



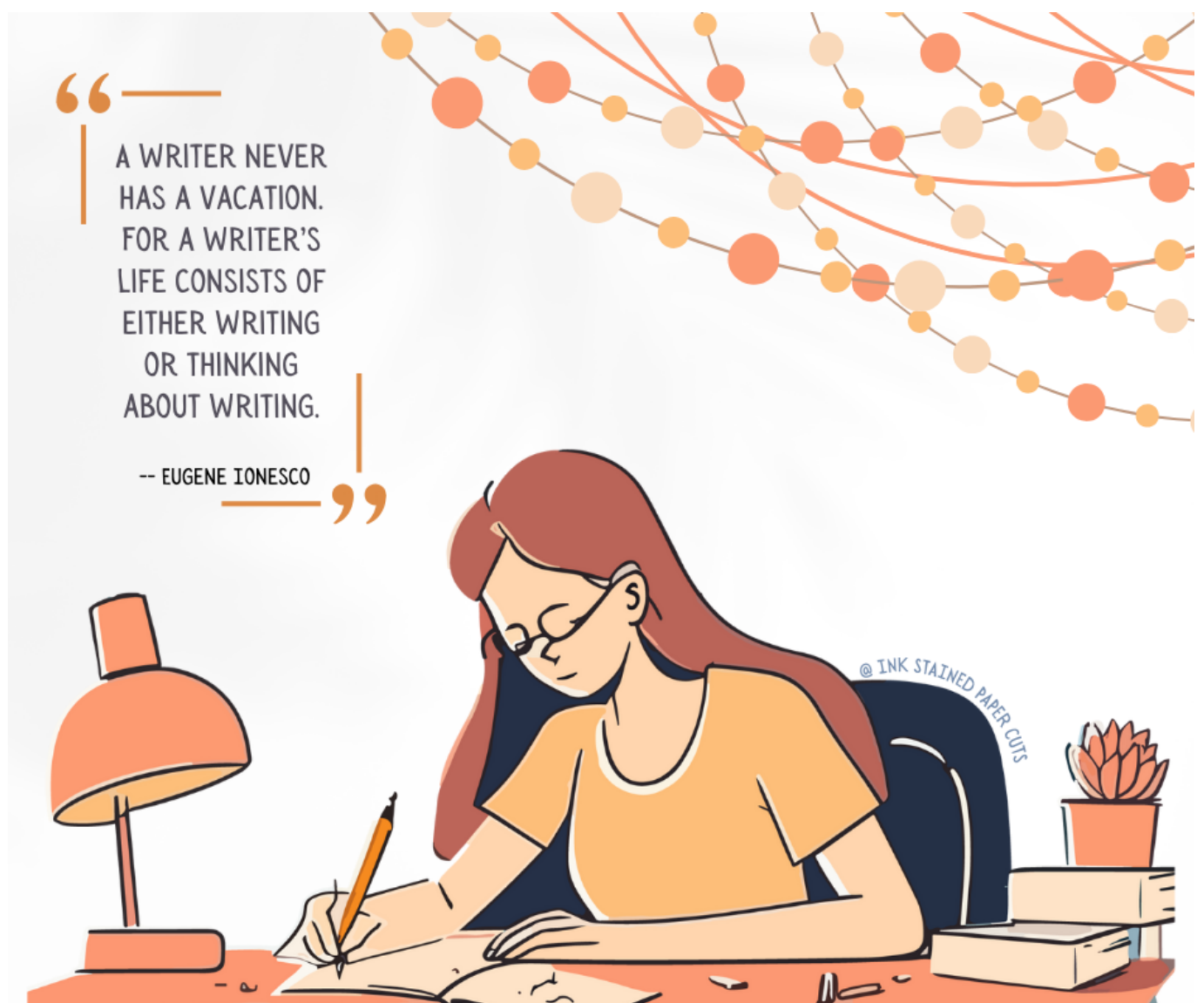
I'm not sure when I stumbled upon this quote, but it made me chuckle. I've shared in my local writing group, and perhaps here before, that I'm a member of a writing forum where you can critique each other's work. It's all based on a point system. You critique theirs, earn some points, and then share your work for others to critique.

