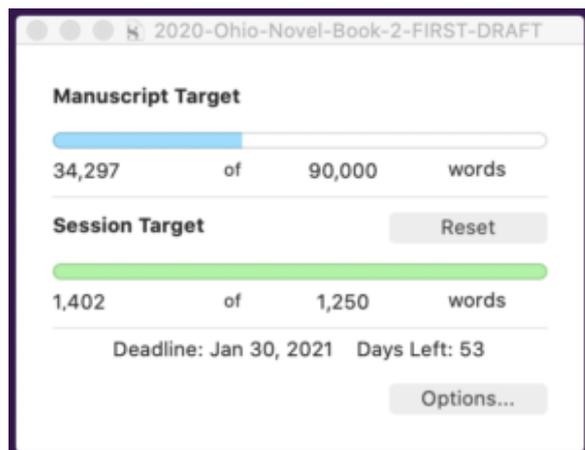


Restarting Fiction Progress Updates

written by Holly Lisle

December 8, 2020

By Holly Lisle



Ohio Novel Word Daily Words:
1402 of 1250

To say that I've been absolutely shitty about keeping up with the blog would be too kind by half.

I've been in Ohio now for a year and three months, more or less, and have written six posts since getting here.

One of them was about my fiction progress.

There have been some things that have gotten in the way, like Covid, and trying to revise *Dead Man's Party* only to discover it wasn't a book I wanted to have written, and working on the Ohio Novels, and the stress and depression that apparently has hit a lot of other folks besides me with Covid and lockdowns and a world that doesn't feel particularly warm or welcoming right at the moment.

Doing a regular podcast also pulled from my pool of "time that isn't writing fiction."

But the thing is, I have been making very good progress on my fiction, and I suddenly realized that going back to posting that would let me share a bit of how this is going.

Because in spite of all the shit in the world right now and how it has affected everything else in my life, the Ohio Novels are coming along nicely.

Book One is done in revision, and is awaiting its final editor pass (from Matt) and me doing the typesetting, and then the bug-hunt. NONE of which will happen until the first five novels are complete and I have my small team of bug-hunter volunteers.

I'm currently doing a minimum of 1250 words per day on Book 2, Monday through Friday.

I'll post as regularly as I can. Fiction words come before blogging. Things like technical issues over at HollysWritingClasses.com come before blogging.

But coming only after the sanctity of fiction and the necessity of keeping technical stuff working with the nonfiction, I'm going to *shoot for* SHORT daily posts on the fiction, and will consider this a success if I *accomplish* a minimum of two or three posts a week.

I'll include my little Scrivener screenshot of where I am at the end of each writing day for remaining four novels, along with a bit of "what's going on in the writing or my life", and occasional links to my temporary UrbanFantasyGirl.com site for readers who like that sort of thing and who think they might like these Ohio novels.

The Ohio Novels are going to be under a pseudonym well separate from the OTHER pseudonyms I'll be moving to.

I am finally biting the bullet on the whole issue of using pseudonyms, which I've resisted for thirty years.

I am a broad writer, with a big backlist of fiction in many genres and an equally big backlist of nonfiction (though most of that is exclusively on my writing site, HollysWritingClasses.com), and I was the idiot who believed from the beginning that all my books should be under my real name.

Turns out, that's an awesome way to guarantee you're going to bring folks who love **just one** of your genres to a shit ton of stuff they're guaranteed to hate.

Most of my pseudonyms are going to be public.

- My SF is going to be under **HD Lisle**.
- My high fantasy is going to be under **Holly Lisle**.
- My nonfiction is going to be under **Holly D. Lisle**.

These books and classes are all already out there, I have already wrecked their find-your-perfect-audience hopes and killed their Amazon also-reads, and while some day I may successfully clean up that mess, these books can't be my priority. Hoping to get them to sell better is going to be like towing big icebergs with rowboats.

I'm going to have to re-cover, re-blurb, re-link, re-promote, and bring in the new pen names WHILE writing fiction full-time AND taking notes for the update of my **How to Revise Your Novel** class, and none of this stuff is going to happen overnight. It's a process.

