

## Sample line edit

~~It's dark under the canopy, making it hard to walk. t~~The forest is denser than I remember, the path stonier, the air heavier, clouds holding in the day's heat. I find a lush spot under a tree and sit to rest a while, sore from several stumbles on the uneven path. Butterflies criss-cross the dim air as the sun sets, and I find myself smiling, reflecting on the afternoon and all the good things in my life – Kate, my new job. Not to mention having the cabin to escape to when city life gets too much. Being a few hundred kilometres from my parents doesn't hurt either.

I hear Toby come running up to me, tired of sniffing for rabbits and beetles. I'm still not sure about him; I've never owned a dog before, but Kate refuses to give him up, so ... ~~here we are~~. I guess he's kind of cute with those piggy-like ears and whiskery face. He nuzzles my leg, wanting a pat. I ignore him, so he insists.

"Yeah, okay. I'm not there yet, pal."

He trots off again, then ~~He~~ stops a few metres away, cocking after ~~trotting off again, then cocks~~ his head. It's now I hear what's distracted him – the deep thud of hoofs on turf.

I jump to my feet, but the soldiers are upon me before I get a chance to run. I'd ~~only break~~ have broken an ankle for sure -in the mess of thick undergrowth anyway. I resign myself ~~to their scrutiny~~.

"What have we here?" the first soldier says.

I squint up at him, taking in his appearance. "Just out for a stroll, sir." I emphasise the "sir".

"Name?"

"Jo Carter."

"ID?"

As I reach for my wallet in my back pocket, the second soldier puts his hand on his gun. I freeze. "Just reaching for my wallet ID," ~~I tell them.~~

Show vs tell. Here, you're *telling* the reader that it's dark and Jo is having a hard time seeing the path. Instead, I've suggested how to *show* by immersing the reader in the scene using the senses, and therefore, creating a richer scene. You might like to have read of this [blog on show don't tell](#), to explain the difference.

Can air be dim? Perhaps include some other senses here: the smell of the forest, the feel of dampness or dryness of the air and the fading light.

You have only listed two items here, but have said "all the good things". I suggest you add a third for completeness. (Rule of three – using three ideas or phrases adds rhythm and is more engaging and memorable.)

This is called a "filter" word. It distances the reader from the character. Removing it gives the reader direct access to the action. E.g. A rustle and snuffle behind tells me Toby is back, tired of sniffing for rabbits ... I suggest having a read of this [blog on filter words](#) to learn more.

The phrasing here is quite awkward. I've suggested an alternative for better flow.

Suggestion to add emphasis re his ankle, since he almost broke it in the previous chapter.

Use this opportunity to show us what this character looks like through your protagonist's perspective.

Showing and telling. You don't need to tell us he's reaching for his wallet as you show this in his dialogue.

You don't need a dialogue tag here. The action beat before the dialogue shows us who is speaking.