Writing Dialogue

Rule #1: Use quotation marks before and after the exact words of a speaker.

Example:

“The truth is powerful and will prevail,” said Sojourner Truth.

Rule #2: If a quote is interrupted by other words, place quotation marks around the quoted words only. Use a comma to spate the quotation from the rest of the sentence.

Example:

“Give me liberty,” cried Patrick Henry, “or give me death!”

Rule #3: Place a question mark or an exclamation point inside closing quotation marks only if the quotation itself is a question or exclamation.

Example:

“Haven’t you ever heard of Sojourner Truth or Patrick Henry?” asked Sam.

Rule #4: Indent every time someone new speaks and identify the speaker if it isn’t clear who is talking.

Example:

“Teach me how to play chess,” Sam requested. “What are these eight small pieces called?” he questioned.

“Those pieces,” Suzy answered, “are called pawns.”

Rule #5: A quote separate by the person who spoke is called a split quotation. Begin the first part of a split quotation with a capital letter, and end with a comma. Begin the second part of a split quotation with a lower case letter. Enclose both parts of the split quotation with quotation marks.

Example:

“Tomorrow,” stated mom, “we will visit friends.”

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