My urban fantasy Ohio Novels, however, are NOT going to be under a public pseudonym for the initial book launches. (There's nothing I can do to keep folks from outing my pseudonym eventually, but at least I can give the Ohio stuff a chance to build an audience that doesn't also bombard them with everything else I've ever written that they would hate.)

I'm going to give them the best chance of finding their perfect audience that I can manage.

BUT anyway...

You can see by today's screenshot exactly how far along I am in Ohio #2, and what I've done so far today. It's not mammoth progress, but done consistently, it does add up.

And that's where I am right now. Stressed like everyone else, doing five days a week of manageable word counts on the second of five books, having the occasional day where the words actually fly...

And now once again taking my fiction-writing process public in small and manageable ways. And, I hope, reconnecting with some old friends who used to hang out here with me.

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The How to Write a Novel Lesson Sampler – Part Two

written by Holly Lisle

December 8, 2020

By Holly Lisle

So as promised, here's the second Lesson Sampler from my in-progress *How to Write a Novel* class.

I'll note that:

- **Registration for the class closes tomorrow night at 11:59 PM Eastern Time**, and that...
- This is the only time *How to Write a Novel* will be

available for the Early-Bird price. When registration reopens sometime next year, the price will go up significantly.

Necessary info out of the way, though, here's your download.

I hope you find this helpful with your own novel writing.

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The How to Write a Novel Lesson Sampler – Part One

written by Holly Lisle

December 8, 2020

By Holly Lisle

Sometimes it's tough to explain what a class is, how it works, why it isn't like every other class out there.

Sometimes (well, most times) it's a lot easier to SHOW...

So in this **PART 1** demo of my *How to Write a Novel* class, I've taken the first 7 to 9 pages of each of the first seven lessons, exactly as they are in the live class.

This includes typos – and I need to mention that because I'm currently writing this class one lesson ahead of the first group of students, at a pace of one lesson per week, and I

don't at the moment have time to go back and fix typos.

All the students in my classes get all in-version updates of their classes at no extra charge – and the folks in first get a better price, because they know there are going to be splinters – typos, places where I could have done better showing them how to do something.

Once I finish the whole class in this version, I'll go back through it with a group of students who will help me find all the bugs, and I'll fix it. And when that's done, it'll will become the finished version, at the finished-course price.

Because PDFs hang around forever, you may receive this PDF after that process is complete.

But perhaps not. In either case, I apologize for the typos, the little grammar misses, and the other errors that come with publishing raw first draft.

I hope you find the content helpful in showing you part of what you'll need to know to write novels well.

Holly Lisle's *How to Write a Novel*

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Completed revision of The Owner's Tale today – Next big

step to getting back to Moon & Sun

written by Holly Lisle

December 8, 2020

By Holly Lisle

This is the first revision I've ever done that didn't even require the fixing of a typo on the first twenty-four pages, and had only the addition of a hyphen on page twenty-five.

This is the lightest revision of a first draft I have ever done.

And it's making me a little crazy that I don't know why.

I love the way this story came out. Made myself cry twice reading the print-out at things I wrote when I was so deep into the story I don't remember writing them, and that took me by surprise.

This is the ending that I wanted for the entire **Longview** series, and from my perspective, I got it in the first draft, with some very minor revisions, not a single added scene, not a single added page.

This is writing in a whole different place for me, and I don't know if it's because I've been writing to find this ending for so long – for years – or because I've made some sort of breakthrough in my writing...

... Or because I've lost my objectivity toward my work. That last one will get tested after I get my type-in finished and put this story in front of Matt.

But type-in will be fast. Will probably be done in a couple hours tomorrow, and that's just with me being extra finicky and paranoid because I've NEVER had a first draft that looked

this clean when I was done with it.

I am my own toughest critic. I am deeply suspicious first-draft pages that pass through my brutal revision process without coming out the other end battle-scarred by massive changes.

Still – it DID come through, and as far as I can tell, I was being as brutal as usual.

So what comes next?