You stipulate what you're looking for regarding feedback, so the critter can give you the best help possible for your needs. Over the years that I've posted there, I've gotten some interesting feedback.

The thing I heard most was, we want answers to the secrets. In chapter one? I think not. I

found it frustrating to be raked over the coals by readers who wanted more information. Then one day I took a different stance. As the author, I saw it as praise if what they desired was more story. After all, if they wanted all the secrets at once, and were happily reading each portion I posted and still demanding to know more answers to secrets, I must be doing something right.

Now, whenever I get feedback, that says, "Yeah, it's good, but you really need to tell us more..." I smile and say, "I'm glad you liked it."



Truer words have never been spoken. The more you write, the more your brain functions in

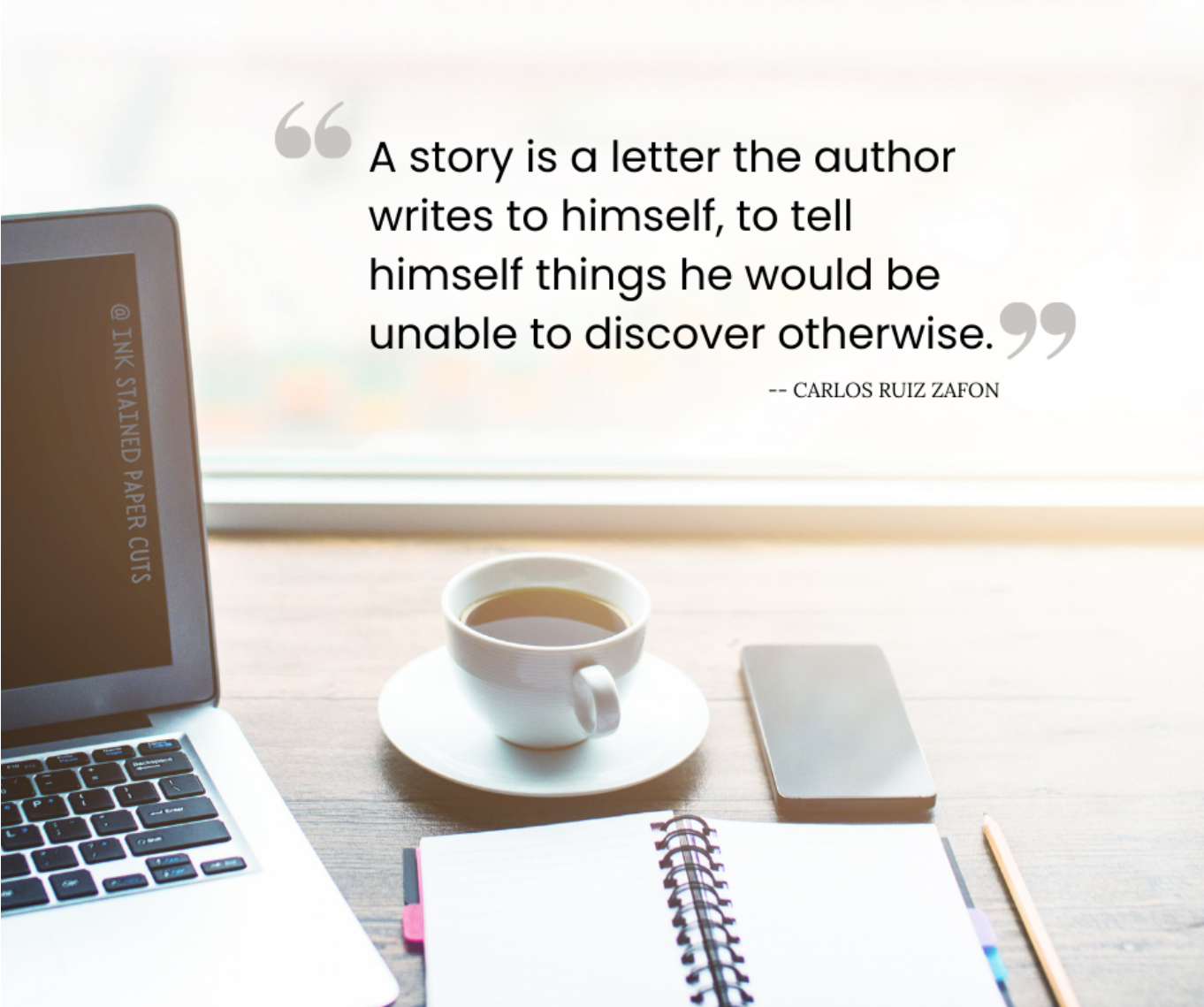
writer mode. You're always asking what-if? How could this be worse for my characters? The other day I was driving home from a writing meeting and the bank sign near the stoplight reminded us that Shred Day was coming soon. My youngest made a comment about it, wondering why on earth the bank was offering a day for gym fanatics.

