

A young child with curly hair, seen from behind, stands on a large, open book. The child is looking out from a cave opening into a magical, glowing sea scene. In the distance, a wooden sailboat with a single yellow sail is on the water. The sky is filled with stars and a bright, glowing light source. The cave walls are dark and textured, framing the scene.

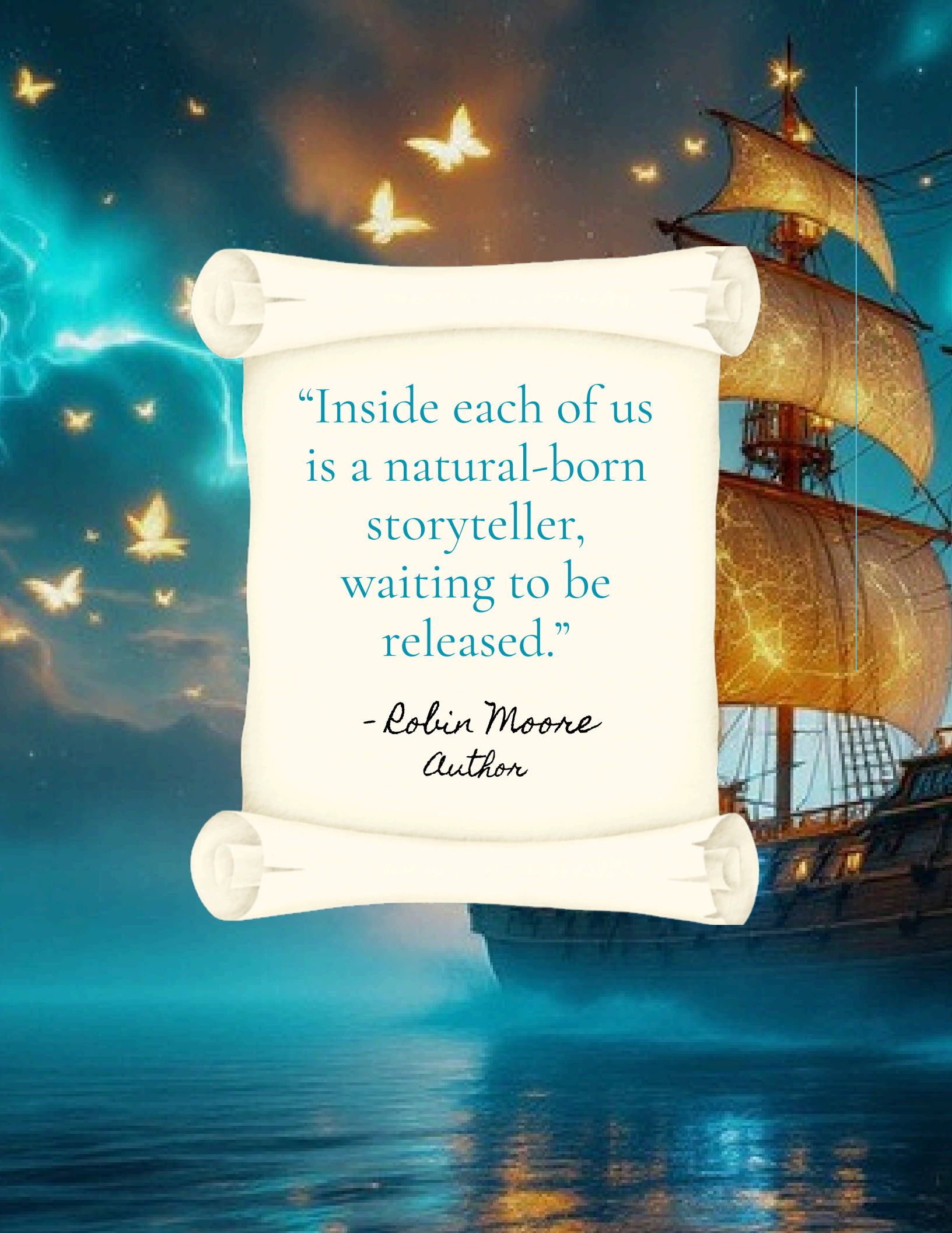
THERE ONCE WAS...

BUILDING A STORY TO SHARE

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A white scroll is centered in the image, containing text. The background is a dark blue night sky with glowing yellow stars and several white birds in flight. On the right side, the mast and sails of a large wooden sailing ship are visible, illuminated from within. The overall scene is atmospheric and evocative.

“Inside each of us
is a natural-born
storyteller,
waiting to be
released.”

*- Robin Moore
Author*

Ahoy friend,

Welcome aboard this writing voyage, mate! It's time to seize the day to explore a far and mystical place behind the door of your imagination. Let's set sail to the open waters of the vast seas.

In this writing project, we will learn:

- what makes a good story
- the 5 C's of creating a story
- how to craft your own unique story to share using a story example, *The Great Adventure*
- tips for great storytelling

Prepare to drift into a place where **there once was...** (I'll let you write in the blank).

