

The purpose of this document is to provide an example for potential clients to assess my editorial style and skill to see if they meet your needs and expectations. This document is not a replacement for a sample edit of your own manuscript.

The editing in this document represents my typical approach to editing, which is a blend of both line editing and copyediting. The exact parameters with which I would approach an edit on any given manuscript might vary depending on the client's goals, their manuscript's needs, and our agreed-upon scope of work.

I'm sharing here the edited document as I would send it to my client, a clean version of the manuscript with all changes accepted and comments removed, the style sheet, and the editorial letter. The exact contents of a style sheet and editorial letter will depend on the individual manuscript they're created for, and may be longer and have more sections depending on the length of the manuscript.

A few things to note:

- Editing is often a choice of editorial discretion. A client might not necessarily agree with every choice made, and even editors might differ in how they would approach certain issues. In many cases, it's not a matter of right versus wrong but of style and preference. I always try to take my cues from the manuscript itself in order to preserve the author's voice and style, therefore I might make choices that flout "correctness" in favor of such.
- I take a very light hand to dialogue, and prefer not to directly edit it unless the author has given express permission or there is an outright, obviously unintentional error. The author has often made deliberate choices in dialogue to convey tone/mood, cadence, and to bring out individual character voices, so I believe that extra caution is always warranted. Therefore, I prefer to only make queries, in the form of comments, rather than editing dialogue directly. That is reflected in this example.

About the sample manuscript. This is a short story that I wrote several years ago. Because it is my own writing, it's possible that I might have understood my own meaning and missed something that is unclear to other readers or that I have edited something I might not have for a client or in a way that I wouldn't have for a client. I've done my best to avoid both scenarios, but no editor can promise perfection.

As a final note, the following piece is a first draft and has not received revisions or critiques or been edited for content. I would have advised this author to go through more drafts or talk with a developmental editor before receiving a copyedit, as the piece is lacking developmentally. For the purposes of this exercise, we'll assume the author is aware of this and has chosen to proceed anyway.

Copyedit of *The Soul Hunter* by Amaris Farr

In a first editing pass, I read through the manuscript to familiarize myself with the story, the world, the characters, and the author's voice and style. This makes it easier to pick up on inconsistencies or plot holes during my edit. As I go, I'll start to fill in my style sheet and make light edits of obvious errors such as typos or repeated words ("the the").

The second pass (what you'll see below) is a slow, careful, letter-by-letter reading of the manuscript where I examine each punctuation mark, word, and sentence for any errors and to make sure that the author's intended meaning is communicated clearly and effectively.

As I go, I'll make most edits in-line, and leave comments where necessary to explain any edits I feel require an explanation or to call out any sections that require heavier editing than I've been asked to do. During this pass, I'm also filling in the rest of the style sheet and checking against it constantly to make sure to maintain consistency. I also begin drafting my editorial letter.

Kishi's fascination began when she was young. Her family was having a picnic when she wandered off, following a playful axolotl. She followed this **fairy** until they reached the Laying Grounds. Kishi, too young at the time to know the importance of the place she was in, only noticed that the ground was covered with **bodies**. Thinking they were asleep, she began to creep towards them, when she saw an extraordinary sight: a **truly**-massive, silver manta ray came gliding over the valley. As Kishi watched, he **—**for it was Pitune, the Shepherd-god **—**swooped low over the bodies. As he did, glowing shapes rose from them, slowly, as though waking up. The souls of the dead mereen. When there was a form over **every each** body, Pitune swept over them once more, gathering the faint souls **into to** himself, **and** they clung to his back and to each other as he swam away.

Kishi was in awe, and the sight of the soul harvest haunted her for years with its beauty and surreality. **She never forgot, and** when the time came for her to **apprentice choose an apprenticeship** for the first time, she chose a duty that would take her near to the Laying Grounds. **She became an attendant** **a footwoman** for the carriages. **The carriages that** were

Commented [AF1]: Q1. Are the fairy and the axolotl the same creature? Context suggests they are, but some readers might get confused.