Short-term, when I get Matt's edit back:

- I'll do my editor's revision.
- I'll request bug-hunters and will do the typesetting from the bugs they find.
- Will put the story on sale in single episode version.
- And will then go through and put together the six-story bundle, because *The Owner's Tale* ends the **Longview** series.

I figure that along with writing lessons for **How to Write a Novel**, writing the parts of my Demo Novel (*Dead Man's Party*), and doing the *Alone in a Room with Invisible People* podcast, that will keep me pretty busy through Christmas.

Once I have the complete **Longview** series available, however, my next step is to reread the first two novels in the **Moon & Sun** series and get the series voice back in my head, and find the various toys I left on the floor in the first two books. Pick those up, figure out how I want to use them in the final book in the series.

By New Year's day, 2019, I want to be in a position to start writing *The Emerald Sun*. I'll be plotting that out concurrently with writing the first draft of *Dead Man's Party*.

And then might find myself writing two novels simultaneously

for a couple months. Not optimal, but not the first time I've done this, either.

I would like to finish *The Emerald Sun* and the **Moon & Sun** series next year – writing, revision, editing, and publication. And get all three books back into print with new covers. Folks have waited way to long to find out how that story ends. As have I.

It's time to get back to the kids, the cat, and the mystery of the Moonroads, and what went wrong, and how to make it right.

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Upcoming Class: How to Write a Novel: What's in the Lessons?

written by Holly Lisle

December 8, 2020

By Holly Lisle

I'm going to do a live YouTube chat on Thursday, September 6 at 1:30 PM ET, and will be sending out a reminder email for folks who want to come. I'll be answering questions about the upcoming class during the chat, and making sure I've covered everything folks need to know.

So you'll know what I'm planning on covering, you can download the PDF I put together about how I'm currently planning to present the class. My planned lessons are subject to possible additions if folks ask questions that I don't have covered AND

that are essential to helping you get your novel written.

Download your PDF of the current Class Lesson Outline

If you have questions about writing a novel and DON'T see the answer to your question, come to the chat on Thursday and ask there. This is a **provisional** lesson. I'm not removing any lessons, but I am open to adding a few more if the questions hit something you need to know about novel writing that no one else asked.

- **Important:** This class will cover novel writing.
- **It will NOT cover** revision, marketing, or publishing, which are enormous subjects on their own.

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Debugging Plot: Episode 3 of Alone in a Room with Invisible People

written by Holly Lisle
December 8, 2020
By Holly Lisle

So here's the gig on Debugging a Plot

In *Alone in a Room with Invisible People* my newer-writer daughter and I – a long-time published writer – talk about writing, revising and publishing fiction.

In this episode, we're talking about how plots go wrong while

you're writing them – and some things you can do to fix them.

We discuss:

- How an antagonist is not always a villain
- Limitations and why they're important
- How to start debugging
- Why Reading like a Reader is important for a Writer
- Why it's bad when you get caught up in 'Writer over Reader'
- Why not to write to trends

Share, rate and subscribe for weekly episodes!

iTunes | Stitcher | Podbean

Mentioned in the Podcast

- Armor-ella
- Armageddon
- Sixth Sense
- Lost in Space Reboot
- How To Write a Series

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Holly's Personal Page: <https://www.hollylisle.com/>

Holly's Blog: <https://hollylisle.com/weblog/>

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Rebecca's Writing Blog:
<https://rebeccagalardowords.wordpress.com/>

Credits:

Producer – Rebecca Galardo. Sponsor – Holly'sWritingClasses.com. Intro written by Holly Lisle and performed by Mark Hermann.

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Announcing the Public Release of How to Write Short Stories

written by Holly Lisle

December 8, 2020

By Holly Lisle

I did a private Members' Only release of my new class, *How to Write Short Stories*, last week so that we could test software and make sure everything was working correctly.

I'm now delighted to announce that the early sale was nearly bug-free... and we have squashed the few bugs that did get through.