What legacy will you leave today?

Cheering for you every day, mate!

Happy writing,

Victoria

Victoria A. Witkewitz
Author & Founder
Red Bicycle Books, LLC

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LET'S BUILD A STORY TO SHARE TOGETHER

What makes a good story?

Take a moment to think about at least two of your favorite stories. Have you thought about what they are? Good! Think about what you like most about the story. Was it the characters? The action? How the story ended? What did you learn from reading the story?

Creating a good story is about leaving a lasting idea with your reader.

Good stories include...

- Moments that make the reader think and learn.
- Something unique to make them extraordinary.
- A strong plot that unfolds the story details in a balanced and gradual way.
- Awakenning the reader's imagination to visualize the story in their mind.
- Connection with the reader's emotions.

What does a story consist of?

A story consists of the following:

- Context
- Characters
- Conflict
- Climax
- Conclusion

This is called the 5 C's of creating a story. Let's explore further on the next page.

The 5 C's of Creating a Story

Context

The story's meaning or purpose. Describe the story setting (place and time).

Characters

Characters can be people, animals, mythical creatures, nature, or even objects, such as a magical ship. Each character plays a role in the story.

Conflict

What do the character(s) need to solve? Think of the conflict as the challenges the character(s) must overcome.

Climax

The major turning point of the story where the conflict starts to reach its resolution. It can be a battle to fight, a shocking truth, a life-altering experience, a natural disaster to survive, or something else.

Conclusion

How does the story end? What do you want the reader to know by the time they finish reading your story? Tie up any loose ends of the story.



Let's look at how to put a story together.

There once was...

Have you ever read or listened to a fairy tale? Did you notice how many stories begin with *there once was* or *once upon a time*? Why is that? These phrases help set the scene for the reader to transport their imagination to a special place and time. That is the magic of writing.

Let's navigate how we can take the 5 C's to create the direction of the story from the beginning, middle, and to the end.

Beginning

The beginning of the story introduces the *setting* (the time and place), the main *characters*, and leads into the *conflict*.

Example

There once lived a beautiful young princess named Marielle (character) who lived in a castle in the small town of Caratores (setting). Marielle had a broken heart because she lost her favorite cat, Fiona (conflict).



Middle

The middle of the story adds details to support the *conflict*. The story builds speed and excitement for what is going to happen next. This leads into the *climax* of the story.

Example

Marielle left the castle to look for Fiona. With a basket of blueberries, she wandered into Baxter Forest. As the sun faded, she became lost. As the darkness surrounded her, she became frightened crossing the path of a wolf. "Oh!" Gasping with fear, Marielle was surrounded by a pack that stared intently into her eyes. They began to growl.



End

The end of the story sums up the conflict and any loose ends to the *conclusion*. The end can be happy or sad.

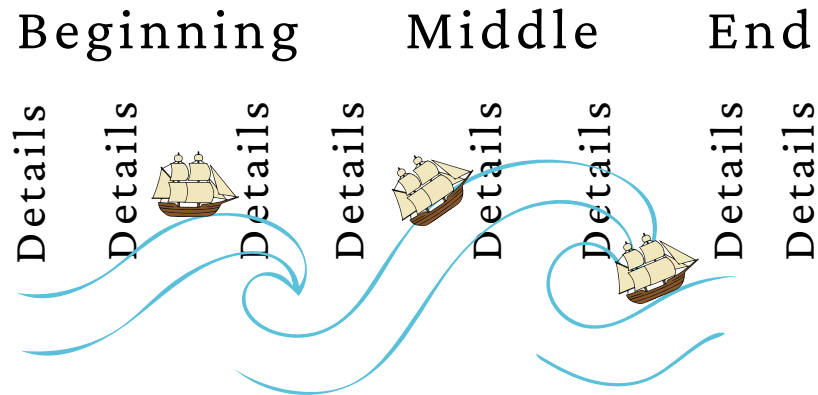
Example

Carefully approaching the wolf, she set down the food. As the wolves busied themselves with the blueberries, Marielle continued to walk, hearing the sounds of the river. Guiding her back to the castle, she found Fiona had climbed a tree. "Fiona, there you are!" With a meow, she jumped safely into Marielle's arms, returning to the castle.

Once you build the main story points...

add the details to help fill in the gaps. Like spaces waves create in an ocean to help guide a ship to its destination, details move a story along while adding curiosity.

We can create details by adding sentences that support and expand on the main story points. This helps the reader visualize the story in their mind.



Adding details to your story will...

