Inked VOICES Critique Cheat Sheet

I: Read the submission as a reader

- How did you feel while reading the piece?
- Did you empathize with the characters?
- What kind of reader would enjoy the work?
- Did you ever get lost, confused or lose interest? If so, where?

II: Read the submission as a writer

What is working well?
What needs additional work?

PLOT
- Does the main character have a clear problem or goal? Are the stakes high enough?
- Does the opening grab readers?
- Does the story begin in the right place?
- Are the right events included at the right level of detail and the right order?
- Is there enough conflict to make things interesting?
- Is there emotional conflict within the main character?
- Is the ending satisfying?

DIALOGUE
- Does the dialogue move the plot forward?
- Is the dialogue realistic and natural? Is it consistent with the character's personality?
- Do the dialogue tags get in the way?
- Is dialogue being used to data dump?

PACING
- Did the story move too fast, too slow or just right?
- Are any scenes unnecessary to move the story forward?

DESCRIPTION
- Do descriptions use the five senses?
- Are descriptions given through the lens of a character?

LANGUAGE
- Is the writing clear?
- Is the language creative?
- Is there variety in sentence structure?
- Are there clichés?

CHARACTERS
- Do the characters seem real?
- Do the characters change over the course of the story?
- Is each character important to the story?
- Do the characters have some complexity? Do they have both positive and negative traits?

POINT OF VIEW
- Does the story use the most effective point of view?

VOICE
- Is there a clear and consistent voice to the story?

ORIGINALITY
- Is the idea fresh or original?

SETTING (TIME AND PLACE)
- Did you feel like you were there?
- Are the characters, description and dialogue consistent with the setting?
- Did you lose interest with long descriptions of setting?

WATCH OUT FOR
- Telling (instead of showing)
- Wordy sections
- Too many adjectives or adverbs
- Spelling errors
- Grammar malfunctions
- Passive voice
- Mixed metaphors