

Dead Man's Party: 1178 words today, some nice tension, and just three chapters left

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I got my words this morning in three ten-minute runs – and I love what I got. I ran a smidge over my goal, but that's okay. This scene was a short, tight run through the third of four scenes that are occurring simultaneously in the novel as my characters go tearing toward the ending.

The world of *Dead Man's Party* is talking to me. I like it, at least the part of it that occurs later, as I understand the story that's been crawling out of my process.

I like it enough that after I do the revision, I'm going to revise and publish it and see how it does for me, and consider writing other books in the same world. I can already think of a number of other books in the world.

But post-apocalyptic cannibal/zombie/AI is a bit outside where I usually play. So we'll see whether the first one gets any interest before I fling myself yet again into "gee, I could write in this world forever."

For writers:

My revision of this novel is going to become the *Streamlined Revision Process* demo for my *How to Revise Your Novel* class, which is getting its long-overdue upgrade/update after I finish the first draft of *How to Write a Novel*.

Which is going to be soon now.

I'm kicking myself for not having used the process I came up with in *How to Write a Novel* to write other novels. I could

have had so much more fiction written, even though most of my time has been going toward class-building.

Regret gets you nowhere, though – so now I can just be grateful that I asked the right questions while I was building the class, and that I'll have finished the first drafts of two novels written simultaneously just a couple weeks apart.

And will have a LOT of fiction to revise in the next couple of months.

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The Wishbone Conspiracy: Accidentally finished the novel today

[By Holly Lisle](#)

This is awkward.

You have plans when you're writing a novel, you know what you're writing toward, you're moving along at your planned pace, doing your planned scenes, and you start writing a scene you know was coming and have been looking forward to writing...

And your MUSE shows you a character you have been writing about in emails, and writing toward in this book...

And the face you see is not the face you expected.

Oh, boy... not even a little bit.

You read what you just wrote, and you think... "What the hell? Where did that come from?"

And you can't even delete it, because it's RIGHT.

It isn't what you planned, but just as in life, fiction happens while you're making other plans.

When your plans weren't as good as reality, you just shut up and keep writing.

As for how this happens...?

The good, solid, gripping surprise that blindsides you, the writer, comes from your right brain asking questions you don't hear, playing around with edges and corners of your story and your story world that your conscious mind isn't considering, knowing things your Inner Editor doesn't...

And when your Right-Brain Muse commits this startling change, your Inner Editor reads it, and instead of slapping the Muse with well-deserved admonishment for wrecking a perfectly good plan, it just mutters, "Damn, I wish **I'd** thought of that."

And you end the first draft of your novel ten thousand words and about a week and a half early.

For me, ending short of my planned word count is not actually a problem.

I always run long in revision – always end up adding in scenes to create some foreshadowing for important bits (and today's little revelation is going to need some of that) and tying things together, because I want to make sure my characters don't drop, "Suddenly, TRAIN" on anyone's head.

I am, in other words, not the jerk my MUSE is – the one who just dropped "Suddenly, TRAIN" on mine.

So for at least one week, I'll let *The Wishbone Conspiracy* sit. Since I'm not on a hard deadline, I'll probably be better off if I let it sit for a month.

And then, when I've recovered from the shock of actually being done with the first draft, and have had a chance to let all the words get cold, I'll print it off and revise it.

As Fridays go? So far, this one is... remarkable.

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The Wishbone Conspiracy: 2014 words, and sneaking up on my ending

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Today I discovered something I did not know – that the layered conspiracy that pulled Cady and her allies into danger did so with way more initial planning than I'd realized.

That the horrifying crimes she uncovered and solved might have just been a convenient way for someone to get her in front of a much bigger and much older secret – something that has been legally murdering people for a couple hundred years.

There are two big questions I don't have answers for yet.

The first is: Why has it been brought to light now?

And the second is: EXACTLY why was it hidden in the first place?

I get a little shivery just thinking about the depth of deceit involved in this, and about what sort of terrifying secret might be tucked away at the back of it.

I'll get the answer to the first question by the end of this novel.

The second question?

That's bigger. A lot bigger. And the thing I think every time I look at it is... "When they find the answers, my folks had better be ready for the consequences."

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Marketing Tuesday: Cleaning and Revising Character Clinic for re-release

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I'm doing a third edition of Character Clinic – the second one had a bunch of dead links, I never did get a print version put together for it, my class website has changed domains, and a few other things.

So today I did bug-hunting, put together a new cover, (one that matches my better covers on my site), and am doing a nice Vellum version that I can put out as print and then publish wide to all my usual places.

Not done yet. But got a TON finished before I ran out of time.

Dead Man's Party: I lost a character I loved today

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I got my words today – 1112 of them, which was more than the 1075 I had to get.

And they absolutely flew. And mostly I loved what I got, and the part that I hated still was necessary and important to the story. It was good storytelling – and good storytelling beats being nice to your characters one hundred times out of a hundred.

Even though what I had to write broke my heart.

Had a character I'd known at the beginning would die at the end.

And then I had this absolutely great thing that happened that kept him from dying – and like the Energizer Bunny he kept going, and going, and I could see him at the end of the book, actually getting to live out the rest of a life.

But no. This morning while I was outlining, my Muse said, “So now, today, he has to die.”

And I was protesting, going, “Wait, no, no... I figured out how to save him.”

And Muse said, “No. *I* figure out how to save him, and I saved him because this thing he has to do today is what kills him.

And then the Muse showed me what he had to do today.

And my Muse (*that monster*) was right.