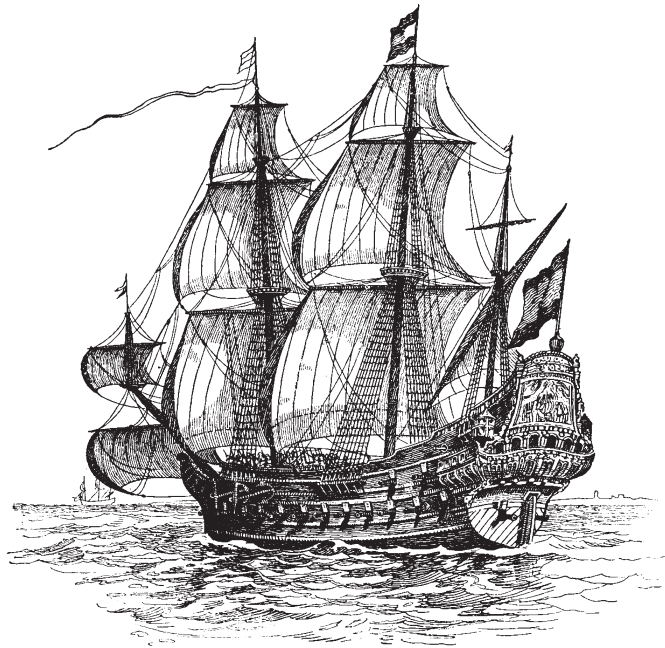
- Add interest and excitement
- Provide background of your characters and bring them to life
- Create a good flow from start to finish
- Draw the reader in to use their imagination

Let's try an example

Let's think of a story in terms of a ship. What is essential for a ship to have? Sails, bow, hull, stern, keel, steering wheel or rudder, a compass, and a crew to manage the ship. These would be the necessary parts of a ship, but what are some of the details that make a ship *unique*?

Is it tall? Old? Maybe the ship has rickety boards that make a loud creaking sound as you walk on top of them. This is where you can practice using *adjectives*, which we will talk about on the next page, to describe the details.

Take a look at the drawing below and name at least 4 details that make this ship different. Could this be a magical ship that flies into space? Use your imagination.



Details bring a story to life

Shall we use our compass to help lead us to creating details to build our story? Let's do it!

Character details

Imagine drawing a picture of your character. What would they look like? What color eyes do they have? Is their hair long, short, curly, or straight? Are they tall or short? **Adjectives** describe **nouns**. **Nouns** are defined as a person, place, or thing.



Nouns

Jan is shy. (Jan is the noun).

The **duck** sat on the **bridge**. (Duck and bridge are nouns).

Peter ate a **peanut butter and jelly sandwich** on the **picnic bench**. (Peter, peanut butter and jelly sandwich, picnic bench are nouns).

Adjectives

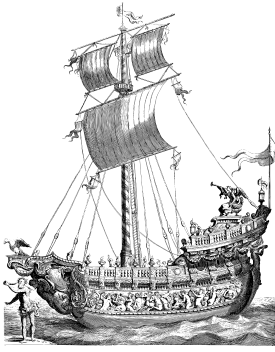
The **man** wore a **tall hat** with a **firm bow**. (Man, hat, and bow are nouns; tall and firm are used to describe the hat and are adjectives).

The **ocean** was **blue** and **wavy**. (Ocean is the noun; blue and wavy describe the ocean and are adjectives).

Jonathan is a **courageous** and **charming prince**. (Jonathan and prince are the nouns; courageous and charming describe Jonathan and are adjectives).



How would you describe the woman in the drawing above? Use **adjectives** to add character details.



Scene details

If you were in the scene of your story, how would you describe what is going on around you? Is the day sunny and calm, or rainy and cold? Take a peek at the ship to the left. How would you describe the day? Is it windy? Perhaps that is why the sails are full and the flag is waving. Using your senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch) can help you paint a picture of a scene in your story.

Build the climax

Remember, the climax leads into how the characters will solve the problem they are faced with. This is one of the most exciting parts of the story. **Verbs** help to describe a noun. Strong verbs (words that create action) generate power to the story and impact how the story is interpreted. Verbs can be a physical action, such as walking, eating, or swimming. Verbs can describe an emotion or state of being, such as need or love, or express an ability, possibility, or permission, such as should, might, or must.

Verbs

The **princess ran** from the **castle**. (Ran is the verb and helps describe the action of the princess. Princess and castle are nouns).

The **horse galloped**. (Galloped is the verb and helps describe the action of the horse. Horse is the noun).

Walter believes in the **tooth fairy**. (Believes is the verb that describes how Walter feels. Walter and tooth fairy are nouns).

Dawn should relax. (Should and relax are verbs; Dawn is the noun).

How would you describe the scene below? Use **verbs** to identify actions.

