THE ART OF

Shorts

5

Cutting Out Filler

@authorelizabethjsmith

Easy Does It
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Don't take a chainsaw to your writing

to decrease your word count!

You're doing delicate surgery here.

Think things through,

and make sure to read over each cut.

Add it back if you need to!

Pre-Readers are the bomb!

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Make sure to keep your intended meaning. It is possible to cut so much out that the reader doesn't understand what you are trying to say. This is one place where a pre-reader comes in handy!

Clear Out the Clutter

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If the meaning is implied, cut out the word (or even the sentence). Think of excess words as clutter. If you don't need it, get rid of it!

That being said, you don't want your story to sound choppy and boring.

Do this!

Jake bought Susie a coke, her favorite. She took a long swig and smiled at her friend's thoughtfulness. (18)

Not that...

Jake went to the store. He bought Susie a coke. He took it to her. She drank it. (18)

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Each option has the same word count, but see how different they are! The second option simply tells the facts. The first adds flavor and meaning to each action.

@authorelizabethjsmith

Example (w/Word Count)

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Looking out over the ocean, he wondered when she would come back. She had been gone for an awfully long time. (21)

-becomes-

Looking over the ocean, he wondered when she would come back. (11)

Why did I remove the sentence?

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By the narrator wondering when "she" could come back, it is implied that she has been gone longer than he expects. I could keep it for flavor, but there are better ways of expressing his emotions.
Stay Tuned!