”

“It’s no bother. What kind of trouble are you having?”

“That’s a good question,” said Toni. “It’s hard to put these things into words.” She was either stalling for time or truly desperate for that entertainment.

..... (abbreviated)

Cynthia let her breath out in a huff. “Honestly, he’s such an embarrassment sometimes. Phil, do you not realize that Justine here [wait - Justine is not with Quinn and Toni just now, is she?] is Mr. Warner’s relation? And here you are speaking ill of that man. Phil spends so much time with fish and golf balls, he’s got no idea who’s who anymore.”

“Ah, geez, I’m sorry about that,” Phil said to Justine. “I didn’t know. My condolences.”

“It’s okay,” Toni [Toni, not Justine] said. “The relation was through marriage. I wasn’t close to Chad Warner.”

A pink flush crept up Cynthia's neck. "Oh dear. I suppose you know he stormed into that mechanic's funeral, as if his poor widow and family were supposed to do something about my bill?"

..... (abbreviated)

"You better believe it," Phil said. "She was making a left turn, waiting like she was supposed to for the idiot to make his right turn. **Instead he waved her forward and as soon as she went ahead, he hit the gas and rammed into her. This is exactly what they do.**" **[Yes, I've heard about this, too.]**

"It's true," said Cynthia. "Phil was in the insurance business for forty-three years. He knows exactly how these fraudsters work. They give auto-body shops and medical clinics kick-backs to inflate or falsify damages. It costs insurance companies a fortune." This was obviously a subject Phil and Cynthia had discussed at length.

"I'll tell you something about B&W Automotive," Phil said. "I had suspicions that garage is part of an organized crime ring that's scamming insurance companies, so I lost it, but I'm just full of hot air." **[this last expression sounds a bit too self-deprecating and not quite the right expression anyway, here]**

"I know I brought it up, but just talking about it out loud scares me to death," said Cynthia.

Phil squeezed his wife's shoulder. "There's nothing to be afraid of anymore. I'm retired, Cynthia. It's not my business. This car thing of yours isn't related."

I looked at Toni.

"Related to what," Toni asked.

Cynthia lowered her voice. "Phil retired from insurance investigation because he was threatened. Someone broke into our house and left a note on our kitchen table, saying Phil better drop his investigation. It was terrifying."

..... (abbreviated)

"Okay," said Phil. "Let's not open that can of worms. That was two years ago."

"True, but why you would go poking that bear, I just don't know."

"Why you'd take the car to that garage I just don't know," Phil retorted.

“We’ve had this discussion enough times now.” Cynthia turned to me. “He thinks I remember which garage is which, like he wasn’t always investigating one or another.”

Neither Toni or I said a word to interrupt the opening of this can of worms. I think we both wanted to see how angry Phil could get.

“Fair enough,” Phil said, looking reproachful. “It’s somebody else’s problem now.” He turned to me. “You asked for my opinion on some car trouble—take your car to Willard’s Automotive. If you want me to have a look, I can do that.”

I smiled at the offer. “No, but thank you very much. I have to get back to work now. Thanks for the recommendation. I will go to Willard’s.” [I like the way you always think up some way of a character getting information surreptitiously, and you do it in so many ways]

..... (abbreviated)

“Good question. I also wonder how we look into a thing like this without catching the attention of the kind of mobsters who have no qualms breaking and entering to leave threats on kitchen tables.” [Just not sure these thugs would do this - it would be easier for them to nail a message to the front door (and maybe lay a dead rabbit there, or something similar, to show they mean business, if you wanted to be dramatic)]

[Moving along really well, Pauline. As always, you've managed to get a lot of action in and smoothing bring other characters in and out of the narrative. I like that chapter 14 starts with health, and was a good change of pace from this chapter 13. Very believable dialogue for the most part - just some queries here and there, is all.

Sheila]