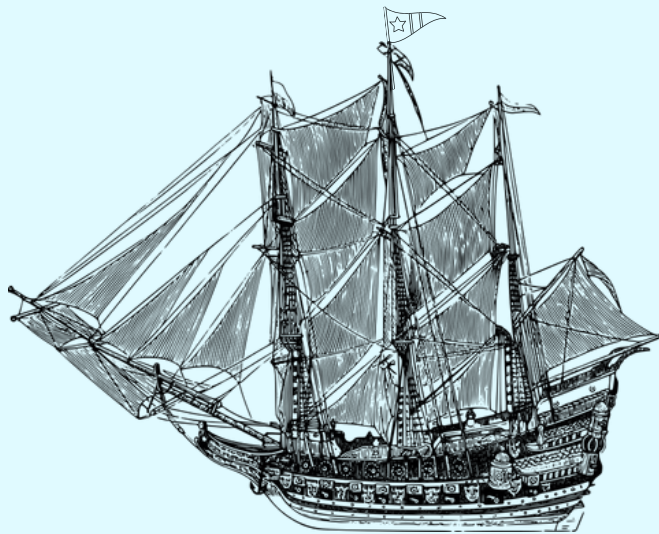


Let's take what we learned and write a story where *there once was...*

While you are reading the story, be on the lookout to identify the 5 C's in action (context, characters, conflict, climax, and conclusion). We will recap this at the end.

Are you ready?

The Great Adventure
by Victoria A. Mitkewitz



There once was...

a captain named Albert Brennery who sailed the vast and windy seas. Though he was a short man, he had no hesitation giving tall orders to eight trusted members of his crew.

The year was 1735 as the bow of their ship, The Great Adventure, dipped up and down the waves. Setting sail to navigate through the cold, crisp waters of the North Atlantic Ocean, their mission was to seek new land to claim as their own. The 21st day of April, the sun began to rise in a slow yawn, splashing a warm glow over the chilled ship.

Pedro, the navigator, peered out the spyglass to study the waves. Hoping for smooth seas for the remainder of their long voyage, the view returned one of choppy waters as far as his eyes could see. He sighed. "One day soon." Pedro reminded himself the crew would trade the scenery of miles of wavering ocean waters to discover green meadows of stable land. He glanced at the white flag with a single star stitched in the center. Fluttering in the wind, it was a sign and reminder of courage, victory, and unity of the crew.

Pedro jotted notes of the wind conditions, weather, speed, and coordinates in his navigation logbook. The goal was to sail south to the trade winds as the stars of the midnight sky would continue to guide The Great Adventure to its final destination.

Captain Brennery approached the deck. He gripped his feathery beard. "Lovely day, isn't it, Pedro?"

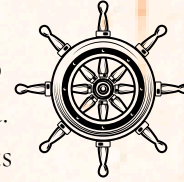
"Yes, sir." Pedro smiled as he finished writing his notes.

"John, direct the crew to let the sails catch the pockets of air in full force."

"Aye, captain." John, the first mate, bowed his head to carry out his orders.



Managing the helm, he repeated the orders like a parrot in a loud voice to the crew. With a strong tug of the lines, the sails whipped in the wind until they were tightly secured into place. The Great Adventure gained speed. The captain and the crew cheered as the ship accelerated on a course destined to live out their dreams in a new land.



That evening, the crew enjoyed a fine meal of salted beef and biscuits in the cabin. A skeleton crew of a few men on deck steered the ship to remain on course.

“Why don’t you play us a tune, Saul?” John suggested to the deckhand. “Very well.” Grabbing his bow and violin, Saul cleared his voice. Raising the violin to rest in his neck, Saul shifted the bow on top of the strings. He sang, “Haul on the Bowline” with determination. The other sailors joined in chorus. Swaying their bodies in harmony with the ship’s movement, they gently rocked back and forth. Drinks were passed around a wooden table to celebrate the voyage of a lifetime.



Captain Brennery joined Pedro. Carefully recapping the events of the day, he determined the best course of action based on his calculations. Pedro rolled his scroll, marking various coordinates and islands along the way.

“What is your estimate for our arrival, Pedro?” Captain Brennery hunched over the table, studying the map.

“Our best case is forty days. Our worst case, seventy days, sir. This depends on weather and wind conditions, of course.”

“Yes, of course. Good work, Pedro. Thank you.” Captain Brennery nodded, clutching his beard. He thought about the food and water supply, knowing they would need to use it wisely. One thing Captain Brennery learned in his life as a sailor was to hope for the best but prepare for the unexpected.

Saul waved his bow to strike up a new song. With the energy of the beat, a few men danced. The crew above could feel the vibration of sound from the cabin.

Managing the helm, Nigel steered the ship full speed ahead as The Great Adventure sailed into the darkness. Emilio and Alejandro trimmed the sails. The humidity started to climb. Charcoal-colored clouds filled the sky. A thick drop of water plopped down on Nigel's head. He raised his head. Not a single star above shone in the sky. Only one of the flag that began to twitch from the mounting wind. A flash of purple lightning pierced the water in the distance. Holding out the palm of his hand, another large raindrop fell.



