

**,” he said.**

By Laura Hayden\

“Oh dear,” she exclaimed.

“You’re looking for a list of substitutions for ‘said’?” she questioned.

“Do you really need this?” she inquired.

“After all, if you use too many dialogue tags,” she advised craftily, “you run the risk of the tags overwhelming the dialogue.”

“But—” he began.

“Hey, do you want my advice or not?” she interrupted.

“But,” he repeated.

“What!?!?” she screamed.

“I thought people get bored reading ‘said, said, said,’” he explained quietly.

“Not necessarily,” she admitted, calmly. “Rather than tagging your dialogue with verbs of speech, you can tag it with action.” She pointed to the computer screen. “See? I just did that with the ‘point at the computer screen’ line rather than say, ‘she said, pointing at the computer screen.’ It’s just as visual and better writing to boot.”

She smiled at him. “It’s better writing to balance simple verbs of speech, without a lot of ly-adverbs and action tags. I hope that helps.”

She hit ENTER and then typed, “LauraH.”

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