Commented [AF2]: Q2. You might consider ending this paragraph here to add weight to her discovery of the bodies.

Commented [AF3]: Q3. OK to prevent potential misreading as "everybody"?

Commented [AF4]: Q4. You might consider deleting this because it's clear from the passage that Kishi didn't forget the sight of the soul harvest.

Commented [AF5]: Q5. Change OK? "footwoman" seems like an odd title for someone without feet. This change also helps eliminate the awkwardness of the later "foot-people" which I've suggested changing to "attendants" as well.

~~deployed~~~~sent~~ regularly to the Kingdom's cities, where the bodies of the deceased were gathered, put ~~into the carriages~~, and taken back to Merpus to be taken care of. Additionally, they transported the bodies to the Laying Grounds, and finally to the last resting place, the Silent Caverns.

For the first year Kishi impatiently performed her under-apprentice duties, not yet allowed to go to other cities or the Laying Grounds. Finally, when she was ~~13~~~~thirteen~~, she was able to go with the carriage. She saw other cities, which was exciting, but ~~she~~ ~~what she really~~ longed to ~~return to see was~~ the ~~L~~aying ~~G~~rounds. A few times ~~she~~ did, but the carriage and all the ~~foot people~~~~attendants~~ had to leave before Pitune arrived. Kishi ached to witness the beautiful event once more. For months she dutifully did her work and followed the rules, until she could not take it anymore.

One ~~day~~~~a day~~ when the carriage she worked for was scheduled to ~~drop off a load of dead~~, Kishi feigned illness and was left behind. She snuck out of the city and hurried to the Laying Grounds, arriving well after the carriage had departed. The Laying Grounds ~~were~~ full of silent, still forms, ~~the water above them clear and empty~~. She crouched behind a rock and watched.

It wasn't that she heard him coming, but somehow Kishi knew: Pitune was here. Sure enough, when she looked up, a giant silver ray was slowly approaching the Laying Grounds. Kishi's heart leapt in excitement as her stomach clenched with nerves. ~~Her~~~~The~~ memory of what ~~she'd seen~~ was as fresh in her mind as though it had happened only the day before, and ~~what happened now was an exact replica~~~~now she watched it play out before her eyes~~. Pitune swept down in his majestic form, silently calling the souls of the dead forth from their bodies. ~~They~~ ~~rose in a daze~~, ~~Their~~ faintly glowing spirits ~~rose in a daze~~, ~~of the deceased~~. Kishi ~~looked at them~~,

Commented [AF6]: Q6. See my note in the Editorial Letter.

Commented [AF7]: Q7. Changes OK? This suggestion is intended to emphasize her desire not just to see the Grounds (as if for the first time), but to return to them and revisit this memory she's held onto for so long.

Commented [AF8]: Q8. I wonder if you want to use this language to describe what's happening? It seems a bit cold and lacking in respect, a stark contrast to the beauty and solemnity of what happens when Pitune gathers the souls.

Commented [AF9]: Q9. This invokes an image of the bodies *underneath* the water, as if they're on dry land and there's water floating in the air above them. You might consider rephrasing this.

Commented [AF10]: Q10. Changes OK?

~~wondering~~wondered if they knew who they were and what was going on, or if they were like children, clueless and trusting. They showed no emotion at all.

Pitune had finished raising all the souls and was looping back around to collect them when Kishi felt something crawling along her arm and looked to see a Poison Crab. She cried out and shook her arm violently, dislodging the venomous creature from her. She backed away, shuddering in horror. If that crab had pinched her with its **poisoned** claws, she would have joined the souls in the valley waiting for Pitune—

Commented [AF11]: Q11. Should this be “poisoned” or “venomous”? A pinch seems more akin to a bite or sting, which is how venom is typically injected.