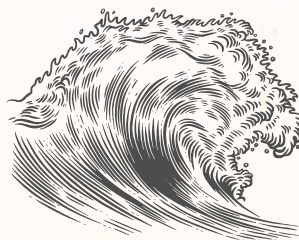
“Nigel, look ahead.” Emilio perched near the bow, trembling with fear. Nigel gripped the helm as tight as he could. The Great Adventure was headed straight into a terrible storm!

“Alejandro, alert Captain Brennery, now!” Nigel shouted as the wind gusts picked up speed, making it difficult to steer.

Below in the cabin, all was happy and well when suddenly there was a loud boom. Shaking the crew, Saul dropped the bow from the violin to listen. Alejandro ducked into the cabin to alert the crew.

“What was that?” Saul placed his violin to the side. The sounds of laughter and joy came to a screeching halt. Thunder rumbled, angering the ocean waters.

“Captain, we are headed directly into a storm!” Alejandro shouted. A jolt of thunder roared with force. The water that reeled pleasantly during the day returned with rage in the night. Rippling waves pummeled against and underneath the boards of the ship. John nearly fell off the stool as the waves grew intense.



“To the deck!” Captain Brennery exclaimed. John, followed by Pedro, who secured his belongings inside, climbed out of the cabin to gaze at a somber sight. The remainder of the crew darted to the deck. Staring into the dark sky hoping to find the North Star as their guide, were slivers of lightning bolts cutting through the sky. Thunder ricocheted from the dark waters. The winds shifted causing the ship to lean to one side, challenging its balance, as well as the crew. The rain fell from the sky in sheets while the spray of the ocean waves soaked the deck and the men. ■

“Nigel, keep her steady. Secure the lines!” Captain Brennery shouted as the winds lashed out. In the eye of the storm, the rain felt like stinging pellets spinning The Great Adventure out of control! The crates holding their food and supplies secured like an anchor to the floor, shifted with the violent rocking of the ship. Cups and plates flew around the cabin.

The mast holding the flag wobbled from the harsh winds. The main sail loosened its grip with the boom of the ship that followed. There was a loud snap. A jab of wind cracked one of the sails causing it to rattle like a snake.

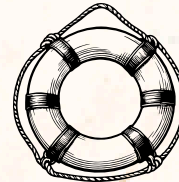
“Watch out,” Emilio shouted to Saul, but it was too late. The sail jutted across the deck, knocking Saul into the water. He screamed.

“Help! Help!”

“Man overboard!” Emilio exclaimed.

Saul yelled to the side. Swallowing the salty water, he started to choke. Trying to remain above water, the colossal waves made it tough to swim.

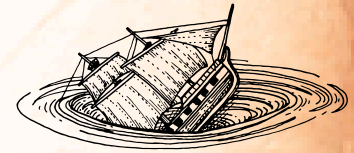
Captain Brennery threw the life preserver to Emilio. Saul was bobbing up and down in the water, trying to stay afloat as the massive waves thrashed against him. Tossing the ring into the water, Saul grabbed the life preserver with all his might. Emilio reeled him in grabbing a line on the deck.



“Are you okay?”

Saul continued to cough from the water in his throat but nodded his head.

“Flatten the main so we don’t tip over! We need to level the hull,” Captain Brennery shouted at the top of his lungs in a deep, hoarse voice. The Great Adventure was nearly on its side, about to sink! Tables, chairs, and cups tumbled in the cabin. The wind continued to howl as rain drenched The Great Adventure. The crew eased the sails to navigate through the storm.



“We are in the thick of the storm setting us off course due straight east, Captain.” Pedro reported as he followed his compass. He looked out of his spyglass.

“Pedro, we need to move away from the storm. John, prepare the crew to turn about. I will check on Saul.”

“Aye, sir. Men, prepare to turn about,” John hollered. Nigel guided the wheel.

“Turning about!” Nigel instructed the men to adjust the sails. “Turning about,” the crew repeated, carrying out the order.

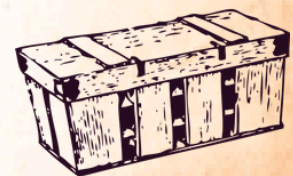
Saul was shaken but okay, offering a helping hand to direct the sails. Captain Brennery joined the crew as The Great Adventure temporarily rerouted its course.

As The Great Adventure sailed away from the storm, the winds died down. The rain nearly stopped with only a few sprinkles. The ship regained traction on the seas as the swell of the waves lessened. The hull carefully balanced the crew.

Soaked, cold, and exhausted from the storm, they caught their breath.

“We need to account for the damage to the ship. John, check the sails. I’ll check the supplies.”

“Yes, Captain.” The men scurried to multiple locations of The Great Adventure to report. The crates of food shifted but remained intact.



The long night of thrills transitioned to a calm and pleasant morning as if the storm had never taken place.

After careful observation, John noted the repairs to report to Captain Brennery. A crack in the mast and a slight tear of one of the main sails was the worst of the damage.

“Pedro, where are we?” Captain Brennery asked.