While trying not to laugh, I explained what Shred Day meant. He determined it was dumb. After all, you could just shred the papers at home. What was stopping you? And those words set off a domino effect of ideas that could become a story. Much to my child's shock, I started spitting them out.

"Hey, what if when you went to shred your documents..." By the time we got home, an entire story was forming in my mind. I saw sinister people, innocent people, and they all wanted to be heard.

When the local police department posted on Facebook to remind us we could take our documents there for shredding, it put an entirely new twist on the story forming in my mind.

Will I ever write it? Some day, and the whole time, I will think of my child wondering why someone would go to the bank to get shredded.

A photograph of a desk setup. On the left is a laptop with "@ INK STAINED PAPER CUTS" on the lid. In the center is a white cup of coffee on a saucer. To the right is a smartphone. In the foreground is an open spiral notebook with a pink highlighter and a pencil. The background is a window with a view of a city.

“ A story is a letter the author writes to himself, to tell himself things he would be unable to discover otherwise. ”

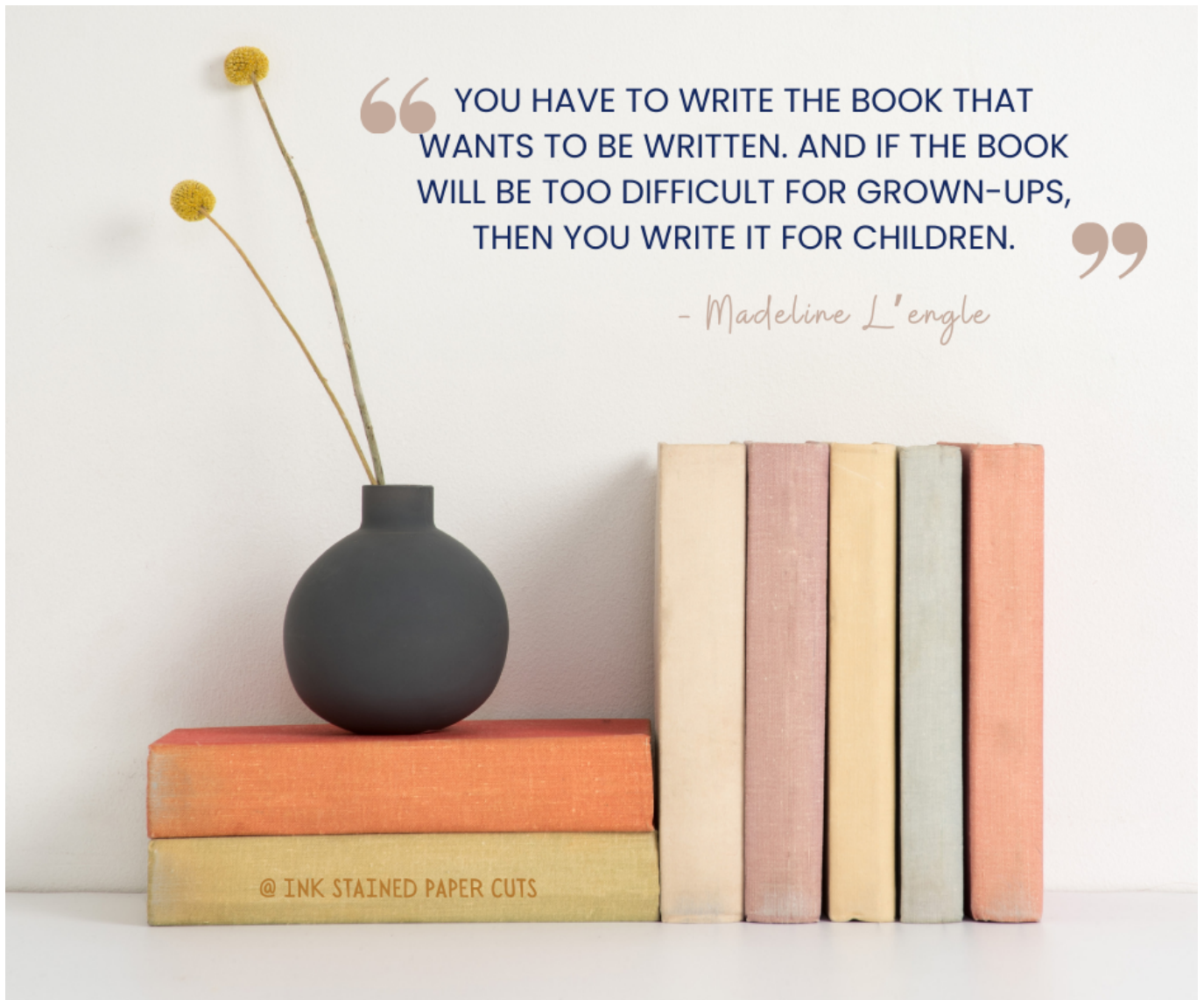
-- CARLOS RUIZ ZAFON

I don't put myself, or anyone I know, in the stories I write. Sure, I write about aspects of life, but not an exact retelling. Most times, I don't even realize I've done it until I'm in editing mode.

It's funny how when one is writing stories, things they are currently learning or enduring, find this strange way of weaving themselves into the story.

At a recent writing meet, someone mentioned that no matter how hard they try to avoid it, they feel like their stories always involve some of the personal traumas they've endured. It sparked an entire conversation in which everyone shared the same mindset.

That quip about writing what you know, it happens. Sometimes, the harder one resists it, the greater the need to write it becomes.