Suddenly remembering where she was, Kishi turned in haste and looked out at the ~~vaelly~~valley. The souls ~~still~~ hovered **silent and unmoving** over their bodies, ~~silent and unmoving~~; seemingly undisturbed by her actions, but the Shepherd was nowhere in sight. Surely she could not have so badly startled a god that he would flee. And just like that she felt him again, and she grew very still, for she now knew that Pitune was right behind her. Several long moments passed, **in which nothing in the valley changed and Kishi remained unmoving**. Then a voice spoke, ~~directly to Kishi’s mind, though Kishi did not hear the words through her ears, but instead directly in her head.~~

Commented [AF12]: Q12. Changes OK to cut down on commas?

Commented [AF13]: Q13. You might consider deleting or revising this. Is there a reason anything should change in the valley, where the souls are waiting, when this moment is seemingly between Kishi and Pitune alone?

“Turn and face me, child.”

Commented [AF14]: Q14. Unspoken dialogue is commonly set in italics to differentiate it from spoken dialogue, usually without quotation marks but sometimes with. OK to change?

It was a ~~very~~ soft voice, ~~very~~ quiet, ~~and sort of~~ scratchy and thin. It did not sound angry, just very calm. It was the voice of the Shepherd. Kishi turned slowly with small flips of her tail until she came face to face with the enormous manta ray. She focused on her breathing, awed by this close-up sight of a god. Many had seen Pitune, but she’d never heard of him speaking to anyone, yet he had done so now, and did ~~it~~so again.

“Why are you here?”

Kishi swallowed; now Pitune wanted her to speak back! She gathered herself and stammered out, "I-I was watching, Noble. Forgive me. I didn't mean to intrude."

"I am not angry. I can see the intention of your heart. You are a curious mereen, child."

Kishi wasn't sure what to say to that, but luckily, Pitune ~~kept speaking, sparing her~~ spared her the need to answer.

"Will you do something for me, child?"

"Of course." Kishi was startled, wondering what a god could need her to do. Pray, perhaps, or sing? Bring a message to his followers? It turned out to be nothing of the sort.

"Once," began Pitune. "A great man died. I came to collect his soul, but it was strong, and a fragment remained in his body. Without this piece he could not Depart, and he was forced to remain here, with his soul torn. Of late he has become restless, so that Ketnos cannot give him rest, and Fereus cannot give him peace. I need you to descend into the Silent Caverns and wake his soul fragment, so that it can be rejoined to the rest. He will be whole, and finally able to go on."

In the sand beneath Kishi, a large conch suddenly appeared. It was a beautiful, almost translucent blue. The Shepherd continued to speak. "When you find the body, the shell will glow. Blow the shell to awaken the soul, then lead it here."

Kishi leaned down and gingerly picked up the shell. She examined it, then looked to Pitune. "But I don't understand. Why could the soul not be reformed before now?" She bit her lip, suddenly frightened; she had just questioned a god! Surely he would be angry with her now.

But Pitune answered her as calmly as ever. "The soul fragment was too attached to the body to depart, but now it is finally letting go. Go now, and retrieve it."

Commented [AF15]: Q15. This line isn't strictly necessary, since readers will soon know what Pitune wants from Kishi. Stet, delete, or revise as you prefer.

Commented [AF16]: Q16. "depart" is capitalized here but not later. Which is correct?

Commented [AF17]: Q17. Period intentional?

Commented [AF18]: See Q16

Kishi stood straight, and tried to look the god in the eye, ~~though she couldn't locate it on the giant manta.~~ "I will do as you ask, Lord Pitune."

Commented [AF19]: Q18. Is it just because of his size that they're difficult to find, or is there another reason?

Pitune glided away then, collecting the souls who had ~~stood-waited~~ patiently and quietly, ~~the whole time,~~ and with them clinging to him, he swam away, leaving ~~Kshi-Kishi~~ alone in a valley full of bodies with a conch shell in her hands.

Commented [AF20]: Q19. Change OK? Even if they weren't souls, would mereen "stand" or perhaps "float" instead?