Right now, you can still get the class for the EarlyBird price of **\$67** – It'll go up to **\$97** when I have the first four lessons finished, *but folks who buy while I'm building the first half of the class* save \$30 and just better than 30% off the final price.

What's in the class?

Eight weeks of comprehensive step by step lessons with

worksheets, forum discussion, questions and answers, and of course permanent membership. Buy once, get all the updates and any in-version upgrades for free, retake the class as often as you like.

Here are the eight lessons:

- **How to Think Short:** Painless Short Story Idea Creation
- **How to Plan Short:** Fun, Simple Short Story Design
- **How to Write Short:** Get the Story You Want at the Length You Need
- **How to End Short:** Landing Twist, Resolution & Meaning
- **Contests, Anthologies, Collections, Magazines:** Writing To Theme, Length, and Deadline
- **Writing Story Time in Short Works:** Five Seconds or Five Hundred Years in 6000 Words
- **Spin Off, Spin Into:** Creating Good Short Fiction to Market Your Long Fiction
- **Genre Short Stories:** Hitting Fundamental Notes or Defining YOUR Genre

Why the Discount on a Brand New Class?

I don't have a fancy sales page yet. Right now, I have the basic curriculum outline and the questions folks asked me that I'm answering in the the lessons.

The pretty sales page doesn't come *until the class is finished* (in other words, after I've finished writing all the lessons).

There's a REASON folks get a discount on the first, AKA SPLINTERS version of the class.

I'm writing the lessons at a rate of one every one to two weeks, and I do not go back to revise, so what you get tends to be...

Raw.

BUT... you get to let me know what you don't understand. I answer questions in class, and revise the lessons after the course is done to meet the needs of the students who had problems with the first draft.

You get a discount, I get funding and beta testing while I build the class ... and then you get the final version at no extra charge.

I raise the price when I've finished Lesson 4, and I'm done with Lesson 2, and working on Lesson 3 today.

I'm not going to flog this early-in discount with a bunch of posts and emails and showers of confetti.

If you're interested, now is the best time to get the class. I don't put my classes on sale, and depending on the scope and scale of the revision I need to do to move a class from the *Splinters Version* to the *Finished (For Now) Version*, I sometimes raise prices beyond what I thought would be the final price. In this case, I think the final price is going to be \$97 but if I end up going over eight lessons, that changes.

I try not to do that, but extensive upgrades and a lot of added content both make it necessary and raise value. When that happens, I raise price accordingly.



If you're interested, you can see my ugly page and get the discounted version now here.

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PDF and Print Page Options are back

written by Holly Lisle

December 8, 2020

By Holly Lisle

This took a bit of time and effort (and deleting one really annoying plugin that required an email address before you could get your PDF), and replacing the annoying plugin with a sort of pricy but really nice new one.

But at the bottom of every article and post on the site now, you'll find both a "Download as PDF" button and a "Print page" button that – and this is really important – just print the article, NOT the headers, footers, sidebars, and so on.

So you won't waste a lot of toner printing information off, and you won't get a massively bloated PDF.

I'm pretty happy with this (and it allowed me to play hooky from the goddamned taxes for about two hours to take care of this particular help desk issue).

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Longview 4: Gunslinger Moon

written by Holly Lisle

December 8, 2020

By Holly Lisle

CHAPTER ONE

Shay

Shay closed her eyes and rubbed her temples.

She'd been in her office for hours, a "Do Not Disturb" sign on her door, looking for any single tiny piece of new information that might let her believe hope still existed. That her stupidity had not destroyed Settled Space's last best chance for freedom.

Bashtyk Nokyd, the philosopher she'd risked her life to rescue from a Pact Worlds Alliance death contract, whom she had secured in the Longview, and whom she could have gotten to the City of Furies if she hadn't been stupid enough to let him go to dinner with the owners of Bailey's Irish Space Station, was dead because of her.

Her hero. The man who'd been responsible for her own freedom, the man who had written Simple Rights: The Individual As Universal Core, was dead, and she might as well have killed him herself.

She pushed the replay button again and once again saw him sitting across the table from her. He had his tablet in hand.

