

SAMPLE of Marlo's Notes for Bubblegum Princess Manuscript

Once upon a time, in a land not far from here, there lived a young lady named Katy.

A delightfully witty, extraordinarily kind, decidedly brilliant young lady was she.

[Once upon a time, in a land not far from here, there lived a young lady named Katy.]

Consider not putting a page turn here. There's not enough info about who Katy is to make the text strong enough on this first page.

[delightfully witty, extraordinarily kind, decidedly brilliant] Would be great if you (briefly) show us how she is these things. That will help kids understand what the words mean. Illustrations will help too, of course, but it's difficult to illustrate *delightfully witty* and *decidedly brilliant*, so I feel the text could better illuminate these.

[was she] I'd avoid this backwards phrasing.

However, Katy had one habit Mum and Dad deemed utterly disgraceful, singularly silly, frightful and stupendously bad.

[However, Katy had one * habit] *Bad? Feels like it needs an adjective here.

I'd put a page turn here. That would create much more tension as readers wonder what the habit is.

Then escalate the tension on the next double-page spread as her parents tell her how bad it is.

[Mum and Dad deemed it utterly disgraceful, singularly silly, frightful, and stupendously bad.] Stronger to break the sentence up. I would show us this in dialogue. Also, once in dialogue, I think this should perhaps be moved to after "awfully mad."

Katy loved to blow bubblegum bubbles, and that made her parents awfully mad. She blew bubbles before bed, while she stood on her head, despite her parents' protestations. And what's even worse, when the big bubbles burst, goo flew through the air and got stuck everywhere. Busted bubbles caused considerable consternation.

[Katy loved to blow bubblegum bubbles, and that made her parents awfully mad. She blew bubbles before bed, while she stood on her head,]

Good, these rhyming elements and rhythm work.

[despite her parents' protestations. And what's even worse, when the big bubbles burst,]

These rhyming elements and rhythm work, also.

[goo flew through the air and got stuck everywhere. Busted bubbles caused considerable consternation.]

You seem to be trying to break into some kind of loose rhyming scheme here, but I'm not sure that is the best choice. There's already a lot going on with language and adding a jaunty (but imperfect) meter and end-rhymes (also imperfect) might not only just be too much, but might also turn an editor off. But rhyming elements can work well. See critique.

Then one day, to Katy's humble home, a court courier carried a coveted communiqué: a royal invitation to the queen's posh palace. Needless to say, this rare request to be a guest at a swank soirée had quite the cachet for Katy's parents. It was the perfect time for Katy's manners to be polished to perfection to meet the prince.

[Then one day, to Katy's humble home, a court courier carried a coveted communiqué: a royal invitation to the queen's posh palace.]

Who covets it? It seems this is something the parents care about, but I don't get a sense of whether Katy cares about it one way or the other.

Alliteration is overdone here, and I think *coveted communiqué* is overdoing the difficult vocabulary too.

What is the occasion? This feels as if it comes out of nowhere. If it's hinted before this that Katy's desire is to live in a castle or marry a prince or go to a big party, this would make more sense.

There just needs to be a cleaner, clearer transition between the set-up of who Katy is and that she likes chewing gum and this invitation.

[Needless to say, this rare request to be a guest at a swank soirée had quite the cachet for Katy's parents.]

Difficult words, but I love the overall feel, flow, meter, and sound of this sentence. I think you could further clarify for kids what this means by following it with some dialogue from the parents to show us how they feel.

[It was the perfect time for Katy's manners to be polished to perfection to meet the prince.]

We could know about the prince before this. Also, give him a name.

Perhaps put into dialogue.

The problem is that I understand what the parents' desire is, but I don't know what Katy wants.

To that end, Mum proclaimed a new rule in effect: No More Bubblegum Bubbles. Katy was quite disappointed. Big, Brobdingnagian bubbles were her triumph, her joy.

But it was best to comply with Mother's wish, she thought. So Katy quit blowing bubbles at once, on the spot. Yet she became overwrought: Life would be gloomy and glum with no gum.

[To that end, Mum proclaimed a new rule in effect: No More Bubblegum Bubbles.]

I think I'd like to hear her say it: dialogue.

[Katy was quite disappointed.]

Show, don't tell.

[Big, Brobdingnagian bubbles were her triumph, her joy.]

This could go into dialogue.

[But it was best to comply with Mother's wish, she thought. So Katy quit blowing bubbles at once, on the spot. Yet she became overwrought: Life would be gloomy and glum with no gum.]

"But it is best to comply with Mother's wish," she thought. So Katy quit blowing bubbles at once, on the spot. Yet she was overwrought. Life with no gum would be gloomy and glum.

Dialogue is fairly absent, and it's needed, hence my changing this to internal discourse here.

And why is it best? What does she want?

Why? This hints at a deeper problem. What is it?