Stunned as she was by the encounter, Kishi wasted no time making for the Caverns, ~~for~~ she would not hesitate or fail in the duty given to her. It was only a short swim to the entrance of the Caverns. When she saw the yawning mouth, she stopped, ~~suddenly realizing an obstacle that stood in her way~~ realizing that an obstacle lay ahead. ~~‡~~ The dracs who guarded the entrance to the Caverns would not let her in without proper authority, and if they suspected her, they would detain her and sound the alarm. She couldn't afford to get into that much trouble. Perhaps she thought, as an emissary from the Shepherd himself, she would be admitted. There was only one way to ~~try.~~

Commented [AF21]: Q20. You might consider deleting or revising the end of this sentence. This seems to place a lot of emphasis on the fact that she's alone with the bodies, but in her work she handles bodies regularly, so I'm not sure if that would be a big deal to her. The conch is seems more significant in this moment, so you might focus on that.

Kishi's hunch proved to be ~~more correct~~ ~~than she could have imagined.~~ The dracs did not so much as stop her, backing away from the entrance the moment they saw her. It was a strange experience.

Commented [AF22]: Q21. Only one way to try, or only one way to know?

Inside the caverns, it was even more silent than the valley had been, and much more still. The only light came from intermittently placed lanterns that glowed a soft purple. ~~Kishi-Kishi~~ swam through as quickly as she dared, feeling as though she was intruding on the restfulness of this place. She'd been inside before of course, but never alone, and today she would have to go deeper than she'd ever been, for the oldest bodies were laid in the deepest caverns. It would take many hours, perhaps days, to reach the body she was seeking.

Commented [AF23]: Q22. Check my understanding: Is this saying that the dracs didn't even stop her to question her? The phrasing isn't quite clear and might cause some confusion for readers.

The conch shell started out cold and dark in her hands, but as she went deeper in, it slowly warmed and began to glow, faintly at first but growing ~~slowly~~ stronger. Kishi had no idea how long she was in the Caverns, for there was no way to tell the passage of time, and she never felt hungry or tired. ~~After much time~~ Eventually, she reached the deepest levels, and the shell was now hot—though not unbearably so—and bright. She knew the body when she saw it.

Commented [AF24]: Q23. Change OK since she doesn't know how much time has passed?

The ~~ancient man mereen~~ had died ~~fairly~~ young, and his beautiful face was preserved expertly, so that he looked ~~almost~~ asleep. He was an orca mereen, a strong and fierce variety of the ~~the Kingdom's~~ people. Kishi could see that he would have a strong soul. But now it ~~was~~ time for that soul to go on. Kishi raised the shell to her lips and blew into it; the sound that came out was unexpectedly gentle, yet firm. Almost instantly, the fragment of his soul, just a wisp of vapor, rose from the body.

Commented [AF25]: Q24. Changes OK? "mereen" would seem more appropriate for this story. Although "ancient" likely refers here to the mereen having died long ago, since Pitune did not indicate that, some readers might initially think that the dead mereen looks ancient and then get thrown off when he's described as "young".

Commented [AF26]: Q25. Previously capitalized; OK to do so here?

Kishi led the soul from the Caverns, and finally back out to the Laying Grounds. ~~It was empty of bodies now. The bodies had been removed and Pitune was gone,~~ but as Kishi and the fragment approached, ~~Pitune the Shepherd~~ appeared in the distance with a faded soul riding alone on his back. She felt the fragment stir, for the first time showing a sign of life. ~~When all four arrived at the Grounds,~~ the torn soul and its fragment quickly joined, becoming one and whole again.

Commented [AF27]: Q26. OK to rephrase?

Commented [AF28]: Q27. Although readers can likely intuit who "all four" refers to, you might consider clarifying for them.

"Well done," came Pitune's thin voice.

"It was my honor, Shepherd," Kishi replied.