"I have it," he said, drawing, and she could hear his excitement in those few words. His surprise. "The process for freeing the Pact Worlds' captive people." His hand moved steadily, drawing boxes, writing words.

She watched herself say, "You do?" At her desk, her whole body stiffened. Even after seeing the replay so many times, she could not stop the reflex to tense, to get ready to stop the thing she could not stop.

His voice was deep, certain, but still tinged with the elation of discovery. "I can't give them freedom. No one can. The only free people are those who recognize their right to be free, claim it, and then fight to protect that freedom."

Wils Bailey, the owner of Bailey's Irish Space Station, said, "We see that here. Like everywhere else, we're getting refugees who are escaping from Pact Worlds. Some understand that to be here, they have to pay their way. Some..." He shook his head. "They ask where they can sign up for benefits, and where the free rooming houses are, and how to get the free food..."

Shay spotted an expression on the face of Wils' teenage daughter, and wished she had been paying attention to the girl, not to Nokyd. She hadn't noticed it at the time. She'd been too intent on watching Bashtyk Nokyd drawing on his tablet.

The girl stood up and said, "I'll be right back."

Her father smiled, giving her a half-second glance, returning his attention to his guest without any recognition that something was wrong. "We're a space station," he said. "What we can't make or grow here on our own, we have to go out to get or pay to have brought in. We don't have the resource buffer that planets have, with food growing wild that you just find lying around on the ground, or shoot as it walks past."

Nokyd didn't look up. He was busy diagramming. His hand stopped moving for a moment, long enough for him to study what he'd drawn, and he said, "Most worlds – being terraformed – don't have easy food or other resources either. But I get your meaning. You're dealing with government slaves. Religion

slaves. They're different from body slaves – men and women owned by individual masters. Body slaves know that if they don't work, they don't eat. If they resist, they don't eat. If they fight, they'll be chained to a stake without shelter. Their actions all connect – so when they get free, their minds still work.

“Government slaves and religion slaves are different. Their minds have been intentionally broken. They have been taught from birth that work and food are unrelated. That no matter what they do, they will still eat, still have a place to sleep, still have someone to take care of them, because government or God will provide. At the same time, they are taught that their time, their thought, and their work have no value to them. That they must give it away for free, for the benefit of others. That anything they do for themselves is of no use, of no importance. That anything they want for themselves is evil or selfish – even their own lives. Even their own thoughts.”

He went back to drawing, and said, “I cannot say the fix for this will be simple, and there will always be people who will choose to be slaves rather than work to be free.”

“Here's where we start,” he said, and pointed to his diagram.

And the girl placed her hands on either side of his head. His head imploded before Shay could pause the holo. She closed her eyes, blinked back tears.

Took a deep breath and straightened her spine.

The diagram was in front of her.

The solution to giving lasting freedom to the people of Settled Space.

She stared at the place on the tablet where his finger rested, to what he'd designated as the starting point.

B or F Principle.

In the week following his death, she'd immersed herself in his work, had brain-imprinted everything he'd published over his long life, as well as every lecture he'd ever given. She'd force-fed seven million written words and almost a thousand hours of holo and audio via high compression into her consciousness.

And there simply was no B or F Principle in any of his work.

There was no *B or F Principle* anywhere in any philosophy. As for the rest of the diagram...

Better Horse or Bigger Gun → NO net! → moon & sun dilemma → Shoot on Sight → "Happy Madame"

HARD Restart?

There was nothing. Nothing that made sense, nothing that connected to any philosophical theory... just nothing. And with the threat of attack by PWA-hired pirate fleets running through the dark channels of space, with rumors of forces being built to come against both the Longview and Bailey's Station, she could not afford to throw herself against this wall any longer.

She closed her eyes, rested weary head in hand, and the image of a Medix floated like sweet temptation through her mind.

Reju would feel wonderful...

But that wasn't what the image meant, was it? This was her brain trying to tell her something important. And what she saw hadn't been a regular Medix. It had been one of the modified

Sleeper cells.

Right.

