

### Story Notes based on Raquel David's story, "Meeting the Parents, Part 1"

1. **Create a personal editing checklist.** Use these story notes as a basis to build a personal editing checklist. Add other items you often overlook, and use these sheets to check your future stories *before* submitting them for review. I included a blank editing checklist you can fill in and add to.
2. **Italicize names of ships and other vessels.** If a ship or other vessel, like the space shuttles, satellites, rovers, etc., is named, italicize the name. If the vessel name is preceded by a designation of USS, HMS, US, or such, do *not* italicize that designation. Only italicize the actual name of the vessel.

The Writing the Waves cruise is aboard Virgin Voyages' *Resilient Lady*.

3. **Compound adjectives.** Combining two or more adjectives to describe a noun creates a compound adjective, and a hyphen is needed to connect the two.

*She wore an orange-red hat to dinner.*  
*He had an oh-no-I'm-caught look on his face.*

4. **Quantify.** Wherever possible, quantify your descriptions in terms of size, amount, number, age, etc. If you don't know the exact number, qualify it somehow, but still provide a specific point of reference.

*We've been best friends for a long time.*  
*We've been best friends for more than thirty years.*

*She is such a smart little girl.*  
*She is such a smart three-year-old.*

5. **Specificity.** Use specific words rather than general words whenever possible. Test your nouns and ask if each is specific or general.

*The groom drank too much alcohol and embarrassed his bride.*

*The groom drank too much rum and embarrassed his bride.*

*We vacationed in Woodstock last year.*

*We vacationed in Woodstock, Vermont, last year.*

6. **That.** *That* is an often overused and unnecessary word. We use it a lot out of habit rather than need. Read your sentence without *that*. If the meaning is still clear, delete the extraneous *that*.

*I bought the car that I wanted all my life.*

*I bought the car I wanted all my life.*

7. **Take your reader with you.** Make sure when you are changing physical locations in the story that you let your reader know where you are.

*I sat in the classroom bored out of my mind. Playing on the monkey bars was fun.*

*I sat in the classroom bored out of my mind. Thankfully, the recess bell rang, and I ran straight to the monkey bars.*