"I have a proposition for you." Kishi perked up, wondering ~~what~~ what the Noble was about to say. "I will offer you the position ~~for~~ of Soul Hunter, to take care of the Wayward souls for me. But it comes with a price, for you will be immortal, a ~~demi-god~~, and must leave your home and family. What will you say?"

Commented [AF29]: Q28. "demi-god" here, but in the next paragraph she's referred to as the first "demi-goddess." For the sake of consistency, maybe pick one or the other? Or is there a distinction (there have been other demi-gods but as yet no demi-goddesses)?

Kishi chose to become the Soul Hunter, saying goodbye to her parents, though she could not tell them where she went. It was not until after the death of her family that the legend of the Soul Hunter became known to all mereen. Kishi was the first demi-goddess. She took the same shape as Pitune, only smaller, but often resumed the mereen shape. Always she carried her soul-calling conch shell.

Commented [AF30]: Q29. This final paragraph seems to step outside the narrative to summarize the rest of Kishi's story. You might consider either rewriting it to bring the style in line with the rest of the narrative, or setting it off somehow, such as with a scene break.

Clean Edited Copy

When I send my edits to a client, I also send a clean version of the edited manuscript, with all of the tracked changes accepted and all comments deleted so that the client can see what the edited manuscript looks like without the clutter of tracked changes. Seeing the manuscript this way is also helpful for me so that I can ensure I haven't accidentally done anything funky, such as deleting a word or space I didn't intend to.

Kishi's fascination began when she was young. Her family was having a picnic when she wandered off, following a playful axolotl. She followed this fairy until they reached the Laying Grounds. Kishi, too young at the time to know the importance of the place she was in, only noticed that the ground was covered with bodies. Thinking they were asleep, she began to creep towards them, when she saw an extraordinary sight: a massive silver manta ray came gliding over the valley. As Kishi watched, he—for it was Pitune, the Shepherd-god—swooped low over the bodies. As he did, glowing shapes rose from them, slowly, as though waking up. The souls of the dead mereen. When there was a form over each body, Pitune swept over them once more, gathering the faint souls to himself, and they clung to his back and to each other as he swam away.

Kishi was in awe, and the sight of the soul harvest haunted her for years with its beauty and surreality. She never forgot, and when the time came for her to choose an apprenticeship for the first time, she chose a duty that would take her near to the Laying Grounds. She became an attendant for the carriages that were sent regularly to the Kingdom's cities, where the bodies of the deceased were gathered, put into the carriages, and taken back to Merpus to be taken care of. Additionally, they transported the bodies to the Laying Grounds, and finally to the last resting place, the Silent Caverns.

For the first year Kishi impatiently performed her under-apprentice duties, not yet allowed to go to other cities or the Laying Grounds. Finally, when she was thirteen, she was able to go with the carriage. She saw other cities, which was exciting, but she longed to return to the Laying Grounds. A few times she did, but the carriage and all the attendants had to leave before Pitune arrived. Kishi ached to witness the beautiful event once more. For months she dutifully did her work and followed the rules, until she could not take it anymore.

One day when the carriage she worked for was scheduled to drop off a load of dead, Kishi feigned illness and was left behind. She snuck out of the city and hurried to the Laying Grounds, arriving well after the carriage had departed. The Laying Grounds were full of silent, still forms, the water above them clear and empty. She crouched behind a rock and watched.

It wasn't that she heard him coming, but somehow Kishi knew: Pitune was here. Sure enough, when she looked up, a giant silver ray was slowly approaching the Laying Grounds. Kishi's heart leapt in excitement as her stomach clenched with nerves. The memory of what she'd seen was as fresh in her mind as though it had happened only the day before, and now she watched it play out before her eyes. Pitune swept down in his majestic form, silently calling the souls of the dead forth from their bodies. Their faintly glowing spirits rose in a daze. Kishi wondered if they knew who they were and what was going on, or if they were like children, clueless and trusting. They showed no emotion at all.