Sleepers who had applied to become crew would have already

been tested, would have already received basic crew training, and would have personality profiles on hand.

None of them were doing anything at the moment. They were still in sleep because the Longview was docked at Bailey's, and because its Death Circus charter had been cancelled when the Pact Worlds Alliance put a bounty on the ship. Shay didn't see the ship going anywhere for a while.

The most promising of the Sleepers would have been brought up as crew by Melie once she could be announced as captain.

But in the meantime, they were in the Sleeper cells.

Shay could dig through their files, find the potential crew best at lateral thinking, puzzle-solving, and logic-leaping.

The owner would need to present them with the situation and impress them with the importance of the task to him.

Once that was done, though, they could dig through Bashtyk Nokyd's sealed quarters. Perhaps they could find something she'd missed.

CHAPTER TWO

Jex

We sit at a long table, four of us, staring up at a man covered head to toe in what I've learned is an armored deep-space worksuit. His face is hard to see through the shaded moleibond helmet shield, his voice is deep and rasping. He has identified himself to us as Mado Werix Keyr, the owner of this ship.

"Each of you is being drafted as provisional crew. If you provide something from your first objective that proves your resourcefulness and attention to detail, your ability to think creatively, or a provable solution or partial solution to the

task I'm giving you, you will receive a permanent universal identity and a crew slot on the Longview."

The speaker stares at the four of us – and the shield does not hide the fact that he is... terrible.

Terrifying.

I'm taller than he is, broader of shoulder, hardened by a brutal past – but the gleam of his eyes through the shield plate sends ice down my spine.

I've been brought out of storage to find something that probably doesn't exist, and three other men have been brought out with me.

His voice, muffled by the suit's breathing apparatus, is clear enough to get the danger in our situation across.

"The man who drew this diagram was getting ready to tell a small audience of listeners the process he'd figured out for changing Settled Space to Free Space – for setting up a system of laws, perhaps, or something else that would make the conditions that permit slavery impossible. Before he could explain each of the items on the diagram he drew, he was murdered by a third party, not present in the room, controlling a child who was.

"Everyone present at that meeting submitted to memory scans, and we now know that nothing in what Bashtyk Nokyd said before his death provides clues to what any of this means."

"Others on this ship well-suited to the task are searching for his killer. Meanwhile, the Pact Worlds Alliance has hired an armada of pirates to exterminate everyone on this ship, as well as everyone on the station to which we're docked. And because of treachery and enormous loss of life, the crew of this ship is short-handed. We can spare no active crew to do what must be done in these quarters. Which is why the four of

you receive this chance.”

He pauses, leans against the table that separates us from him, and breathes heavily. He is looking at each of us in turn, and when his gaze meets mine, I feel myself shrinking, falling into darkness, losing my grasp on who I am.

When he looks to the next man, my mind clears. But I feel shaky and sick. Whatever is wrong with the man across the table from us is beyond the scope of my experience, and it is ugly.

Horrifying. Deadly.

“You four have proven yourselves trustworthy while in hibernation. You have each passed the honor test, reading and crew tests, and various problem-solving tests that make you ideal for the task you’ve been given. In these quarters you are bound to conduct yourselves by ship rules, and maintain ship discipline. If the answer to the problem before us can be found, the four of you will find it.

“Anything in these quarters might offer a key to the solution we seek. Ignore nothing. Assume nothing. No piece of information is too small. If it relates to this, nothing is insignificant.

“When you find something that applies to the words on the diagram I’ll give you, press your button on your wrist-com.” He points, and I look down to see that a band has been attached to my wrist just under the sleeve of the shipsuit I wear. The band is smaller than the diameter of my hand. It will not come off, will not be possible to lose.

I nod my understanding.

“When you press your com button, you will reach either me or my representative. One of us will come when you call.

And he hands each of us a tablet. I am familiar with the

technology. My second parents taught my brothers and sisters and me on such devices.

I stare at the image before me, scrawled by hand in the language I learned following my second birth.