Pulling his spyglass, he scanned the seas to find a small piece of land they were drifting toward. Removing the map from his pocket, he unfolded it.

“Based on my coordinates, we are headed for the Verigos Islands.”

“Good. We can repair the ship.”

“We will never make it,” Emilio cried. With heads hung low, the crew felt a sense of defeat wash over them like the storm. Saul rummaged through the cabin. Surprisingly, his violin was not destroyed. Returning to the deck, Saul smiled followed by an enormous grin.

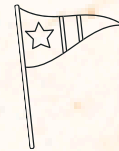
Captain Brennery stood with firm feet planted in the middle of The Great Adventure. “This setback was only a test of our strength. Look above. Our flag still stands, so must we! On the high seas, we make our own music, right Saul?” Saul played a few notes on the violin with glee.

“Aye, Captain.” The crew felt a newfound sense of hope.

As The Great Adventure landed in the Verigos Islands, they made rope from the tree branches. Emilio guided the rope to repair the mast to Alejandro. Working as a team, the crew made repairs to the main sail using the linen from their uniforms.

With an inspection from Captain Brennery, he declared with delight, “Men, we are ready to set sail once again!”

The crew cheered.



The Great Adventure continued its journey. Fifty days passed when Pedro peered out of his spyglass as he had done many times before, but something was different this time.

“We’ve arrived. I can see land. Look!” Pedro declared. Admiring the beautiful sight of rolling lush green hills with tiny flowers poking through, their dream had finally come true.

Scanning his logbook back to the beginning, he said, “One day soon is now. Today is *the day*. We finally made it!”

“We finally did. One as all and all as one.” Captain Brennery took off his captain’s hat, covering his heart. He saluted the flag that did not give up as a reminder to the crew that they should not either, no matter what obstacles come their way.

A celebration of a hard journey and the teamwork that made it happen, their dreams were only beginning.

The End.



Let's break down *The Great Adventure* story

Context

Story meaning & purpose

- Preparation is key.
- Trials come when we least expect them.
- Teamwork can lead the crew to victory and fulfill their dreams.
- Never give up.

Introduce the time and place

- Time: April 21, 1735
- Place: Aboard *The Great Adventure* Ship in the North Atlantic Ocean

Characters

Introduce main character(s), their roles, and important details that are relevant to the story.

- Albert (captain): Shows authority and leadership to his crew.
- John (first mate): Follows direct orders obediently from the captain to deliver to the crew.
- Pedro (navigator): Smart and quick to solve problems. Pedro is responsible for *The Great Adventure* to maintain its course.
- Nigel (helmsman): Prepares to direct the ship to safety.
- Saul (deckhand): Charming and fun, Saul is responsible for helping where needed.
- Emilio (crew member): Alert and attentive to inform Nigel of the storm and adjust the sails.
- Alejandro (crew member): Responsible for communicating to the crew about the storm.

Conflict

What do the characters need to solve?

- 1.) Rescue Saul.
- 2.) Bring the ship to safety.
- 3.) Repair the damaged mast and sail.
- 4.) Reroute their course to reach their final destination.

Climax

The major turning point of the story where the conflict reaches its resolution.

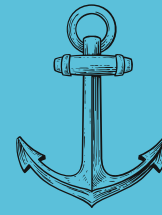
- 1.) A terrible storm brews.
- 2.) The Great Adventure Ship is headed directly in its path.
- 3.) The crew must battle the storm to save their lives, prevent the ship from sinking, and lead to safety.

Conclusion

How does the story end? What do you want the reader to know by the time they finish reading your story?

- 1.) Emilio rescues Saul.
- 2.) The Great Adventure diverts away from the storm to the Verigos Islands.
- 3.) The crew notes the damage of the ship and checks on their supplies.
- 4.) The captain brings morale back up.
- 5.) The crew repairs the ship to set sail.
- 6.) The Great Adventure reaches its destination with dedication, teamwork, time, and patience.

It's time to pull up the anchor and set sail. Let's write a story!



Story writing tips

- Brainstorm your story idea.
- Use the 5 C's of story creation (context, characters, conflict, climax, conclusion).
- Create what happens in the beginning, middle, and end of the story.
- Add details in sentences.
- Use adjectives (words that describe nouns) to add depth to your story. For example, courageous, short, bright, cheery). Use verbs (words that create action for nouns).
- Start with an exciting story opener.
- Build suspense to lead into the climax of the story.

Do not worry about mistakes; we all make them. There is a great storyteller in you, I just know it. Have fun!

Print out the next few pages to help you plan your story and then write it.