Pitune had finished raising all the souls and was looping back around to collect them when Kishi felt something crawling along her arm and looked to see a Poison Crab. She cried out and shook her arm violently, dislodging the venomous creature from her. She backed away, shuddering in horror. If that crab had pinched her with its poisoned claws, she would have joined the souls in the valley waiting for Pitune—

Suddenly remembering where she was, Kishi turned in haste and looked out at the valley. The souls hovered silent and unmoving over their bodies, seemingly undisturbed by her actions, but the Shepherd was nowhere in sight. Surely she could not have so badly startled a god that he would flee. And just like that she felt him again, and she grew very still, for she now knew that Pitune was right behind her. Several long moments passed in which nothing in the valley changed and Kishi remained unmoving. Then a voice spoke directly to Kishi's mind.

"Turn and face me, child."

It was a soft voice, quiet, scratchy and thin. It did not sound angry, just very calm. It was the voice of the Shepherd. Kishi turned slowly with small flips of her tail until she came face to face with the enormous manta ray. She focused on her breathing, awed by this close-up sight of a god. Many had seen Pitune, but she'd never heard of him speaking to anyone, yet he had done so now, and did so again.

"Why are you here?"

Kishi swallowed; now Pitune wanted her to speak back! She gathered herself and stammered out, "I-I was watching, Noble. Forgive me. I didn't mean to intrude."

"I am not angry. I can see the intention of your heart. You are a curious mereen, child."

Kishi wasn't sure what to say to that, but luckily, Pitune spared her the need to answer.

"Will you do something for me, child?"

"Of course." Kishi was startled, wondering what a god could need her to do. Pray, perhaps, or sing? Bring a message to his followers? It turned out to be nothing of the sort.

"Once," began Pitune, "a great man died. I came to collect his soul, but it was strong, and a fragment remained in his body. Without this piece he could not Depart, and he was forced to remain here, with his soul torn. Of late he has become restless, so that Ketnos cannot give him

rest, and Fereus cannot give him peace. I need you to descend into the Silent Caverns and wake his soul fragment, so that it can be rejoined to the rest. He will be whole, and finally able to go on."

In the sand beneath Kishi, a large conch suddenly appeared. It was a beautiful, almost translucent blue. The Shepherd continued to speak. "When you find the body, the shell will glow. Blow the shell to awaken the soul, then lead it here."

Kishi leaned down and gingerly picked up the shell. She examined it, then looked to Pitune. "But. I don't understand. Why could the soul not be reformed before now?" She bit her lip, suddenly frightened; she had just questioned a god! Surely he would be angry with her now.

But Pitune answered her as calmly as ever. "The soul fragment was too attached to the body to depart, but now it is finally letting go. Go now, and retrieve it."

Kishi stood straight, and tried to look the god in the eye, though she couldn't locate it on the giant manta. "I will do as you ask, Lord Pitune."

Pitune glided away then, collecting the souls who had waited patiently and quietly, and with them clinging to him, he swam away, leaving Kishi alone in a valley full of bodies with a conch shell in her hands.

Stunned as she was by the encounter, Kishi wasted no time making for the Caverns, for she would not hesitate or fail in the duty given to her. It was only a short swim to the entrance of the Caverns. When she saw the yawning mouth, she stopped, realizing that an obstacle lay ahead. The dracs who guarded the entrance to the Caverns would not let her in without proper authority, and if they suspected her, they would detain her and sound the alarm. She couldn't afford to get into that much trouble. Perhaps she thought, as an emissary from the Shepherd himself, she would be admitted. There was only one way to try.

Kishi's hunch proved to be correct. The dracs did not so much as stop her, backing away from the entrance the moment they saw her. It was a strange experience.

Inside the caverns, it was even more silent than the valley had been, and much more still. The only light came from intermittently placed lanterns that glowed a soft purple. Kishi swam through as quickly as she dared, feeling as though she was intruding on the restfulness of this place. She'd been inside before of course, but never alone, and today she would have to go deeper than she'd ever been, for the oldest bodies were laid in the deepest caverns. It would take many hours, perhaps days, to reach the body she was seeking.