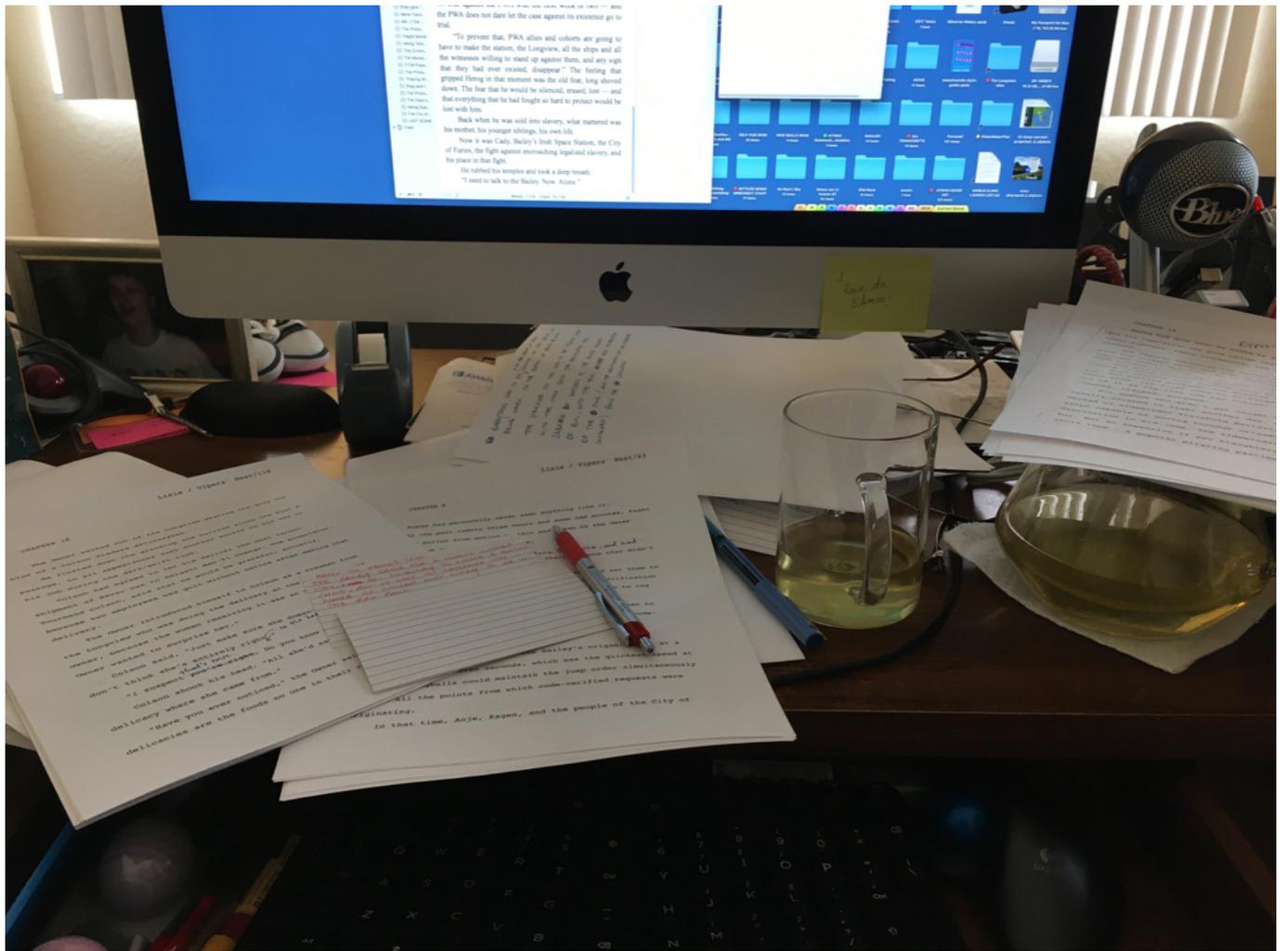
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Snapshot from the Fiction Frontlines

written by Holly Lisle

December 8, 2020

By Holly Lisle



It is in fact possible for the explosion of your revision to be a GOOD thing.

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