Story title: _____

Written by: _____

Context (story meaning & purpose):

Setting (time and place): _____

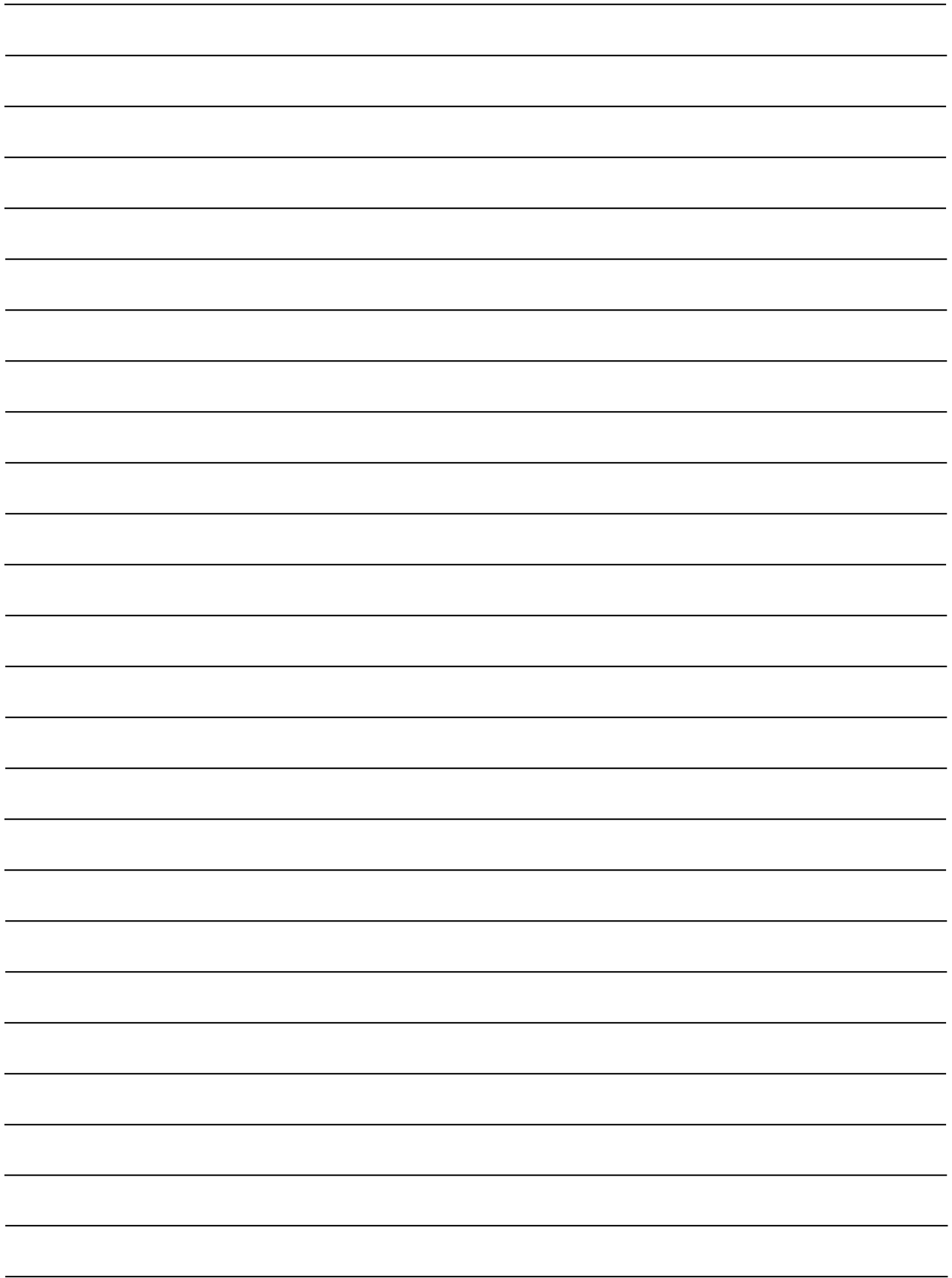
Characters Names:

Characters Roles:

Conflict (what do the characters need to solve?):

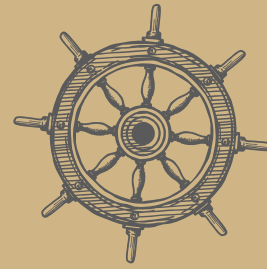
Climax (the major turning point of the story/action):

Conclusion (how does the story end?/what do you want the reader to know?):



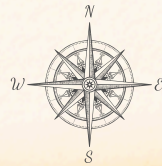
It's Storytelling time!

Congratulations on writing your story, author. Get ready to steer your story in the right direction. Below are some tips to tell a memorable story to your friends, family, teacher, or classmates.



How to tell a great story

- Organize your listeners in a circle.
- Start with an exciting and uplifting tone to tell your story. Use props if needed.
- Tell your story at an even pace. Try not to rush.
- During the exciting parts to build suspense, use an enthusiastic voice.
- Use your senses to help describe the story. For example, if the character is nervous, your hands and voice may be shaky to emphasize this feeling.
- For dialogue, create different tones/voices to demonstrate the interaction between the characters.
- Look at your listeners. Maintain eye contact as much as possible. The more alert your listeners are means you are holding their attention. Great job!