The conch shell started out cold and dark in her hands, but as she went deeper in, it slowly warmed and began to glow, faintly at first but growing stronger. Kishi had no idea how long she was in the Caverns, for there was no way to tell the passage of time, and she never felt hungry or tired. Eventually, she reached the deepest levels, and the shell was now hot—though not unbearably so—and bright. She knew the body when she saw it.

The mereen had died young, and his beautiful face was preserved expertly, so that he looked asleep. He was an orca mereen, a strong and fierce variety of the Kingdom's people. Kishi could see that he would have a strong soul. But now it was time for that soul to go on. Kishi raised the shell to her lips and blew into it; the sound that came out was unexpectedly gentle, yet firm. Almost instantly, the fragment of his soul, just a wisp of vapor, rose from the body.

Kishi led the soul from the Caverns and finally back out to the Laying Grounds. The bodies had been removed and Pitune was gone, but as Kishi and the fragment approached, the Shepherd appeared in the distance with a faded soul riding alone on his back. She felt the

fragment stir, for the first time showing a sign of life. When Pitune arrived, the torn soul and its fragment quickly joined, becoming one and whole again.

“Well done,” came Pitune’s thin voice.

“It was my honor, Shepherd,” Kishi replied.

“I have a proposition for you.” Kishi perked up, wondering what the Noble was about to say. *“I will offer you the position of Soul Hunter, to take care of the Wayward souls for me. But it comes with a price, for you will be immortal, a demi-god, and must leave your home and family. What will you say?”*

Kishi chose to become the Soul Hunter, saying goodbye to her parents, though she could not tell them where she went. It was not until after the death of her family that the legend of the Soul Hunter became known to all mereen. Kishi was the first demi-goddess. She took the same shape as Pitune, only smaller, but often resumed the mereen shape. Always she carried her soul-calling conch shell.

The Style Sheet

Author/Title Farr, *The Soul Hunter*
Copyeditor Amaris Farr
References *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (Online)*
Merriam-Webster's Unabridged Dictionary (Online)
The Chicago Manual of Style (18th ed.)

(?) = queried in ms

Numbers

Spell out numbers one through one hundred

Punctuation

Always lowercase after a colon (series style)

Typography

In address: child; Noble

Telepathic dialogue set italic with quotes (?)

"Turn and face me, child."

Usage

Allow sentence fragments and comma splices

Allow misplaced *only*

Word List

Part of speech follows each word:

adj (adjective) UC (uppercase)

lc (lowercase) v (verb)

n (noun)

close-up (adj)	leapt [not leaped] (v)
demi-god (n)	Shepherd-god
demi-goddess (n)	soul-calling
Depart (UC) (?)	under-apprentice
god (lc)	Wayward (UC)

Characters / Creatures / Objects

Name	(pg. #)
dracs	4
guard the Silent Caverns	-
Fereus	4
Ketnos	4
Kishi (she/her)	1
mereen	3
becomes the Soul Hunter, the first demi-goddess	6
takes on a form similar to Pitune, but smaller	6
mereen	1
Merpus	1
Pitune; the Shepherd-god; the Shepherd; the Noble	1, 1, 2, 3, 6
massive silver manta ray	1
harvests souls of dead mereen	1
soft, quiet voice; scratchy and thin	3
Poison Crab	2
crab with poisonous claws	-
soul-calling shell	4
large conch shell; blue, almost translucent	4
used by Kishi to find and lead Wayward souls	6
Unnamed Dead Mereen	3
His soul was too powerful and a part remained in his body	3
orca mereen	5

Locations

Name	(pg.#)
Kingdom, the (?)	1
Laying Grounds, the	1
where Pitune gathers souls of dead mereen	1
Silent Caverns, the; the Caverns	2, 4
where dead mereen bodies are kept for their final rest	1
yawning mouth (entrance)	4
guarded by dracs	4
lit by intermittent lanterns that glow soft purple	5
very large and deep	5

Worldbuilding & Lore

- The bodies of dead mereen are placed in the Laying Grounds, where the Shepherd-god Pitune collects their souls before they are sent to the final resting place, the Silent Caverns.
- The bodies are transported from one place to another via carriages.
- Kishi is the first demi-goddess (and possible first demi-god in general) (?)

