

7-Day Crash-Revision Workshop

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Foreword

This workshop is by necessity LIMITED in scope. Give me a moment to explain its limits.

- **This course was originally designed to help writers who'd already sold their novels get through their editor's revision requests under deadline.** This process by its nature means the novel had already been revised once by the writer before it was ever seen by the editor. If this is why you're taking you're taking the workshop, you will get exactly what you need to become your editor's go-to writer when one of her other writers craps out on his deadline.
- If you have written a complete novel, (or several) but have never done a revision that has led to a sale, **How To Revise Your Novel: Get the Book You Want from the Wreck You Wrote is the course you actually need.** It is 22 weeks long, and covers everything.
- **If you have the same skill-set as the fiction writer above, but are writing nonfiction, this course will be mostly useful.** All the targeting, deadline processing, and goal-setting and pain will be the same for you as for the novelist. You'll have to worry more about errors of fact and issues of clarity, however, and less about story bugs and broken plots.
- **If you're using this to revise short fiction, you'll also find it useful, and if your stories are coherent and structurally sound to begin with, it will be sufficient for your needs.** You may, after the first revision or two you do using this method, find it overkill—rather like hunting bunnies with hand grenades.

Not much left of the rabbit. Oh...but your story will be just fine. YOU'LL feel like the bunny, though.\

- **This course was never intended to teach the revision process of a first draft novel manuscript**, and what you will learn here is a desperately abbreviated revision process that leaves out MOST of what a new writer (or first-time reviser) needs to know and be able to do to succeed.

HOWEVER...

- I already know that, because **7-Day Crash Revision** is much less expensive than my complete **How To Revise Your Novel** course, some folks are going to take this workshop to save money—and if this is the only revision course you take, it will be better than wandering around blindly, hoping that fixing commas and swapping out nouns for fancier nouns, and verbs for stronger verbs constitutes revision. (It doesn't, by the way. It's not even in the same universe. Commas and better words are the revision equivalent of trying to fix major trauma on an auto accident victim by giving him a nose job.)

So if you've never done a novel revision that has led to a successful sale, but you've decided to take this course in the hopes that you'll be able to do a first revision from it, let me give you the warnings now.

- I cannot make revision **easy**. It simply **ISN'T**. It's difficult for me, it's difficult for anyone determined to do it well. Revision is more difficult than writing a first draft, because to revise well, you have to see what mistakes you made...**then understand WHY you made them, and identify the actions you must take to fix them**. Revision is about ten times more difficult than writing a first draft, which is why so many writers do a NaNoWriMo novel, try to fix it, throw their hands in the air in despair, and the following year, *write another novel. Writing a novel is tough*. But compare the folks

you know who've written one to the number who, having written it, have successfully revised it. If revision were easy, everyone who wrote a novel would do it. *And most folks who write novels never revise them.* **But I can make the process easier, and I can make it step-by-step, and I can make it make sense.**

- **All first draft is crap.** I include my own work in this broad statement. Until you've written clear through the end of the book, you only have a rough idea of what your story is about, what your themes are, what subtext you've built in, where your conflicts are, and which parts of the story need to stay, and which need to go. **This course just skims the identification and repair of major first-draft wrecks.** So if you're revising first draft from this course, PLEASE realize that you're missing enormous chunks of the process you need to do an in-depth revision.
- **Don't think you're going to be able to do a complete first-time-through novel revision in seven days.** *I can't do one in that length of time.* It takes me—best case—several weeks to a month working at top speed to do MY revision, and this is when the book is pretty clean and close to what I'd hoped it would be—NOT WRECKED. And I've been doing this for more than a quarter century now, and I'm good at it. Give your revision time.

And a general, for-everyone caveat:

- I cannot guarantee that your book or short story will be publishable when you're done. If you follow my directions, it will be BETTER. But better may not mean "ready for prime time."

So what CAN I promise?

If you have already sold your work and have done a good, solid first revision, and you like what you have, you'll be able to competently turn around your editor's revision requests while

turning in a much-improved manuscript at a speed that will impress her, assuming she isn't requesting that you gut your book. I can't promise seven days, because you might have written a 200,000-word novel, and the longest book I've ever managed a seven-day revision on was right at 150,000 words—and you aren't me, so I don't know what your top potential speed is.

If you're willing to hire an editor for your self-published work, and the editor you hire is any good, and you use this as a guide for getting you through your editor's revision, you'll have a better story or book at the end of it. Yes, I know that's a lot of ifs. I can't guarantee your editor will know how to spot genuine structural problems: areas where you have unnecessary characters, plot holes, story-wrecking contradictions, or other major issues that show up in first draft. I can't guarantee that you'll build your target carefully, either.

If you're on a shoestring budget, and this is the only editing help you can afford until you sell something and start getting paid for it, this will teach you how to hit revision high points and bare-minimum basics. If you've never revised a novel successfully before (successfully means it sold to a publisher, or directly to at least a hundred readers) ignore the seven-day schedule. Go through it as carefully as you can, and take as much time as you need.

When you get frustrated (and no matter what level you're writing at right now, you will get frustrated) just remember: Revising is ten times harder than writing first draft. Put another way, doing one good novel revision is as difficult as writing ten first-draft novels.

But...

You. Can. Do. This.

(continued in the class)

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