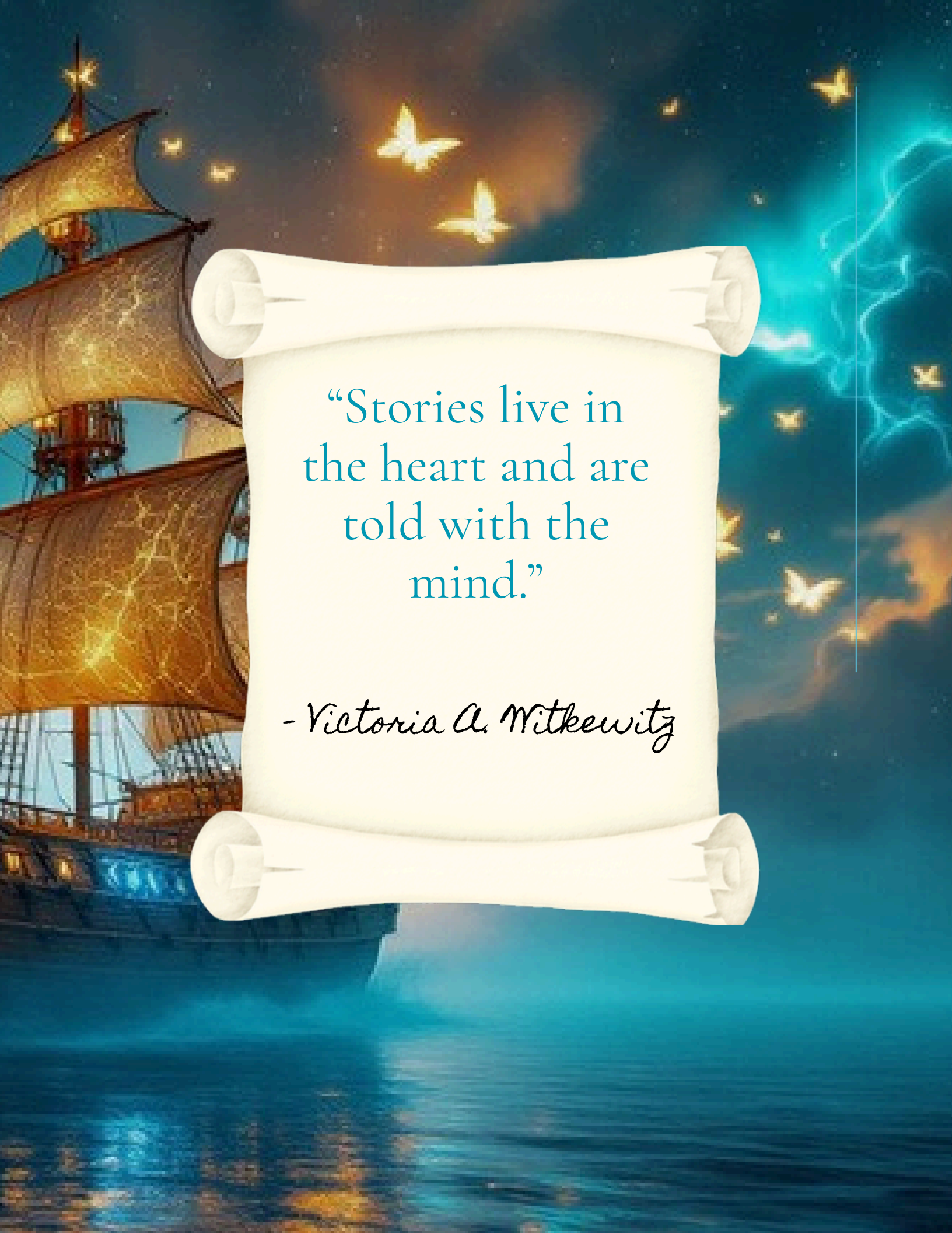


A close-up photograph of an open book. The pages are slightly curved, and a soft, golden light emanates from the center, creating a dreamlike atmosphere. The background is dark and textured, with some glowing spots that resemble stars or distant lights. The overall color palette is dominated by deep blues and greens, with the golden light providing a focal point.

Share your inspiration with us!

Where did your story take you?

Tag us at [@Redbicyclebooks](#) on Instagram.

A white scroll is centered on a dark blue night sky. The sky is filled with glowing yellow stars and several white birds in flight. On the left side, the masts and sails of a large wooden sailing ship are visible, illuminated from below. On the right side, bright blue lightning bolts are striking down. The scroll is unrolled, showing a quote in a teal serif font.

“Stories live in
the heart and are
told with the
mind.”

- Victoria A. Witkewitz

Come Journal With Me

Let's create something magical together



Come Journal With Me is designed for children and teens to unlock the magic of journal writing and reflect on for years to come.

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- How to build a lasting journal routine
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*Journaling helps us light the pathway
to harness our imagination.*

-Victoria A. Witkewitz



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