

Another of those utterly non-intuitive math segments

By Holly Lisle

or .. The Novel as Long Goddamned Sonnet

Figured the number of words I have currently (roughly 33,000), and the number of words that remain (67,000), and counted the number of scenes in the existing portion of the manuscript (21). Multiplied the number of scenes by the total words in the book and divided the result by the existing word count to get the total number of scenes needed in the entire book (63). Divided the current number of words by the current number of scenes to get an average scene length (1600 words per scene) [Some are much longer, some are much shorter. That's just the average]. Subtracted existing scenes from total scenes in completed book to get number of scenes remaining to write. (42)

Decided that I wanted the ratio of **hero:heroine:killer** scenes to be **5:5:3** (this is sort of arbitrary, but fits the rhythm of the book). Added the ratio numbers, 5+5+3 to get 13, divided 13 into 42 to get 3 with a remainder of three. Made three columns, and split the scenes like this:

Hero	Heroine	Villain
3	3	3
3	3	3
3	3	3
3	3	1 (1/3rd remainder)
3	3	—
1 (1/3rd remainder)	1 (1/3rd remainder)	10 scenes
—	—	
16 scenes	16 scenes	

Of the 32 scenes that will feature either the hero or the heroine, I want 60% of them to be together. That's 19. 13 scenes will be apart.

Of the thirteen apart:

- 2 – scenes with Phoebe and ghost
- 2 – scenes with Alan and ghost
- 2 – scenes with Alan and killer
- 3 – scenes with Phoebe and killer
- 2 – Alan's writing
- 2 – Phoebe psychic/tarot

Not going to give clues on what the ratio of sex to danger will be in the together scenes.

But having that all figured out, the re-plotting of the rest of the book is going very nicely.

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