Summary & Timeline

The story has an ambiguous timeline, beginning when Kishi is young (age unspecified) and following her to the age of thirteen, highlighting only the key moments of her life.

- Kishi, a young mereen, watches as Pitune gathers the souls of dead mereen. Awed by the sight, she chooses an apprenticeship that will allow her to work in the Laying Grounds in the hopes that she can witness the sight again.
- When Kishi is thirteen, her duties expand, and she is allowed to go to the Laying Grounds, but the carriages always leave before Pitune arrives.
- One day, Kishi pretends to be sick and sneaks out to the Laying Grounds to watch for Pitune. He arrives and begins to harvest the souls.
- Kishi is distracted when a Poison Crab nearly pinches her. When she turns her attention back to the Grounds, she realizes that Pitune knows she's there.
- The god tells her about a soul he has been unable to harvest because a part of it clung to its body. He believes the soul is ready to depart now and asks Kishi to bring it to him. He gives her a shell that will help her find the soul and lead it back to him.
- The god tells her about a soul he has been unable to harvest because a part of it clung to its body. He believes the soul is ready to depart now and asks Kishi to bring it to him. He gives her a shell that will help her find the soul and lead it back to him.
- Kishi enters the Silent Caverns. Over hours or days, she's unsure which, she descends deep inside, the conch growing warmer in her hands and beginning to glow. She finds the body, and the fragment of the soul follows her back out.
- Kishi brings the soul fragment to Pitune, and the soul becomes whole. Pitune offers Kishi a role as a Soul Hunter, taking care of Wayward souls for him. He warns her that the job comes at the price of her mortality and relationship with her family.
- Kishi accepts Pitune's offer and becomes the first demi-goddess. She's unable to tell her family what became of her, but after their deaths, her legend spreads to all mereen.

The Editorial Letter

The editorial letter provides an overview of my edits and brief explanations for some editorial decisions, particularly global and silent edits. If necessary, it will also address remaining issues such as plot holes, major inconsistencies, sensitivity concerns, or accuracy issues, which will be up to the author to address (or not, at their discretion).

Dear Amaris,

Thank you for trusting me with the editing of your manuscript. *The Soul Hunter* is an intriguing addition to your world's mythology that I think readers will be eager to dive into (please forgive the pun). It was a pleasure to help you move one step closer to publication of your short story, and I wish you the best in completing that journey.

As we discussed, my edits focused primarily on cleaning up the manuscript and eliminating any outright errors of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and consistency, with light line edits to improve the flow and eliminate awkward or unclear phrasing and to improve the effectiveness of the prose. You'll find my editorial decisions detailed in the style sheet, which I recommend you read after this letter and before jumping into the manuscript itself.

A few editorial notes:

- The only silent (untracked) changes I made were to eliminate any extra spaces between words and paragraphs. All other changes are tracked, with some called out in comments as well.
- There were a number of semicolons in the piece, and while they were all used correctly, I've recommended cutting down on the amount, as the frequency might prove distracting to readers. Please feel free to stet or revise as you see fit.
- Regarding Query 6 (Q6): Readers are likely to wonder what Kishi's apprenticeship consisted of if she wasn't allowed to ride with the carriages for the first year. You might consider clarifying her role or duties.
- Pitune has multiple titles and variations of those titles. He is: the Shepherd, the Shepherd-god, Noble, and the Noble. For such a short piece, you might consider sticking to one title so that readers don't get confused.

That's about it! You should find everything else in the style sheet and in the edited document. If you have any questions or need further clarification on anything, including my suggested edits, please don't hesitate to reach out.