Writers say strange things that catch others off guard. I'm pretty convinced that the local baristas in the cafe where we meet are more than convinced we are insane. They've witnessed some pretty crazy things happening at our meetings. I even showed up in a viking helmet recently, which caused the on duty barista to burst into hysterics. Attempt to regain her composure, she said, "Wow, okay, so that's an interesting hat."

One thing you'll often hear us discussing is writing the story that is begging to be told. It's a

hard thing to explain, but there are stories out there begging to be written. Characters demanding to have their hardships and victories told. I have a few that keep knocking on the door, and I keep telling them they'll have to wait.

The crazy thing is, as adults, we reject information when we need to hear it. We fail to see things from a non-biased perspective. Whereas children take it all in, they weigh it up and keep what they need and discard the rest without a moment of hesitation. Sometimes, when the topic you need to write is too great and you know adults won't listen...



Despite the chaos and bickering, the hate, and the professed love. There is a silence no one

speaks about, and if you listen long enough, you notice it. The quiet thoughts sitting in the background that no one wants to bring up. Not because they don't feel them, but because it's easier not to talk about them.

One of my favorite things about writing is touching on these topics. Some stories begging to be told to cover hard topics and are thick with emotions. They sit in the closet waiting their turn, begging to be written, and reminding me every so often that I'm avoiding the hard topic, not because I can't write about them, but because I'm part of the silence, too.


Author's Note:

It's been a crazy week here, and I'm scrambling in the wee hours of the night to put the finishing touches on this post. I'm hopeful I've tended to all the right things, and if I haven't that at least the quotes will be enjoyable for you.

The Reluctant Author 