I have three or four SHORT chapters left to get to the end of this novel, and I'm so excited because I love the story, and I'm really looking forward to doing the revision.

But today the story broke my heart.

It did it for all the right reasons, and the guy who didn't make it was already a hero – which I knew – and he became a bigger hero.

But dammit.

You know what I mean?

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The Expanded Ko-Fi Rewards Poll

[By Holly Lisle](#)

This is the expanded non-binding vote for rewards you would like to receive for funding me on Ko-Fi.

Which TWO (2) rewards would you most like to receive for supporting my fiction on Ko-Fi? (Please select 2)

- Scenes from another character's POV (an example, since all the Cadence Drake stuff is from her POV, would be getting to see Herog's take on the same event)
- Monthly lottery drawing for one person who gets to pick a topic for a post, ask a question, or some other special reward.
- DRAWING to be included as a minor character in a book (generally one who gets killed off, as tradition dictates)
- EXCLUSIVE SUBSCRIBER OPTION: A live private hangout from time to time on Zoom for folks who support me at the monthly subscription level, with the chats becoming later-release open video access on YouTube.
- Downloadable flash fiction stories OR downloadable excerpts from novels in progress.
- DRAWING for full class access to my six-class "Create A" writing series (Character, Plot, Language, Culture, World... the sixth class, How to Write Page-Turning Scenes, is the one with the non-series title.)
- Unique, limited-availability T-shirts, imprinted notebooks, or other purchasable items just for supporters, with my quotes, cover art, etc.
- DRAWING for a signed first-edition print version of a novel
- A special monthly private blog post just for supporters. (Your choice of content from my list of what's possible if this option is chosen).
- A collaborative works-in-progress shared-image collage of things like "workspace" or "favorite

writing instrument”

- Early access to new classes (or new novels).
- Other suggestions

I acknowledge that I understand my IP address will be stored and cookies will be enabled when I submit my vote, and I give my consent.

[VoteResults](#)

Please vote. Add any comments below.

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Ko-Fi Rewards: I forgot to add some rewards I loved to the questionnaire

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I made the mistake of having multiple ways that folks could suggest great rewards for my Ko-Fi fiction-writing fund.

Listing sponsor in the ACKS is automatic – to the point that if you don’t WANT to be in the Acknowledgements, you’ll need to let me know.

But everything else I CAN do is under consideration, and among the many things I forgot to add were:

- Scenes from another character’s POV (an example, since all the Cadence Drake stuff is from her POV, would be

- getting to see Herog's take on the same event)
- DRAWING to be included as a minor character in a book (generally one who gets killed off, as tradition dictates)
 - DRAWING for a signed first-edition print version of a novel
 - DRAWING for full class access to my six-class "Create A" writing series (the sixth book, How to Write Page-Turning Scenes, is the one with the non-series title.)
 - A collaborative works-in-progress shared-image collage of things like "workspace" or "favorite writing instrument"
 - A graphic SUPPORTER pip to use on the forums

So I'm going to pull the very broken and incomplete current poll, and put up a new (STILL NON-BINDING) poll to help me winnow the many good ideas down to a workable number, or a rotation between a lot of equally popular possibilities.

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The Wishbone Conspiracy: 2094 words, and a bit of grimdark at the end

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Started rough, ended well.

That's been a theme lately. I love the words I got, but just getting started getting them was an uphill run blindfolded.

Once my guys started *Shooting To Thrill*, and came *Back in Black*, though, my fingers got moving and did not stop.

And at that point, I had the story twist on me in a couple of places and connect with my own childhood and personal experience at one point (look for the mention of Achilles tendons – I sliced my right one in two when I was seven, and pulled the details of the experience into a fight scene in this novel.

But this day's writing went dark. A murderer was exposed, and with him the details of the murders. And (very light but suggestive) details of what the killer was doing while his victims died.

I creaped myself out.

Just saying... The places were I have said the least, like the *Danya and the wolves* scene in *Diplomacy of Wolves* have been the ones where I have taken the worst beatings from readers. In every case, it's been because I have given no details, and have left my readers to fill them in from their own imaginations.

I suspect this is going to be another of THOSE scenes.

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The Wishbone Conspiracy: Going in Guitars Blazing

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Sometimes sweet acoustic won't do the trick. Sometimes silence won't do the trick.

And sometimes weirdly, not even Disturbed can shake the words loose.

So this morning its me and AC/DC, and ***Back in Black***.

Sometimes you just gotta go Old School. Sometimes the words need *Hell's Bells*, and *Shoot to Thrill*, and *You Shook Me All Night Long*.

And on that intro scream from *Hell's Bells*, I'm going in. As you can see, no words yet. But I'm heading in to rip them out by the throat.

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The Wishbone Conspiracy: Still in the exciting "first ending" bits

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Herog decided to be difficult this morning.

I had what he was going to do all nicely planned out, and then it didn't go the way I'd planned at all.

Cady is now in a bad situation that's about to get worse, Herog is in a dreadful situation that he might not be able to handle, the first part of the truth about the Wishbone Conspiracy has been revealed as a fraud and NOBODY wants to

believe their own eyes or their own senses, and while I know things that need to happen next, I have no clue right now how they're going to happen.

Things have the potential to get very messy and to throw some pain and heartbreak at people I like.

Tomorrow is going to be an interesting writing day. (Where the definition of "Interesting" is... *Oh, crap. How do I fix the mess I made?*)

Oh, yeah. And while it took me way to long to get them, I got **2054 words**. And I am very happy with them – at least, if tomorrow I can figure my way out of this mess.

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